



RUTH

GOD AT GROUND ZERO

BEFORE EACH GATHERING READ Ruth 1-4

WEEK ONE

DISCUSS

1. What caused Naomi to be angry with God?
2. Describe a situation in your life when you shared Naomi's view of God.
3. How do our circumstances impact our view about God and His goodness?
4. What do you feel is a healthy response when our circumstances seem to invalidate what we believed to be true of God?

WEEK TWO

DISCUSS

1. Why are our questions about God so important?
2. Why did Ruth choose to reject Naomi's counsel?
3. Naomi is a worst-case scenario in her culture. How might this have defined her own value in her mind?
4. Describe a time in your life when a core identity was shaken. How did you find God's grace in the midst of it?



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WEEK THREE

DISCUSS

1. Describe a situation where you (or someone you know) faced adversity and had to do things to survive or make ends meet that you never imagined doing.
2. How did gleaning give the poor dignity? And how did it put them at risk?
3. What healthy “conflict of interest” did God’s gleaning laws pose for the landowner and his workers? Why is this conflict important for us?
4. Boaz was generous with the grain in his field, but Ruth worked hard to gather those gleanings (an *ephah* is nearly thirty pounds). How is this a picture of our relationship with God?

WEEK FOUR

DISCUSS

1. What were the risks involved in Ruth’s brave move toward Boaz?
2. Why was Ruth’s courage important to Naomi? Why was it important to Boaz? Why was it important to Ruth?
3. Think of all the ways this plan could have gone wrong, especially in a culture that didn’t value the virtue of women. How can we see God’s hand in directing and protecting Ruth and Naomi?
4. Describe an area in your life where you need to be bolder in pursuing the things God has for you.

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WEEK FIVE

DISCUSS

1. How does Boaz' behavior toward Ruth reflect the way of Jesus toward us?
2. Ruth's request is met with a delayed response, but Boaz does give her six measures of barley to take back to Naomi, saying, "Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed." Ruth asked for something big and received something small. But the small thing is a placeholder for what Boaz is willing to do for her. Do you have any placeholders in your life to remind you of God's promised faithfulness?
3. How do you feel about the first kinsman-redeemer's refusal to accept responsibility for Ruth and Naomi at the expense of his own inheritance? How does his behavior contrast with Ruth's toward Naomi and Boaz' toward Ruth?

WEEK SIX

DISCUSS

1. One of the pillars at the entrance to Solomon's temple was named Boaz. What does this tell us about the way the story of Ruth fits into the overall divine strategy of God -- in the temple and in the timeline of history?
2. One Hebrew word for lovingkindness in the story of Ruth is *hesed*. It means *long-acting love*. *Steady love*. *Steadfast love*. How do we see this at work in and through Ruth? Naomi? Boaz?
3. Describe the contrasts you see in our culture between the kind of love we've grown accustomed to and *hesed* love.
4. Where have you most experienced *hesed* love in your life?