

WEEK FOUR

A STUDY BOOK OF  
**RUTH**



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*flourish*

DESIGNED & PRODUCED BY  
**USA SOUTHERN TERRITORY WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT**

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## 6-Week Ruth Bible Study

*ESV translation used unless otherwise noted*

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# Approach

## Ruth 3:1-18

"Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barely tonight on the threshing floor. Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do." And she replied, "All that you say I will do."

So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! 9He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer." And he said, "May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the Lord lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning."

So she lay at his feet until the morning but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city. And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her, saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."



# A NOTE FROM JENIFFER



The providence of God has been unfolding over the first half of the Book of Ruth. Here in Chapter 3, we find the practical plans of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz being put into place, as their hearts are aligning with God's plan. Buried in the midst of the plans of man, we find the richness of God shining through. Please continue to press into the scriptures this week, setting time apart each day to read the word of God and align your heart with his.



# Approach

## DAY ONE

Ruth 3:1-2

## PRAYER

*Lord, help me to bring my needs to you, to trust that you are not only able but willing to meet my needs. Help me to remain committed and focused during this week's study, so that I may be drawn into your presence and grow in my faith. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

*Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor."*



My how the tables have turned for Ruth and Naomi. Until this point, it has been Ruth seeking rest and comfort for Naomi. Now in an answer to her own prayer from Chapter 1, Naomi is putting a plan in action to seek rest for Ruth.

The beauty of Naomi's plan might lie in the fact that she is excited about the potential of Boaz being Ruth's new husband. Please note Naomi isn't saying, "Well, Boaz might be a good man, but no one will ever be as good as my boy." Naomi isn't moving forward begrudgingly; she has returned to Judah, grieved her loss, and journeyed into the blessings God is providing her. It is important for both Ruth and Naomi's redemption that Naomi is ready to move on. Ruth is a foreigner in this culture. She doesn't know the customs of the threshing floor. Ruth can't come up with a plan without Naomi, and Naomi can't see the future clearly if she is still in the past.

The change of seasons is sometimes a beautiful thing with the ushering in of spring season while winter slowly fades away. Other times it seems as though one season crushes the other as it enters, like the unexpected death of a loved one moving a young mother to a widow in the blink of an eye. No matter how the seasons change for you, it is important to fully embrace the new season without trying to hold on to the past.

Is there a season that you haven't yet been able to let go of? What must you do to seek rest? It is time to see where the Lord has you and how to fully embrace it.

Naomi is embracing the new season and encouraging Ruth to meet Boaz at the threshing floor. Ruth and Boaz had worked together and built a friendship over the last three months through the wheat and the barley harvest with Ruth working in the fields and Boaz being the vessel God would use to meet her needs.

Now the harvest was over, and Boaz and others were at the threshing floor. Please note there would have been many people at the threshing floor that night. The men and women employed by Boaz would have worked that day to separate the grain from the husks. Then that night their families would gather to eat together and celebrate the richness of the land. To close out the night they would sleep with their heads at the pile of grain in order to protect it from robbers. It was their entire harvest; all their wealth was there. It needed to be protected. Ruth wasn't invited because she wasn't part of the team. She was at home with Naomi. Boaz would have been at the threshing floor with his workers to see completion of the harvest and to protect what the Lord had given them.

Threshing was necessary to reveal the true harvest. A crop that hasn't been properly threshed can begin to deteriorate and go to waste. Moisture trapped in the husks can cause mold and rot to ruin the grain. Thus the timing of threshing is important; grain husks must be crushed to separate the edible and the uneditable portions.

Are you at the threshing floor? Has the harvest of your current season ended? Do you feel as though you have been crushed lately, as if God has forgotten about your maximum weight load and is weighing you down? Could it be that God is using this opportunity to separate that which is going to cause your life to rot from the parts of you that are of great value?

Is your life fruitful? The threshing floor separated that which was good and fruitful from what was not. Please note it took energy and time to separate the two, but without the effort put into separating the two parts, none of it would be fruitful.

Is it time to take your daily habits to the threshing floor? What needs to be separated? Are their habits or relationships that need to be thrown to the wind so that they are able to be fruitful in the place God has called them to?





**Reflection:**

How are you embracing this coming season?

What is the Lord threshing out of you?

How can you seek rest in the Lord?

**Prayer:**

Dear Lord, help me to seek rest in you and you alone, that I may embrace the season you are bringing me into. Lord, help me to see the areas of my life that need to be separated out, so that I may produce fruit that brings you honor. Amen.

**NOTES**

# Approach

**DAY TWO**

Ruth 3:3-6

**PRAYER**

*Lord, help me to bring my needs to you, to trust that you are not only able but willing to meet my needs. Help me to remain committed and focused during this week's study, so that I may be drawn into your presence and grow in my faith. Amen.*

**SCRIPTURE**

*Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do." 5 And she replied, "All that you say I will do." So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her.*

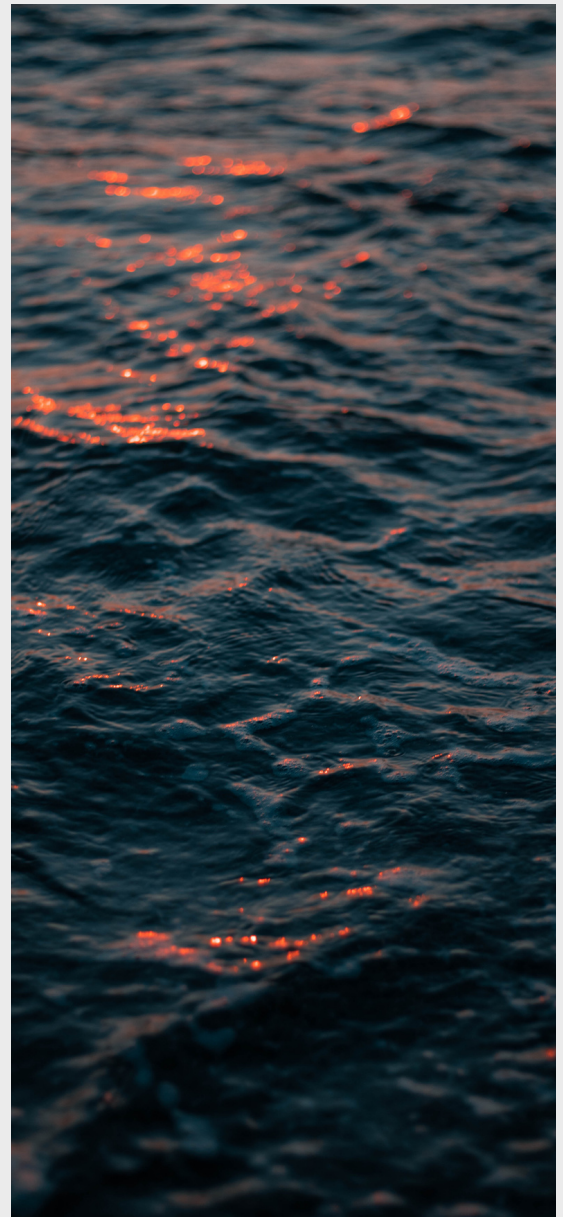
Naomi begins to lay out her plan for Ruth's redemption. Step one: Go clean yourself up and look your best. I wish I could count the number of times during my childhood my mother said to me, "Are you going to wear that to go out?" I didn't understand why she was so concerned about how I presented myself until I was older. I had a friend tell me someone once told her she needed to "paint the barn." We know that image says a lot about who we are and how others perceive us; it is important to dress the part. It's a bit like saying, "Please, it will be noticed." Well, it was the same for Ruth. Naomi is looking at her daughter-in-law and giving her the most practical advice a mother can give: be presentable.

Naomi then lays out the plan for Ruth to go to Boaz after he has fallen asleep on the threshing floor and lay at his feet in the position of a servant. Please remember there would have been lots of people and families present on the threshing floor. Ruth lying at the feet of Boaz never would have been interpreted as a sexual advance by Boaz, but it was still a risky move for Ruth to travel to the threshing floor late at night, by herself and smelling clean. However, it was not the first risk Ruth had made on this journey to redemption. In fact, throughout this book we see Ruth taking major risks; she agrees to travel with her mother-in-law to a foreign land, she gleans in the fields, she befriends Boaz and now she prepares to go to him on the threshing floor. It should be noted that each of her risks begins with her words declaring her actions before she begins. In verse 5 we read Ruth's response to her Mother-in-law's plan: "All that you say I will do."

Ruth is taking the first step in the right direction by speaking it out loud. How are you speaking?

Read Proverbs 18. There is so much in this chapter that details the power of your words. Make note of which verses stick out to you. For me it is verse four; this verse calls the words of our mouth deep waters. Deep waters tend to look still on top and yet have strong currents running beneath them. I try to listen to the words I speak when I am tired or frustrated. That is when my filter isn't working, and they often reveal the currents running deep below.

What do your words say? How do your words influence your actions?





**Reflection:**

Take time today to review the words you have spoken to yourself this past year.

What words or phrases run in your head as a soundtrack?

Which of these phrases needs to be removed from your thinking?

What words would the Lord speak over you?

Ask your inner circle to write out words or phrases that describe you.

**Prayer**

Lord, help me to filter the soundtrack of my mind, so that I may know the words you have for me, and that I may speak the words that draw me closer to the truth of who I was made to be. Remove from me the lies Satan would have me believe. Amen.

**NOTES**

# Approach

**DAY THREE**

Ruth 3:7-10

**PRAYER**

*Lord, help me to bring my needs to you, to trust that you are not only able but willing to meet my needs. Help me to remain committed and focused during this week's study, so that I may be drawn into your presence and grow in my faith. Amen.*

**SCRIPTURE**

*And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings[a] over your servant, for you are a redeemer." And he said, "May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.*

Following Naomi's plan, Ruth arrives at the threshing floor as Boaz has fallen asleep. She uncovers his feet and lies down. This may seem strange to us, but this was the position of a servant and a very practical way to wake a person. Sure enough about midnight, Boaz wakes and is surprised to find someone at his feet. When he asks who is there, we have the only recording of Ruth speaking her own name, identifying herself as Boaz's servant. Ruth then continues by asking Boaz to spread his wings over her. It is important to note that Ruth is speaking back to Boaz the words of his prayer from Chapter 2: "The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!"

By doing this Ruth is reminding Boaz of his identity, his God-given position to be the answer to his own prayer. Ruth has known since her first day in the fields, when she returned with her leftover lunch, that Boaz could redeem her, but she hasn't rushed to ask him to fulfill this role. Timing is everything. Just because you know someone can do something for you doesn't mean you should ask them to do it for you. God has to prepare the hearts of those he is calling and equipping to do his work. Your ask should always begin with a prayer and a petition to the Lord. This prayer should not be that you will get what you want; it should be a prayer for the other person's heart to be prepared for what God desires to do through them in the situation.

What exactly is Ruth asking? She is asking Boaz to marry her and to provide an heir for Naomi so that the land and possessions that were once in her family, but sold most likely to to pay for the journey to Moab, could be returned to her.

Ruth has waited upon the Lord for the right timing to ask Boaz to fulfill his role as her kinsman redeemer. Now in this moment, she is asking him for the thing he is uniquely qualified to do by reminding him of his identity.

Do you have people in your life who remind you of your God-given identity, even the one that you are not yet fully embracing? Are you able to be the answer to your own prayers? Are you asking God for something that God has given you the ability to fulfill?

Ruth has waited; she has reminded Boaz of who he is and the prayer he prayed over her when they first met. While this is a great model for how we can relate to other people, there is a deeper teaching in this. Ruth approaches Boaz the same way we need to approach Jesus with our requests.

- 1) She brings nothing but her need.
- 2) She comes as a servant and falls at his feet.
- 3) She speaks boldly to him, not because of who she is, but because of who he is.
- 4) The knowledge of her need drives her to risk herself, so that she may be redeemed.

What would it look like if we came before the Lord bringing nothing but our needs?

Are you willing to speak boldly to Jesus because of his identity? Oh, to have a relationship with our Savior that allows us to come before him without fear of rejection in the midst of the knowledge of our needs.



**Reflection:**

How am I coming to Jesus?

How can I allow the knowledge of my need to drive me?

What is preventing me from coming to Jesus?

**Prayer:** Lord, please help me come to you as your servant. Help me to recognize my need for you, so that I may be bold enough to bring my needs to you, without fear. Help me to embrace who you have called me to be. Surround me with people who are able to remind me of this, even in the darkest of times.

Lord today my need is \_\_\_\_\_. I need  
\_\_\_\_\_. I recognize you are  
\_\_\_\_\_. Amen

**NOTES**

# Approach

## DAY FOUR

Ruth 3:11-17

### PRAYER

*Lord, help me to bring my needs to you, to trust that you are not only able but willing to meet my needs. Help me to remain committed and focused during this week's study, so that I may be drawn into your presence and grow in my faith. Amen.*

### SCRIPTURE

*And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are ta worthy woman. 12 And now it is true that I am ua redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. 13 Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will vredeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, was the LORD lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning."*

*14 So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." 15 And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city. 16 And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her, 17 saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'"*



Boaz's plan starts with the sweetest of responses: "My daughter," a common phrase at the time, demonstrates the care and concern Boaz holds for Ruth. Boaz answers Ruth as directly as she asks, committing to do all that she has asked, and affirms her identity as a worthy woman. The Hebrew word here is hah-yil. The townsmen know her as hah-oil, a woman of moral strength, good quality, integrity, virtue, and comprehensive excellence. This is a far cry from what her reputation among the townsmen would have been when she first entered the city. But over the last three months, her work in the fields and the words of all that she had done for Naomi have spread. The once Moabite widow is now seen as a woman of hah-oil. God is redeeming her identity.

Do you have an identity that needs to be redeemed? Do you trust that God can redeem it? The redemption of Ruth's identity began with the risks she took to act in honorable ways toward her mother-in-law, which showed her to be hardworking, kind, and gracious. God can do all things, but he will often hold back until our hearts and minds are ready to receive them. While our salvation is by Grace alone, through Faith alone, in Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8-9), it is our responsibility to actively participate in the work God is doing in our lives.

A drug addict who continues to buy drugs and chooses to use those drugs will have a harder time recovering from their addiction than an addict who chooses to enter a rehabilitation program and put in the work to break the addiction. Likewise, a young woman who has left prostitution will have a hard time changing how people see her if the way she dresses remains immodest. These are more extreme examples of purpose; it is easier to see the flaws that way. What areas of your life do you need to put in the work to change as God redeems them? What small changes are you responsible to take? Many times it has to do with a conscious effort to change the words of our mouth, our daily habits, or the attitude of our heart towards something.

Yesterday we learned that Ruth knew from day one that Boaz could redeem her. Well, today we learn that Boaz has known this as well. Yet, in all these months, he never forced his right to marry Ruth on her. Boaz waited for Ruth to come to him. What a beautiful picture of how Jesus waits for us. He knows he is the one to redeem us, while we may believe there are other tangible things that will satisfy our hearts. It is Jesus who waits patiently for us to come to him.

Unfortunately for Ruth, Boaz is not the first in line to redeem her. There is another who is closer to the family line. Boaz promises to settle the matter of her redemption in the morning. So as a matter of protecting her physically from an attack on the road traveling back to her house, Boaz tells her to lie down till morning. Then in the early morning light, Boaz protects her reputation by sending her home before anyone could recognize her. Timing is everything. Are you waiting upon the Lord for something? Let me encourage you that his timing is rarely our timing. I was once told that the Lord is never late, and he is never early.

Boaz knew the timing of Ruth's departure was key. People talk, and he wasn't going to risk what could be said and the damage it would do to her and his ability to redeem her.

Ruth leaves with six measures of barley for her mother-in-law, and a promise that her redemption is on the way. The goodness of God, the little blessings he is pouring into your outer garment is meant to bless you and others while you are in the process of waiting. Please don't miss the gifts of God along the way.

**Reflection:**

What are the areas of my life that the Lord is working to redeem?

What are the things that I am responsible for in the process?

Make a list of the ways the Lord has blessed you as he is redeeming you.

How can you use this to encourage others?

**Prayer:**

Lord, help me to see what you are in the process of redeeming in my life. Strengthen me to make the right choices in this process, so that I may know you are redeeming my identity. Lord, thank you for the work you are doing in me, and the blessings you have poured out on me in the process.

**NOTES**



# Approach

## DAY FIVE

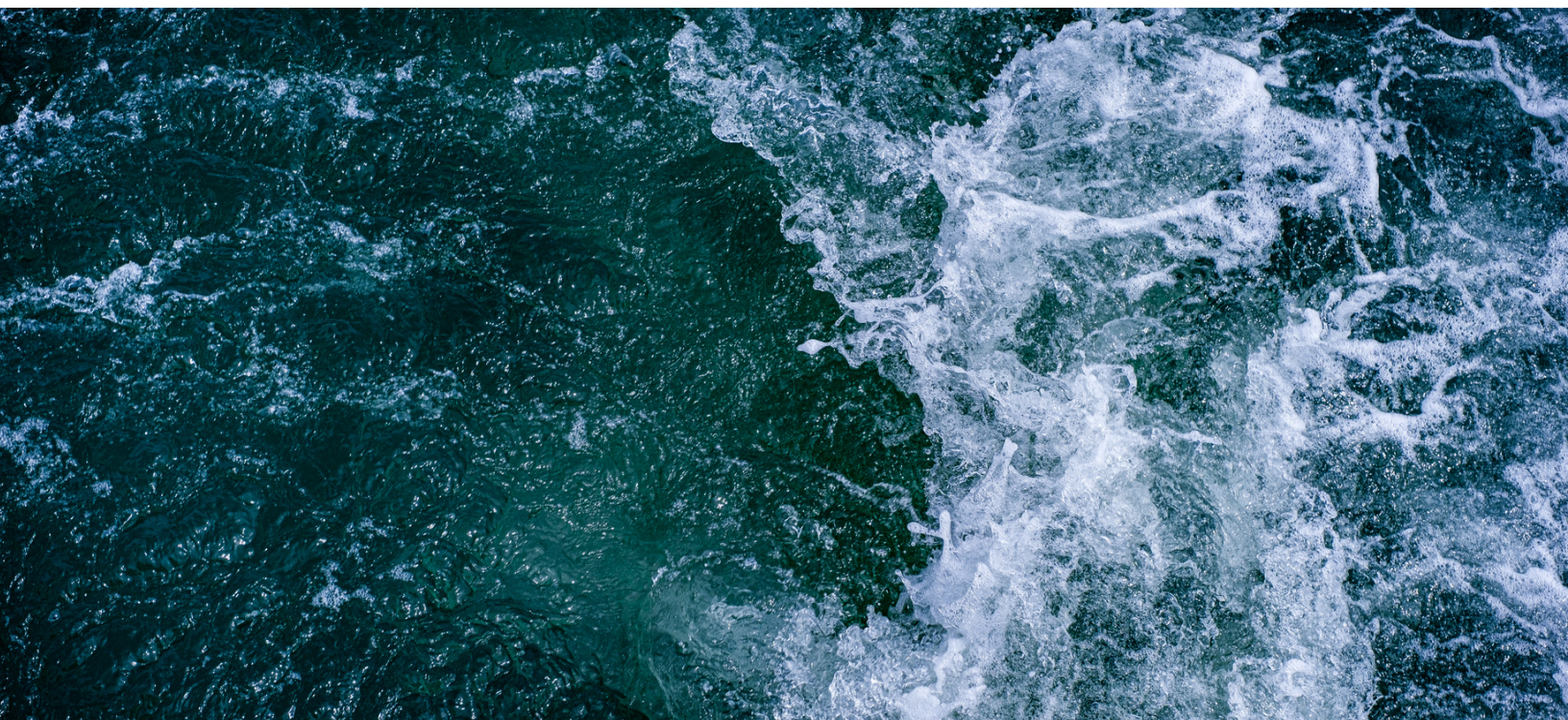
Ruth 3:18

### PRAYER

*Lord, help me to bring my needs to you, to trust that you are not only able but willing to meet my needs. Help me to remain committed and focused during this week's study, so that I may be drawn into your presence and grow in my faith. Amen.*

### SCRIPTURE

*She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."*



Almost there, but not yet. This may be the hardest verse in this book for me. I am horrible at waiting upon the Lord, and yet scripture is clear again and again and again. We are asked to wait upon the Lord, and we are not alone. Throughout scripture, God has asked his faithful servants to wait.

Below is a short list of those who waited:

- Abraham waited 25 years for the Lord to bring about the birth of his child Isaac. Even after the promise of the Lord comes to them, they must wait through 40 weeks of pregnancy life.
- Joseph waited in a hole a few hours, and then in prison for over two years to be called out by Pharaoh.
- Job waited for the Lord in his grief
- After being anointed as the King, David waited approximately 14 years before taking the throne
- Rahab waited for the spies to return.
- Daniel waited for the morning in the midst of the lion's den.
- Jesus waited 30 years to begin his ministry.

They were actively waiting; to wait upon the Lord is not a passive activity. If you are waiting for the Lord to show up, and in your waiting, you are doing nothing, then let me caution you. You will be waiting a long time. None of the people above simply sat and waited. Nope.

- Abraham built his faith and learned to walk in the ways of the Lord
- Joseph used his time in the prison to work for the Lord, build relationships with the guards and prisoners, and was given responsibilities in the prison. This trust becomes crucial to what happens next.

Job spoke to God about all of his emotions and maintained his integrity. This plays a key role in how his peers will view God.

- David learned to trust and rest in the Lord, how to serve others, and most importantly how to worship no matter what the circumstance.
- Rahab gathered her family so they would also be saved.
- Daniel learned the power of prayer and integrity.
- Jesus “grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” -Luke 2:52

The list of those who actively waited upon the Lord could continue for pages, but the most important truth we can glean from this is that:

God will anoint you for a calling and then withhold the opportunity for that calling until you are equipped, and his timing is perfect.

Are you in a place that you aren't enjoying? Is there something about home life, work, school, and friendships, that makes you feel like you aren't “there”? Maybe you are in the waiting. Remember, it must be an active process by which you are growing in your faith, your knowledge of the Lord, and learning the skills your current environment challenges you to know. Why? Because God placed Daniel in the pit, and David in the field, and Rahab in the wall so that they would be prepared for when He showed up and called them out of those spaces.



If Rahab had not taken the time to listen to the stories of an unknown God that foreigners spoke of, she may never have met her husband. I know this sounds like it is coming out of left field, but follow my thoughts here. Rahab lived in the wall of the city. Her house was one in which many foreign men visited. She heard the talk of the townspeople as they walked the streets below. Then one day two spies enter her doorway. Because of what she has heard, and what she is beginning to believe, she allows the spies in, hides them, and gives them an exit plan. In return, they give her a scarlet cord and promise her safety when they return. She is told to gather her family in her house and to wait there. Rahab actively gathers family and then they wait for the return of the spies.

I would be so bold to say Rahab and her family didn't just sleep the hours away, but they grew in their faith as they discussed who this God was and what they had heard of his goodness to his people. Where is my evidence for this? One of the two spies was named Salmon. Salmon later marries Rahab and fathered Boaz (Matthew 1:5). Boaz stayed in Judah when the famine hit. Why? There is a good chance his mother told him how she gathered her family and stayed in the wall as portions of it crumbled around them, but the God they barely knew protected them. Boaz's faith is a product of Rahab's willingness to wait for God to deliver her.

Now we find Ruth in the waiting. The physical work of redemption is done by Boaz alone. Ruth can do nothing to speed up the process, but she doesn't just sleep the hours away. Somehow these hours spent with Naomi will grow her faith. Waiting has a way of doing that.

This is a beautiful picture of how Jesus works to bring about our redemption. No matter what we have done, it is Jesus alone who saves us. Our salvation is complete, not because of anything we have done, but by Christ alone who finished the work of God on the cross.

We are saved by Grace alone, through Faith alone, in Christ alone. We must wait upon the Lord.

How long are you willing to wait upon the Lord? Have you given him a time limit? Have you set out an ultimatum? If the circumstances don't change this time around, then I am out. If they don't resolve this issue I have by \_\_\_\_\_, then that is the sign that I am done, moving on to greener grass. Or are you able to actively wait upon him, growing in your faith and understanding?





**Reflection:**

Listen to the song 40 by U2. Originally written by David, when he served as the chief musician over 1.1 million days ago and recorded in Psalm 40:1-3, this song continues to resonate with our hearts. "How long, how long, how long, how long to sing this song?"

U2 40 (Psalm 40:1-3)

I waited patiently for the Lord  
He inclined and heard my cry  
He lifts me up out of the pit  
Out of the miry clay

I will sing, sing a new song  
I will sing, sing a new song

How long to sing this song?  
How long to sing this song?

How long, how long, how long  
How long to sing this song?

Are you waiting on the Lord, and you feel as though you can wait no longer?  
What are you waiting on?  
What is the Lord attempting to do in your heart as you are in the waiting?  
Are you refusing to wait? Why?  
What does it look like for you to wait on the Lord?

**Prayer:**

Lord, help me to find peace in the waiting. Help my heart align with yours. Teach me to wait for you. Draw me into your presence as I struggle to wait. Lord, today I find myself waiting for you to \_\_\_\_\_. Please help me to trust that you will settle the matter in a way that brings about your honor and is for my God. Amen.



# Weekend Challenge

With only two weeks of this study left, I want first to let you know how proud I am of you for sticking with it. I know it isn't always easy to add something else to your schedule or change your rhythm. But you have made it this far. Well done!

Please keep it up. I get so excited about what the Lord has in Chapter 4, but before we dive into the closing of the book, it is important that we take the time to look back on what the Lord has been revealing to us. Below are a few questions that might help you review the last few weeks.

Can I encourage you to call another officer who is working through this study and have coffee with them or take a hike together, even if you are hiking in different states? I find that the power of God's word and the lessons he has to teach us to do a better job of making life changes when we cling to one another.

## Questions of Reflection:

Maybe listen to this song as you think through the questions. There are a number of artists who have put out a version of this. The words are powerful and set the tone for today.

*I will call upon the Lord*

*"I will call upon the Lord. Who is worthy to be praised. So shall I be saved from my enemies. The Lord liveth and blessed be my Rock and let the God of my salvation be exalted. The Lord liveth and blessed be my Rock and let the God of my salvation be exalted."*

1. The Providence of God works through the ordinary to bring about the extraordinary. Never overlook the most ordinary moments of your day. They just might be the very things God is using to change your destiny.
2. How we respond to hardship is our choice. Sometimes its not about what we are asking for as much as it is how we are asking.
3. God will build our reputation when we work to serve him. Are you focused on doing what God has called you to, or are you building your own house?
4. Ruth's risks begin with her words. What are you saying? Do you need to change your language?
5. God can redeem your identity.
6. God asks us to wait for him. Are you waiting to see how the matter will work out, or are you attempting to do it your own way?

## Prayer:

Lord, help me to hear your voice. Help me to see how you are working in the details for my good and your glory. May I be willing to wait when I need to wait? May I choose to keep you as my focus? Thank you for redeeming my identity. Amen.

Notes