

WEEK SIX

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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Choices

Ruth 4:13-22

So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went into her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him." Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

The Genealogy of David

Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron, Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.



A NOTE FROM JENIFFER



Welcome to week six. I am so excited! You have made it this far. Thank you for sticking with me; thank you for joining me on this journey. Can I tell you there's still so much more to glean from this sweet little book; my hope and my prayer is that as you enter into the final week of this study, you take the time to prayerfully reflect on the little pieces of wisdom you have gathered. My prayer continues for you to be drawn into the presence of a loving God. In the Book of Ruth, God was working in the most treacherous circumstances. I heard it once said that God was working in ways Naomi could not see, doing what Naomi could never do at just the right time to bring about her good according to his purposes and plans in ways that she could never imagine. I pray that you are able to hold on to this hope for your own life when times look dark.

Choices

DAY ONE

Ruth 4:13

PRAYER

Lord, help me to trust that you are here for me. Help me to understand that you are the same God who watched over Naomi and provided for Ruth. Help me to grow closer to you as I set aside time this week to study your word.

SCRIPTURE

"So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son."



Ruth spent 10 years in Moab married to a man who desired to establish a house. I have no doubt that they tried again and again and again to have a child. It would have been culturally appropriate for them to desire lots of children. Children, after all, were how you established a house, and the more you had the more blessed by God you were in every culture. Naomi surely wanted a grandchild to carry on the family name. Some say she may have even encouraged her sons to marry the Moabite women in order to create a house in Moab. Yet Ruth remained barren, unable to birth a child.

I can't help but wonder if that barrenness weighed on her soul as she entered into a marriage with Boaz.

Boaz was her kinsman redeemer, but she was also responsible for producing the heir that would continue the family's name. If she were unable to get pregnant by Boaz, Naomi's family line would become extinct.

Throughout the Book of Ruth, we see Ruth speak boldly and confidently before she takes a risk. I imagine her wedding night felt like the biggest risk of all; everything they had worked for would come down to whether or not she could bear a child. Those who have walked the road of infertility can truly understand the fear, anxiety, and heartache that would have encompassed Ruth. Yet as she has done countless times before, she takes a bold risk and marries the man she has grown to love.

Can I be so bold as to say that we all struggle with barrenness? In some parts of our life, we all fail to produce something of quality. It may come in seasons; it may seem to have lasted forever.

"So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife, and he went into her, and the Lord gave her conception and she bore a son."

God wastes no time. Ruth becomes pregnant as if infertility was never a struggle. Yet, for ten years she could not produce a child with her husband. This is one of the reasons I believe her barrenness was a gift from God.

Maybe just maybe the thing you long for that God seems to be withholding from you is more about the condition of the hearts of those around you than it is about you.

Ruth's lack of a child in Moab is the very thing that brings Naomi back to Judah. If Ruth had a child in Moab, a house would have been established, and Naomi would not have had to return to Judah. But without an heir, without a son to provide for her in her old age, Naomi had no choice but to return to Judah.

In other words, Ruth's barrenness had nothing to do with her and everything to do with God's plan for eternity!

Some of you need to hear that your barrenness is not a curse on you but part of a bigger picture where God will bring about fruitfulness in his time. And what he brings forth will be more than you could ever have asked for or imagined.

Reflection:

Where are you seeing the anxiety of barrenness?

What area of your life do you need God to revive?

Have you dared to pray God would give you the strength to enter into the barren places?

How can you see God using the journey you are on to bring about eternal purposes?

Prayer:

Lord, I give you my barrenness and trust you to bring me to a place of fruitfulness for my good in your timing. Please help me see the goodness of your hand at work. Amen.



Choices

DAY TWO

Ruth 4:14-15

PRAYER

Lord, help me to trust that you are here for me. Help me to understand that you are the same God who watched over Naomi and provided for Ruth. Help me to grow closer to you as I set aside time this week to study your word.

SCRIPTURE

Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."



I love that this passage of scripture starts out with “then the women said to Naomi.” These women have been listening to Naomi complain since she entered Judah. In chapter 1 when Naomi and Ruth return to Judah, these are the women who greet Naomi. Remember, they are so excited to have their pleasant friend home. From the moment of her return through the barley harvest, through the wheat harvest, through an entire pregnancy, Naomi has been pouring out all of her frustration, anger, and self-pity and these women have listened.

Do you have a friend who listens? Not just for a moment, not just for a day, but day after day, do you have a friend who listens but does not join the pity party and patiently waits for the opportunity to point you back to the hand of God in your life?

These women have listened to Naomi and waited. We know they have shared the goodness of what God has done for Naomi because throughout this book people have learned of the good things Ruth has done for her mother-in-law. Now at the birth of Naomi’s grandson, the women speak.

I believe this verse breaks down the lies Naomi has spoken with the truth of what these women know about God. “Blessed be the Lord who has not left you this day without a redeemer.”

Can you imagine what Naomi must have said again and again? “God has abandoned me. I have no redeemer. God has left me. He has brought me back empty. Why would God do that?” And the women have the chance to now say, “No Naomi, the Lord has not left to you.”

What lies have you been speaking about God? What lies have you been believing about where God has placed you? What is the truth?

Naomi believed that God had abandoned her in Judah without a redeemer. The women correct these lies, not by ignoring them, but by speaking the truth over her. Maybe you need a friend to help you see the truth of your situation. Maybe you can see it, but you need to write the truth out on a note card that stays posted on your mirror. Maybe something like:

“God has called me to this place, for this season, and he has not abandoned me, nor will he forsake me here. The work he has called me to has eternal value, and the choices I make in this work matter.”

The women then take it one step further. I love this; not only did they correct the lies Naomi was speaking, but they call her up out of her self-pity and darkness to worship God and speak the truth of God to others: “May his name be renowned in Israel.”

They are basically saying, “Okay, now that we have listened to all of your whining, and God has proven himself, it is time you speak the truth.” Remember, words have power. Every time Ruth takes a risk, she speaks it first. It is now Naomi’s turn to speak of the goodness of God.

Are you speaking of the goodness of God?

Do you have friends who remind you that God is writing your story?

Do you believe he deserves to be praised for the details?

There is power in speaking the praises of God, to proclaim his good works. When you sit with your co-workers, are you proclaiming the good works of God, or are you whining about the difficulties? Have you forgotten that God has not left you, and that he is working behind the scenes to prepare blessings for you according to his plan and his timing?

The women continue to redirect Naomi's thoughts to the truth, not only for Naomi's sake but for Ruth's. Remember, God has redeemed her identity among the townsmen (3:11) but not yet among the women. When Ruth first arrived, Naomi very publicly stated the Lord brought her back empty ignoring Ruth's presence in front of the women.

It is the women who boldly speak the truth to solidify Ruth's value to Naomi and the community, "for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons."

God is in the process of restoring our lives. He will redeem our identity.

What part of your life needs to be restored?

**Reflection:**

What part of your life needs to be restored?

How would it look for you to be nourished by God?

Make a list of the moments God has revealed himself to you during your darkest times.

How does this encourage you to push forward?

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember that it is you and you alone who is able to redeem me and nourish my soul. Let me not forget the moments you have shown up when I needed you most when I least expected it, and when you answered my prayers. Lord, draw me close to you that I may seek you in my darkness. I trust you to be the restorer of life. Amen.

Choices

DAY THREE

Ruth 4: 16

PRAYER

Lord, help me to trust that you are here for me. Help me to understand that you are the same God who watched over Naomi and provided for Ruth. Help me to grow closer to you as I set aside time this week to study your word.

SCRIPTURE

Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse.



The women have spoken the truth of God's faithfulness to Naomi and affirmed that God has redeemed Ruth's identity. But it is not until Naomi takes the child and lays him in her lap that the fullness of God is truly received. So it is with the blessings of God. There is a point at which we must reach out and take what God has offered, lay it in our lap, and nurse it till it grows into the fullness of God's promise.

Everyone who has ever been in the presence of a newborn knows there is a difference between seeing a child in someone else's arms and the moment the child is placed in your own arms. The joy, the weight of responsibility, the need to protect, and the demand for your full attention are all wrapped up in a bundle of undetermined potential and unknown adventure.

Naomi knew one thing when she placed this yet unnamed child in her lap; this boy was the fulfillment of God's promise to her, and she was committed to bringing him to his fullness.

Can you look into the unknown of God's promise and commit yourself to bringing it to fullness? What have you been called to? Are you committed to bringing this calling to its fullness? Are you willing to see the fullness beyond the helplessness of the current infant blessing you are holding?

Just imagine if the first time a newborn was messy, parents gave up. It's absurd to even think about, but yet we sometimes give up on the blessings God has for us because they aren't packaged as we expect them to be.

Blessings, provisions and callings are messy. In Matthew 17 when the disciples need to pay the temple tax, Jesus sends them fishing. Not only do they have to work for the provision, but when they catch the fish, they have to reach in and pull the coin out of its mouth. I know they were fishermen, but this is still gross. The fish would be slimy, and most species of fish have multiple rows of teeth that could scratch their fingers as they pried a coin out of their mouths. I doubt it was as easy as the paintings and children's story books make it appear.

Can I encourage you to see the messiness of your blessings as part of the process? Satan would love for you to simply turn away from the greatness God has in store for you because the job of nursing this gift seems overwhelming.

I get it, it's that way with babies, too. The joy and the fullness new life brings is so intense that some of us are almost afraid to hold a newborn, while others have an uncontrollable need to reach out and touch the new life.

My favorite memory of the Commissioners is from almost 10 years ago. I was speaking at a youth event in April of 2014. It was the last event I was medically allowed to participate in before the birth of my first child. To say I was greatly with child is an understatement. In fact I had two nurses approach me during the event to ask exactly when I was due, as they thought I might give birth that weekend!

When I arrived on site Friday afternoon, Commissioner Donna spotted my large belly from across the room and ran towards me arms stretched out. I thought she was coming in for a hug. We had known each other for a few years at this point, so a hug made sense. Commissioner Kelly spotted her and picked up his pace; he knows his wife well enough to know she wasn't coming for a hug.

Before he could intercept her outstretched arms, Commissioner Donna was cradling my belly and speaking to my unborn child, "Hello little one. Auntie Donna is here. I am praying for you. . ." Commissioner Kelly calmly approached, removed his wife's hands and gently reminded her, "Donna, I don't think we know Jeniffer that well yet." The beauty of this memory plays over and over again in my head as my daughter, now 9 years old, runs to meet the outstretched arms of Auntie Donna anytime she can.

The Commissioners taught me a beautiful lesson about the uncontainable joy of the Lord that is found when you reach out and grab a hold of the blessings.

So it is with the blessings of God. Are you willing to take the blessing God has brought to you? Or does it scare you to step into the responsibility it brings?

Reflection:

Is there a blessing the Lord has brought to you that you are afraid to pick up?
Are you willing to take responsibility of the blessings?
How do you need to nurse the blessings of the Lord?

Prayer:

Lord, help me to see the ways you have shown up and the blessings you have in store for me. Help me to take hold of what you have for me. Give me the wisdom to nurse the blessings you have brought to me, so that they may grow to their fullest potential. Thank you for knowing what I need and delivering it to me even when my heart speaks against your goodness, and my mind forgets your faithfulness. Forgive me for the times I am too afraid to hold what you have offered for me. Amen

Choices

DAY FOUR

Ruth 4:17

PRAYER

Lord, help me to trust that you are here for me. Help me to understand that you are the same God who watched over Naomi and provided for Ruth. Help me to grow closer to you as I set aside time this week to study your word.

SCRIPTURE

And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.



And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Thoughts:

Now we sit at what seems like the end of the journey for Ruth, the fulfillment of God's promise to provide for his people. Ruth has given birth to a son that will bring Naomi's family line out of extinction. The ladies of the neighborhood name this boy Obed, or worshipper, servant of God. What a beautiful name for this young child. No doubt, Obed would grow up to serve others, specifically his grandmother, in the name of God and would worship the Lord. But I believe the women intentionally named him worshipper to remind Naomi of the goodness of God, and that she would continue to fight the lies that God had abandoned her each time she said Obed's name.

Obed becomes the father of Jesse, who is the father of David. Hold that lineage for a moment.

In Monday's study, we learned that Ruth's barrenness was not about her. If she had birthed a child in Moab, Naomi would have never journeyed back to Judah. This same thought then has to apply to Orpah. If Orpah had birthed a child in Moab, then Naomi never would have journeyed back to Judah.

That day on the road Ruth and Orpah each made a choice. They were given the same options and the same blessing from Naomi. The three women weep bitterly, and then Orpah kisses her mother-in-law and goes back to her people and her gods, while Ruth chooses to cling to Naomi and travel to a foreign land to worship a foreign God. This is the last time we read about Orpah in the Book of Ruth. What we know is that she left with Naomi's blessing to return to the house of her mother.

But that is not the last time Orpah and her offspring interact with the people of God. If you study the ancient Jewish writings, you learn that Orpah was also blessed with children once she broke from Naomi. In fact her great-grandson and the great-grandson of Ruth would later meet face-to-face on the battle field.

Ruth's great-grandson David, the youngest of the eight sons of Jesse, a shepherd and musician, outwardly did not look like a warrior but had a strong passion for God and the things of God.

Orpah's great-grandson Goliath was one of five children, strong and mighty in battle, spoke against the things of God and had everything the world could desire. Yet David took Goliath down with one smooth stone. While the things of the world are attractive, for the soldiers that day Goliath seemed like a sure bet. It is the things of God that bring about the victories in our lives.

Have you placed your confidence in the things of the world?

Why are you trusting the things of the world? How are they attracting you to them?

What is the fear pushing you towards the world's offering?

What would it look like for you to trust the Lord in your current circumstance?

1 Samuel 17 details the interactions between these distant cousins, David and Goliath. Please note that vs 40 tells us David picked up 5 smooth stones. David didn't doubt God could take Goliath on the first shot, David knew that Goliath had 4 more brothers. I believed he picked up 5 stones so he would be prepared for future battles.

How are you preparing to fight the battles ahead?

One small choice: Taking the easy road back to the world's ways and their gods versus taking the hard journey to the presence of God made all the difference. Orpah's choice gave birth to a fallen enemy of God. Ruth's choice birthed a king.

Your choices matter. The journey you are on matters. When you come to the crossroad are you choosing to return to what is comfortable, or are you willing to take the unknown and often difficult journey into a deeper relationship with the Lord that he may use you for the purposes of Eternity?

Reflection:

How have you been encouraged this week to stay the course?

In what ways can you encourage others to keep an eternal perspective?

Is there an area of your life that you need to bring back to the Lord's guidance?

What does it mean to you that your choices impact eternity?

Prayer:

Lord, help me to see the importance of the choices I make. Help me to know the eternal value that comes from clinging to what you have called me to, even when the road in the other direction is more inviting. Please Lord, direct my path and strengthen me for the journey ahead.



Choices

DAY FIVE

Ruth 4:18-20

PRAYER

Lord, help me to trust that you are here for me. Help me to understand that you are the same God who watched over Naomi and provided for Ruth. Help me to grow closer to you as I set aside time this week to study your word.

SCRIPTURE

Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron, Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.



Here we close out the Book of Ruth with what might seem like a misplaced partial genealogy. Perez seems like an odd starting point until you read Matthew 1 and connect Perez to Judah in one direction and to Jesus in the other.

This becomes significant to the theme of a kinsman redeemer. When Boaz went to the city gate to redeem Ruth, he had to prove he was related, able to pay the price, and willing to redeem her.

The following passage from Revelation 5 reveals to us the need all creation has for a kinsman redeemer.

"Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?' 3 And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, 4 and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. 5 And one of the elders said to me, 'Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals.'"

Here John notes that the scroll is sealed and requires a redeemer to open it. No one is qualified to open the scroll until the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David is found.

Obed is linked to Perez, the son of Judah and David in this short genealogy, so we will see Jesus as our kinsman redeemer. He is the only one qualified to open the scroll.

Jesus must be related. This is why the virgin birth is so central to the gospel, Jesus must be related in order to open the scroll.

Jesus must be able to pay the price. According to the scripture, he is the ONLY one who could pay the price for our redemption. He paid the ultimate price, his blood.

Jesus must be willing. John 10:18 tells us Jesus is willing "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord."

Ruth loved beyond her own self-interest, committed to a God she did not know, sealed herself to Naomi, and did the necessary daily tasks to provide in the process creating a sustainable future for her family line that would ultimately love humanity beyond the grave and into eternity.

I like to imagine Ruth in heaven with God looking over the timeline of her life. I see her sweet, humble spirit thanking God for all the moments his providence was at work as if she could follow a golden thread through the tapestry of her life.

God and Ruth standing there reviewing the highs and lows:

"There it is, the moment I met Mahlon.

Naomi was so kind to me that day.

Oh the fields of Moab, the first time I asked Naomi who she was talking to.

The journey to Judah. That was long such a long trip, and Naomi was so bitter.

Look, this is when Boaz first saw me.

Our first lunch together. . .

The birth of Obed, my sweet boy."

Then I imagine that Ruth notices that the golden thread of her life seems to continue far past her time on earth. I see her staring for a moment, then asking God, "LORD, why does my thread continue? I am no longer on earth."

God's gentle response: "Ruth your life has changed eternity for all mankind, for from you came Obed, from Obed came Jesse, from Jesse came David, and we know that from David will come Jesus."

"But God," I can almost hear Ruth saying with shock, "I am just a Moabite girl. I shouldn't even be with you in heaven. I can be the great-grandmother of your son!"

As this movie plays out in my imagination, I picture God throwing his head back with the most endearing laugh of delight as He reminds Ruth:

"Ruth you were NEVER just a Moabite girl. You have always been my daughter."

Can you hear it? Can you hear God speaking to your heart today?

Satan tries to feed us lies of doubt, shame, fear, and insecurity that convince us we are not able to be used by God to bring about the purposes of eternity. We think to ourselves: I can't change that I'm just a _____. God's not going to use me. I am just a _____.

Think about that for a minute. Make a list of the lies Satan has used to discredit you. What have you believed?

I'm _____ just _____ a _____.

Ruth was part of something so great and so powerful, she could have never imagined it and didn't see it in her lifetime.

Let me be the voice that reminds you, that God has greatness for you. Do not allow Satan to discredit your value in the Kingdom of God. You are so much more in God's plan for eternity than you can ever imagine.

Reflection:

How do I see myself? I am just a _____.

Why do I default to seeing myself through a lens other than the one God sees me through?

How would my choices differ if I allowed God to define my value and not others?

What can I do to align with God's vision of my value?

Prayer:

Lord, help me to remember that my choices matter. What I choose today may impact others for eternity. Help me to trust that you are with me even when the risk seems too great. Teach me to see myself as you see me, beloved, powerful, and as an integral part of your plan for eternity. Thank you for being willing to redeem us from our circumstances. Thank you for paying the price with your own blood.

Weekend Challenge

I pray you have been encouraged over the last month and a half.

This is a time for you to worship and review what God has taught you over the course of this study.

Remember there are only 2 rules:

- 1) stay focused on what God has shown you
- 2) Stay on task and worship

Make sure you set aside a few minutes to simply sit with God and listen to him.

If you need help getting started, the questions below might guide your time.

Questions of Reflection:

What are the most powerful moments of this study for you?

What truths are you still struggling to believe?

Have you identified your friend who will cling to you?

Are you able to trust God with the barrenness you feel?

Prayer:

Lord, help me to remember what you have taught me. Help me to hold fast to the truth that you are working even when I cannot see it. Lord, help me to trust that your worst is still better than the best the world has to offer me.

(insert a time of personal prayer here)

