

LEADER DISCUSSION GUIDE

citygroups

Fall 2022

Week of November 6

Book of Ruth: Ruth 1

DISCUSSION FOCUS

Read (Primary Text): Ruth 1:1–22

Supporting Texts: Ruth 4:18–22; Deut 23:3–6; Matt 1:1–17

MAIN IDEA: God is sovereign over our family history and our past sins to accomplish His will.

OBSERVE

Read Ruth 1:1–5. Describe the loss Naomi experienced in Moab.

- *Her husband died*
- *Her two sons died*
- *She has left her homeland and is living in Moab away from any family.*
- *She is probably viewed as cursed since she has lost a husband and both sons.*

Read Ruth 1:6–18. Why does Naomi want her daughters-in-law to stay in Moab and what is their response?

- *Naomi wants them to be able to marry again and have children but knows that she is too old to have any more children and believes that she is cursed by God. Orpah and Ruth's families live in Moab but Naomi is going to return to her people in Bethlehem.*
- *Orpah attempts to stay with Naomi but decides to go back to Moab.*
- *Ruth insists on staying with Naomi and clings to her, making a vow to be with her and a part of her family and worship the same God.*

INTERPRET

What is significant about Bethlehem (vv. 1–2)? Why is it a major problem if the genealogical line from Naomi's husband (Elimelech) is broken?

- *Bethlehem is the city and Ephrathah the clan prophesied to be where the Messiah comes from (Micah 5:2) which we know is Jesus (Matthew 2:1–6; Luke 2:1–7).*
- *If the line through Elimelech is broken, the genealogical line of the Messiah is in trouble.*

Read Ruth 1:19–22. Why is there an emphasis on referring to Ruth as the Moabitess?

- *The Moabites were a hated people by the Jews (Deuteronomy 23:3–6) because of many past sins (Genesis 19) and harassments of Israel (Numbers 22–25; Judges 3). Ruth was an outsider to the Jews. There is special emphasis on her background to distinguish her from the Jewish people and to set us up as the readers for the ultimate outsider who will be included in an amazing plan of God.*

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APPLY

What are some life events that have caused you to believe that you are “cursed” or that God is against you? How can the story of Naomi and Ruth help?

- *You will need to read ahead in the story to find out how God takes a terrible situation and uses it for His glory. God provides for Naomi and Ruth upon their return to Bethlehem. God keeps His promises.*

How is Ruth’s commitment in vv. 16–18 to Naomi a reflection of a true conversion experience? How does our own lives and commitment to God reflect her level of commitment?

- *She left and forsook everything to “cling” to Naomi.*
- *She left her own family and became part of a new family in the same way that we become part of a new family of believers along with a complete change in identity.*
- *She left the gods her family worshipped to embrace the One True God of Naomi. In the same way, many have abandoned their own gods or those things in life that act as gods in order to embrace Jesus Christ.*
- *Ruth’s life and death are identified with Naomi’s in the same way that a believer’s life and death are identified with that of Jesus.*

Read Ruth 4:18–22; Matthew 1:5–6. What does the genealogy presented here say about God’s faithfulness and about how He can overcome a person’s past?

- *Though our story looks hopeless in Ruth 1, God proves that He is sovereign over every person and circumstance. His will cannot be thwarted.*
- *God uses an outsider (Ruth) to complete the ultimate genealogy of Jesus, demonstrating that God can use anyone. Consider especially Ruth’s background as a Moabitess.*
- *No matter who you are, what you have done, what your family tree looks like, His grace, mercy, and power are bigger. As Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:9, “But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.’ Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may reside in me.”*