

## *Promised Land 1 Study and Discussion Questions*

### *Lesson Six: Naomi's Story - Ruth*

#### Read Ruth 1.

- 1) Which statements summarize Naomi's catastrophic state (include the verse numbers)? Ruth 1:5 says, "Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband." In patriarchal cultures, this was a statement of catastrophic implications. In 1:13 and 10-21, Naomi indicated that the Lord's hand was against her, leaving her bitter and "empty."
- 2) In chapter 1, which of Ruth's words and actions indicate she had experienced a spiritual conversion? In stating, "your people will be my people and your God my God" (1:16-17), Ruth indicated her willingness to abandon her Moabite culture, family, and gods in order to worship Yahweh and align herself with His people. She backed up her declaration with action, suggesting true Biblical, saving faith (faith working itself out in actions [James 2:14-26]).
- 3) Re-read Ruth 1:20-21.
  - a) Have you ever experienced a season of emptiness, right after a time of fullness? If so, briefly describe it. **Personal sharing**
  - b) What are the root causes of suffering, according to God's word?
    - Hebrews 12:5-11 **The Lord's hand of discipline comes for our training. He never disciplines His children out of spite or because He has a mean streak. God's discipline is always remedial and redemptive in nature.**
    - 2 Corinthians 12:7-9a **Some suffering comes directly from the enemy (the Satanic realm). Even then, God intends to work through it for good.**
    - Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 8:22 (the world's general condition) **We live in a fallen world.**
    - Proverbs 1:22; Romans 6:23a; Galatians 6:7-8 **Even after God forgives us, our personal sin has consequences that often remain. We reap what we sow.**
    - Proverbs 11:29a; Acts 20:3; 1 Corinthians 16:9b **Others' sin often impacts our lives.**
  - c) If you are presently in an empty season of life, what do Psalm 30:5b, Romans 8:28, 1 Corinthians 10:13 and 1 Peter 5:10 say that encourages you? **These passages encourage those who are hurting or empty that in every circumstance, God is always working toward the good of making His children Christ-like. He knows our limits (how much we can bear) and He will restore us in His right time.**

#### Read Ruth 2.

- 4) In what verses and phrases of Ruth 2 do you see God at work behind the scenes? **According to Ruth 2:3-4, circumstances occurred that were more than coincidental (as indicated by the phrases "as it turned out" and "just then"). God's providential work behind the scenes is implied.**
- 5) What character qualities of Ruth and Boaz does chapter 2 reveal? **Ruth's willingness to work to support her mother-in-law shows her love, industriousness, and initiative (2:2). Boaz's greeting of his workers ("The Lord be with you") shows friendliness, genuine concern for others, and spiritual mindedness (2:4). Ruth worked steadily, except for a short rest, indicating that she was hard-working (2:7). Boaz provided a safe place for Ruth to work; he was a kind man (2:8). Ruth bowed down to Boaz and responded in a way that indicates humility (2:10 and 13). Boaz recounted Ruth's kindness toward her mother-in-law, reminding us that Ruth was loyal, kind, and unselfish (2:11). Boaz's blessing to Ruth implies even more clearly that he was a godly man (2:12). Boaz made provisions for Ruth, indicating that he was generous and kind (2:14-16). Ruth conformed her work habits to what Boaz and her mother-in-law recommended, proving she was submissive and teachable. Furthermore, once she arrived in Israel, she did not run off to seek a life of her own but continued living with her mother-in-law. Ruth was faithful (2:23).**

- 6) Boaz was a blessing to Ruth and Ruth was a blessing to Naomi. Whom has God placed in your life that you could seek to bless? What specific steps will you take this week? **Personal sharing**

### Read Ruth 3.

- 7) Summarize Naomi's plan, as described in Ruth 3. In what ways would this plan have been risky for Ruth? **Naomi told Ruth to go to the threshing floor at night, cleanly washed, dressed and perfumed. Once Boaz retired for the night, she was to remove the covering from his feet and lie down. This plan required Ruth to travel alone in the dark (unsafe for a woman), hide until Boaz retired (hoping not to be discovered), slip into his presence (without anyone else noticing), and make a silent request of him by lying by his uncovered feet. Boaz could have outright rejected her or even had her punished.**
- 8) What was Boaz's response to Ruth's initiative? **Boaz called Ruth's initiative and interest in him a kindness, since he was no longer a young man. He assured her that he would take the necessary steps to become her kinsman-redeemer (first, he had to offer the opportunity – and responsibility – to a closer relative). Boaz instructed Ruth to remain in the safety of his presence until daylight, and then loaded her with food for her mother-in-law.**
- 9) What "faith-risk" is God asking you to take right now? **Personal sharing**

### Read Ruth 4.

- 10) Re-read Ruth 2:20, 3:9, 12-13, and 4:1. What insights into the nature of the "kinsman-redeemer" role do you gain from Ruth 4? **Both Boaz and another man (a nearer "kin") are called "kinsman-redeemers." 3:13 implies that either of these two men could "redeem" Ruth. In chapter 4, we learn that the kinsman-redeemer was required to redeem Naomi's land. Additionally, the one who bought the land *acquired the dead man's widow as his wife* (in this case, Ruth, not Naomi, probably since Naomi was past child-bearing years), in order to maintain the lineage of the dead man whose property was purchased. (The Mosaic Law did not link redemption of property with levirate marriage, but Ruth 4 indicates that doing so had become customary.) The chapter hints that taking this role could put a man's personal estate at risk. Finally, the elders of the town blessed Boaz for his willingness to redeem Ruth, thereby implying that it was an act of generosity on Boaz's part (apparently, Ruth was not the only one who took a risk).**
- 11) Examine the genealogy in Ruth 4:16-22. According to Genesis 46:12, who was Perez's father? According to the genealogy in Ruth, what was Ruth's relationship to King David? **Judah, son of Israel, was Perez's father. Ruth was the great-grandmother of King David. (The account of Ruth and Naomi's lives is the only history of King David's ancestry recorded in the Bible.)**
- 12) Re-read Ruth 4:17a in consideration of Ruth 1:21. Then, read Romans 15:13. With regard to which personal circumstance does the "God of hope" want you to "overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit?" **God gave Naomi a son, when previously she had been destitute ("empty"). God can turn around any misfortune, and even work through what seems hopeless to bring about surprising and good things. Personal sharing**

### Ruth

- 13) Consider the words in Ruth 4:13-17 with Ruth 1:5, 6, 13, 21. Who is the story of Ruth really about? **The Book of Ruth is actually the story of Naomi's life.**

- 14) Re-read Ruth 1:1 with Judges 21:25. Recalling what you learned from the two previous lessons on Judges, what do you find surprising about the fact that the Book of Ruth is set in the period of the Judges? **The book of Judges is depressing (to the point of being difficult to read) and covers history in a broad way. By contrast, the book of Ruth is a very personal story of God's involvement in the life of one family. Judges shows God's involvement in national life, while Ruth shows God's involvement in personal life. Even more important, at a time when Israel largely had no interest in God (Judges 21:25), a Moabite (and a woman, no less) appears in the Scriptures as a model of true faith and evidence that at least one family did acknowledge Yahweh as king.**
- 15) How does the Book of Ruth show that God's plan for any one person's life has implications that extend far beyond that one life alone? Give a specific example of how this truth ought to influence your attitude toward the role(s) in life the Lord has presently given you. **In chapter one, Naomi was focused on her own personal crisis. She was so self-absorbed that she could not even see Ruth's loyalty as an evidence of God's faithfulness. The rest of the story shows that God had a plan in allowing Naomi's misfortune. Through Ruth's marriage to Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, God placed Ruth (and indirectly, Naomi) in the Messianic line of ancestry. Personal sharing**