

INTERVARSITY BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Ruth 2:1-23 NIV, The Field of Boaz (60 minutes)

WELCOME (7 minutes)

Icebreaker: Describe a habit you have (could be good or bad). When did you develop it, and has it led to anything helpful or unhelpful in your life?

We are studying the Bible together because we want to grow in our love for Jesus through Scripture and because we want to grow in our witness to Jesus through Scripture.

Let's pray and ask God to help us as we study today's passage together...

GROUP NORMS (3 minutes)

Let's remember our group norms as we study together today:

1. Use "I" statements (speak for yourself, not for everyone)
2. Avoid judgmental statements (no shame or blame)
3. Allow space for everyone to share if they choose
4. Practice active listening and give advice only if invited to do so
5. What we share here stays here (confidentiality)

INTRODUCE the Scripture Text (3 minutes)

If you haven't already, take a minute to look up the significance of Bethlehem in Scripture. This is where the narrative is set for the rest of the book. Also take some time to dig a little into Boaz's family history (Matthew 1:5; Joshua 2). Who were his parents and how might this have shaped his character and actions in Ruth chapter 2?

SEE the Scripture Text (10 minutes)

Let's read the passage and talk about what we see.

- Who are the characters? How are they connected?
- What is happening? When? Where?
- Which words are being repeated?
- Is the author comparing or contrasting anything?
- Would you like to point out anything else you notice?

Ruth 2:1-23 NIV –

Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side, a man of standing from the clan of Elimelek, whose name was Boaz.

2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor."

Naomi said to her, "Go ahead, my daughter." 3 So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek.

4 Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, "The Lord be with you!"

“The Lord bless you!” they answered.

5 Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters, “Who does that young woman belong to?”

6 The overseer replied, “She is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi. 7 She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.’ She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter.”

8 So Boaz said to Ruth, “My daughter, listen to me. Don’t go and glean in another field and don’t go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me. 9 Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the women. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled.”

10 At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?”

11 Boaz replied, “I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. 12 May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”

13 “May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord,” she said. “You have put me at ease by speaking kindly to your servant—though I do not have the standing of one of your servants.”

14 At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar.”

When she sat down with the harvesters, he offered her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over. 15 As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men, “Let her gather among the sheaves and don’t reprimand her. 16 Even pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don’t rebuke her.”

17 So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah. 18 She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough.

19 Her mother-in-law asked her, “Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!”

Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. “The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz,” she said.

20 “The Lord bless him!” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. “He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead.” She added, “That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers.”

21 Then Ruth the Moabite said, “He even said to me, ‘Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain.’”

22 Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with the women who work for him, because in someone else’s field you might be harmed.”

23 So Ruth stayed close to the women of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

DISCOVER the Scripture Text (25 minutes)

Let’s discuss a few questions that will help us discover and understand the text.

1. The translation of verse 3 is that Ruth “happened to happen” to the part of the field belonging to Boaz. What do you think? Was this coincidence? Providence? Something else?
2. Discuss the various dynamics at play between Ruth and Boaz. Consider gender, age, social status, ethnicity, etc. What stands out to you about their interactions?
3. What is it that ultimately causes Boaz to favor Ruth? What does this tell us about him?
4. Boaz is identified as a kinsman redeemer. Read more about what a kinsman redeemer’s role is in Leviticus 27:9-25 and Leviticus 25:47-55. How does this shed more light on the interactions between Ruth and Boaz?
5. If we could communicate the core message of this text in just one sentence, what would it be? What do we sense God is communicating through this passage?

RESPOND to the Scripture Text (10 minutes)

Ruth risked a lot in deciding to go out and glean. She risked physical harm and social ostracism, yet God used her everyday faithfulness to provide for her mother-in-law as the spark for God’s redemption in her own life, her mother-in-law’s life, and eventually, the lives of all the the people of ancient Israel. Another way to put this is that God’s invisible hand was moving powerfully in Ruth’s life whether she perceived it or not at the time. She “happened to happen” upon Boaz’s field but it’s clearly much more than just coincidence. God was working in ways that Ruth couldn’t detect.

God’s invisible hand moves powerfully in the lives of his followers.

Let’s discern together how we can respond to what God is saying. We will answer one option from below, whichever seems most relevant to our group’s discussion of the text.

- A. Looking back on your life, have you had an experience where the invisible hand of God was moving, but you only realized it later? What was the experience like and what did you learn from it?
- B. Spend some time in reflection. Do you sense that God’s invisible hand is working in any area of your life now? Share about that part of your life. How does believing God is present change the way you see God and your situation?

CLOSE (2 minutes)

Let’s pray and thank God for our time in Scripture together...

Tips for leading the group discussion (and more tips are available at howto.bible):

- *Participate but keep your comments short to make space for others.*
- *Silence is okay. Encourage further discussion by saying “What else?” instead of commenting on every response.*



this material and more can be found at tiny.cc/biblestudyguides
contact christy.gates@intervarsity.org or sara.chang@intervarsity.org with any questions