RUTH

Read her story closely • Ruth 1–4

READ FIRST: Ruth 1–4. Notice what the passage says, what it leaves unsaid, and whose voice you hear.

A widow makes a choice

Ruth was a Moabite widow. When Naomi planned to return to Bethlehem, Ruth chose to accompany her, leaving familiar people and places. Her promise of loyalty is moving, but it also led into real uncertainty. As a foreign widow, she had little security and needed a way to find food for them both.

Work and vulnerability

Ruth went to glean, collecting grain left behind by harvesters. Boaz noticed her and instructed his workers to leave her in peace and provide water and extra grain. His protection matters because the work exposed her to risk. Ruth worked hard; the kindness and fair treatment of others also helped her survive. Neither part should be erased.

A path to stability

Naomi guided Ruth in approaching Boaz as a family redeemer. Ruth made a bold request for his protection. Boaz praised her, but explained that another relative had a prior claim. He handled the matter publicly at the city gate; then he married Ruth. Their son Obed became part of the family line leading to David. Ruth's foreign identity did not exclude her from this larger story.

Hold this question

How does listening closely to her actual story change the way you understand her?

RUTH

What her story can teach us today • Ruth 1–4

The Bible gives us a particular woman’s story. These connections invite reflection; they do not claim that every woman’s situation is the same.

Courage includes asking for help

Ruth’s effort did not make her self-sufficient. She needed access to food, safe work, trustworthy relationships, and a fair process. Asking for these is not weakness.

Belonging across difference

Ruth is repeatedly identified as a Moabite. The story invites us to consider how newcomers and outsiders experience our communities and whether they can find safety and dignity.

Loyalty is a choice, not a demand

Ruth freely chose to stay with Naomi; Naomi had urged her to go. Her story should inspire care, not become a tool to require women to sacrifice their safety or future for others.

Pay attention to power

Boaz had more social standing and resources than Ruth. His responsibility to act honorably is central to the story. Our communities can also use their power to make everyday spaces safer.

RUTH

Reflect, discuss, and pray • Ruth 1–4

1. What did Ruth risk when she went to Bethlehem, and what resources did she need?

2. Where have I felt like an outsider, and who helped me feel welcome?

3. When does asking for help require courage?

4. How can I use my position to make someone else’s work or search for belonging safer?

A step to take this week

Name one safe, practical response this story invites: a prayer, a conversation, a boundary, a request for help, or a way to care for someone else.

Closing prayer

God of welcome, walk with me when the future is uncertain. Give me courage to take the next wise step and humility to receive help. Show our group how to offer practical welcome, safe spaces, and dignity to those starting over. Amen.