

THE STORY

God's Love for Outsiders

2. Ruth left her homeland and her people to follow Naomi and Naomi's God. How might Ruth be a role model for us today? In what way is God asking you to follow Him? How can you respond this week to God's call for you to follow Him in obedience?

3. Boaz showed compassion towards those who were in need. How could you do the same for someone this week? Think through your coming week and identify one or two acts of compassion and generosity you could extend to a person who is hurting, in need or marginalized.

4. How is the concept of a "kinsman redeemer" unique? What does this concept reveal about God's heart for the outsider? God blesses Boaz and Ruth with the birth of a child, Obed, who is David's grandfather and an ancestor of Jesus (Matthew 1). In what ways does Jesus' love and provision for all of mankind reflect the concept of the "kinsman redeemer"?

Prayer TimeGroup time - 15 minutes

Praise God that He is behind the scenes leading and guiding you through His divine providence. Thank God that He is in control even when our lives seem hopeless. Pray for the people you love and care about who are going through a difficult time in life right now. Ask God to help you be like Boaz and grow as a person who extends the gracious care of God to those who are outsiders.

Finish your prayer time by praying for the needs of those in your *Growth Group*. Take a few minutes to share prayer requests. Ask someone in the group to record your prayers so you can see in future weeks where God is answering your prayers.

Ruth

- Naomi did everything right but it had all turned out WRONG.
- Ruth wanted Naomi's FAITH and Naomi's GOD.
- When things get a little fuzzy, God is usually up to SOMETHING.
- God again uses a lower story FAMINE to work out His upper story.
- Jesus Christ is the ULTIMATE kinsman-redeemer.
- God calls us to be agents of ACCEPTANCE on His behalf.
- God could have chosen ANYONE to use and He chose some messed up outsiders.

GROWTH GROUP HOMEWORK

Week of November 11-17, 2013

Getting Started.....Group time - 15 minutes

1. Share about time when the situation seemed hopeless but God showed up and did something surprising and unexpected for you or someone you know. How did you feel in the midst of that hopeless situation? How did your feelings change after you saw God work?

FOR GROWTH GROUP TIME

Getting Into God's WordGroup time - 30 minutes

Read *The Story*, Chapter 9 (In preparation to answer questions)

1. As you read chapter 9 of *The Story*, what were some of the losses that Naomi and Ruth faced? How did each of them respond to these difficult and painful experiences? What can we learn from their response to these losses?
2. Read Ruth 1:19-21. Naomi was a person of faith, but she also questioned God and was deeply honest about her struggles. In what ways did Naomi's losses impact how she viewed God and His work in her life? Compare Naomi's attitude at the beginning and her attitude at the end of this story. How does her view of God and His Upper Story change?

3. Throughout the Book of Ruth we get glimpses into Ruth's character. What are some of the exemplary aspects of her heart, attitudes, and behavior? What some people might call *coincidence* others call *divine providence*. What are some key examples of God's divine providence in Ruth's story?

4. What do we learn about Boaz from the way he treated his workers, Naomi and Ruth? Read Ruth 4:1-10. Why was Boaz willing to pay for all the property and redeem the name of Elimelech (Naomi's husband) when the relative who is first in line to do this was not? What risk did Boaz take in doing this? How did Boaz honor the Law and God in redeeming Naomi and Ruth? (Deut. 25:5-10)



5. How does the story of Ruth and Naomi demonstrate the laws God had given Israel to take care of marginalized people? Read Leviticus 19:9-10 and 25:25. What do these laws reveal about the heart of God for the poor, the widow and the outsider? What lessons can we draw for ourselves from this story?

Applying It In My LifeGroup time - 30 minutes

1. Naomi was honest with her daughters-in-law, with the village women and with God about the pain in her life. Share a time in your life where you were honest with God about your pain and hurt. How did God respond to your honesty? As you look back on that episode, what did you learn about God's presence and faithfulness in your life?