

The Story Adult Study Guide

For the Week of November 3, 2019

Chapter 9: “The Faith of a Foreign Woman”



Key Events: Naomi and Ruth during the time of the judges, Ruth meets and marries Boaz, Ruth and Boaz – ancestors of David and Jesus

Key Character: Ruth (see *The Story* page 489 for a description)

Bible Reference for this Chapter: Ruth 1-4

THEME: REDEMPTION!

1. The account of Ruth takes place during the time of the judges, a dark period when the Israelites were idolatrous, immoral, and oppressed. What did you find refreshing in Ruth’s story?
2. In her misery, Naomi states, “It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord’s hand has turned against me. . . The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me!” (page 122) What challenges do Christians face when trouble and sorrow enter our lives?
3. Naomi urged Ruth to return to her own people in Moab. Read and analyze Ruth’s reply on page 122 (“Don’t urge me to leave you . . .”). What do these words reveal about Ruth? (Were these words read in your marriage ceremony?)
4. Cite several examples that show that Boaz was a godly man.
5. From the information on pages 123 and 124, describe the reputations that Ruth and Boaz had developed. What character traits reflect a positive Christian witness to others?
6. The courtship of Ruth and Boaz stands in contrast to many of the so-called love stories we see today. What can single and married men and women learn from their example?
7. Ruth had a God-given knack for demonstrating humility and boldness at the appropriate times. Under what circumstances should a Christian be meek and humble? Under what circumstances should a Christian be assertive and bold?
8. Upper Story = God is present and working in the world to bring about the salvation of souls. Lower Story = God is present and working in my life every day to strengthen my faith in his plan and promises. Please share messages of personal comfort, hope, and encouragement you received from chapter 9.

Matthew 1:1-17
The Women in the Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah
(How God uses unlikely people in the Lower Story to accomplish his Upper Story)

1 This is the genealogy^[a] of Jesus the Messiah^[b] the son of David, the son of Abraham:

² Abraham was the father of Isaac,

Isaac the father of Jacob,

Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,

³ **Judah the father of Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar,**

Perez the father of Hezron,

Hezron the father of Ram,

⁴ Ram the father of Amminadab,

Amminadab the father of Nahshon,

Nahshon the father of Salmon,

⁵ **Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,**

Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,

Obed the father of Jesse,

⁶ and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,

⁷ Solomon the father of Rehoboam,

Rehoboam the father of Abijah,

Abijah the father of Asa,

⁸ Asa the father of Jehoshaphat,

Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram,

Jehoram the father of Uzziah,

⁹ Uzziah the father of Jotham,

Jotham the father of Ahaz,

Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,

¹⁰ Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,

Manasseh the father of Amon,

Amon the father of Josiah,

¹¹ and Josiah the father of Jeconiah^[c] and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

¹² After the exile to Babylon:

Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,

Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,

¹³ Zerubbabel the father of Abihud,

Abihud the father of Eliakim,

Eliakim the father of Azor,

¹⁴ Azor the father of Zadok,

Zadok the father of Akim,

Akim the father of Elihud,

¹⁵ Elihud the father of Eleazar,

Eleazar the father of Matthan,

Matthan the father of Jacob,

¹⁶ and Jacob the father of Joseph, **the husband of Mary,** and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

¹⁷ Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.

ANSWERS

Story 9: The Faith of a Foreign Woman

1. Answers will vary. It's uplifting to see God's Upper Story plan of salvation move forward during a time of large-scale unbelief. It's refreshing to see a remnant of God's people spiritually survive and thrive during a dark, evil period of history. It's refreshing to see a happy ending for Christians in despair (like Naomi and Ruth); it reminds us of the happy ending of heaven won for us by Christ.
2. Naomi and all Christians struggle with opposing forces in the midst of hardship and sorrow. On the one hand we have Spirit-filled faith in Jesus and trust in God's promises (assuming saving faith exists), yet the emotional and/or physical pain we feel tempts us to think God has abandoned us. We may waver back and forth between hopeless despair (pessimism) and hope and confidence in the Lord (optimism). God's Word and support from fellow Christians (like Ruth for Naomi) are vital in circumstances of suffering and hardship, and the opportunity for growing closer to the Lord is great. Share experiences when you grew through tough times.
3. Ruth is making a clear confession of faith and trust in God and his promises – the Holy Spirit made her a child of God. Ruth, a Moabite, proclaimed her allegiance to the Israelites and the true God of Israel, even though Israel and Moab had a history of hatred and hostility between them. She also expressed Christ-like love, loyalty, and commitment to her mother-in-law Naomi, although their prospects together looked grim.
4. He greeted his workers with "The Lord be with you." Praying to God to repay Ruth for her kindness and asking God to bless her. He followed the laws of God and did so gladly. His many acts of kindness throughout the story show his love for the Lord.
5. Word got around regarding Ruth's devotion and dedication to Naomi and God, and her reputation would be reinforced with her hard work gleaning in the fields to provide for her mother-in-law. Boaz, a well-to-do landowner and businessman, was known as a godly man with a kind heart and was respected by his workers and the needy. Traits that reflect Christ and God's Word: genuine **care** and **concern** for others; being a **good listener**; **good work ethic** = being **competent, diligent, prompt, responsible, accountable** and **reliable**; optimism = being **hopeful, upbeat** and **encouraging**; being **modest, humble** and **giving credit to others**; being a good **team player**; **honesty** and **integrity**; **faithful to values/beliefs** and **loyal** to people; being **stalwart** and **steadfast** in difficult times.
6. The courtship norms in Israel certainly differ from our norms today, but the God-pleasing conduct of Ruth and Boaz is noteworthy. First and foremost, they placed the Lord at the foundation of their relationship, which means they strived to put God's design for man and woman, husband and wife ahead of the world's ways and human desires. Their courtship was not about physical gratification (which they delayed until they were married), but about loving and following God and serving each other's spiritual well-being. They also wanted to portray a godly witness to others in the way they behaved during their courtship. Their courtship was centered on God's Word, which set the stage for their marriage and family life to remain centered on God's Word.
7. Ruth humbly put the needs and interests of others ahead of herself, yet she was bold when called upon to stand up for God's will and plan (like when she approached her kinsman-redeemer Boaz for marriage). Meek and humble: In dealing with other people, God calls us to serve others and put their interests, needs and concerns ahead of ours (like Christ – see Philippians 2:1-11). Humility often involves sacrifice for the sake of others. Assertive and bold: God calls us to stand firm in faith, stand up for the truth of God's Word, live for Jesus, and spread the Good News (see 1 Thess. 2:13-17). Assertiveness is for the sake of the gospel, not personal gain.