

Read the ninth chapter from The Story (pgs 99-104) or Ruth 1-4 in one sitting. Consider doing the reflection questions on three separate days to put space between your learning and allow for better and deeper retention. If three separate reflection times aren't practical, you may choose to read and answer all three days' questions in one extended personal devotional time.

Day One

1. The chapter begins with a famine (page 90 or Ruth 1:1). God clearly is able to use even tragic circumstances in the unfolding of His grand plan, as He did with a previous famine (chapter 3 or Genesis 41:29-30). Have you experienced any tragic circumstances that you can now see were part of God's bigger plan?

2. Naomi lost her husband and sons, and Ruth never knew how important to God's plan her descendants would be. Is there a circumstance in your life that you must accept without seeing how it is part of a bigger plan? What helps you trust God?

Day Two

1. Ruth's tender words of commitment (page 100 or Ruth 1:16-18) have often been used at weddings because they so closely parallel the ideals of marriage. What about Ruth's pledge do you see as commendable? How can we order our relational world so people experience the blessing of this kind of stability?

2. Gleaning allowed the poor to follow behind harvesters and, through their own hard work, be sustained. As you consider this God-ordained practice, what observations can you make about God's heart toward the poor (note the preservation of dignity) and the values being instilled in the wealthy?

Day Three

1. Boaz was impressed with Ruth's faith in God and her commitment to her mother-in-law. He commended her to be rewarded by the God "under whose wings you have come to take refuge" (page 101 or Ruth 2:11-12). What has "refuge under God's wings" looked like in your life? How are you in need of His covering right now? Ask God to bless you as you come under His care.

2. In the women's blessing of Obed (page 104 or Ruth 4:13-22), the "fame" that they asked for eventually came in Obed's offspring, Jesus. Perhaps a principle from this text is that we should not sow blessings sparingly, because we never know how far they will go. Who needs a blessing from you today? Don't wait—write a note or make the call.