



A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families: For the week of January 15, 2017

WEPC small groups meet in homes across Richmond every week to participate in Jesus Christ's mission to Richmond, enjoy fellowship, study God's Word, pray together, and explore the fruit of the Gospel on our lives. Simply put, these groups are small enough to be the church to one another, and they serve as bridges between WEPC and the community where God has planted us. It is a place where the church can go deeper in the worship of God and further in Christ's mission.

Note to Discussion Leaders: Have members read the Bible passage in the group meeting. This is a "worship discussion" guide, and our reflections and applications are grounded in Scripture. Read through this guide before meeting with the group. You do not need to work through the whole guide. Decide which points would be most helpful for the time of meeting together, and use them as a starting point for your time together.

Ruth 3:14-18, "Not Empty"

¹⁴So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." ¹⁵And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city. ¹⁶And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my

daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her, ¹⁷saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" ¹⁸She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

1. Tell the group about a person that encouraged you recently. Why was this person such an encouragement? What effect did receiving their encouragement have on your heart?
2. What is Boaz' concern in the morning (14)? Why?
3. Why did Boaz give Ruth six measures of barley (15)?
4. What was so significant about Boaz ensuring Ruth does not return to Naomi empty-handed (16-17)?
5. What did Naomi tell Ruth to do in light of the down payment that Boaz sent home with Ruth (18)?
6. What must Naomi believe about Boaz for her to assure Ruth in this way?
7. Boaz's generous blessing points us to Jesus Christ. How has Jesus blessed you this week? Is God calling you to take initiative to be generous toward someone in your life? Join together in prayer, thanking God & asking Him for power and love to bless others.

Sermon Notes

This week, Steve Shelby preached on Ruth 3:14-18

"Taken as a whole, the story of Ruth is a sign to us in grief about the intentions of our God. It was written to give us encouragement and hope that all the devastating and mystifying events in our lives are going somewhere good. They do not lead off a cliff, and if they do Jesus is there to catch us. In all the setbacks of our lives as believers, God is working to fill us, protect us and redeem us."

A Concern for Reputation

- Throughout chapter three Boaz demonstrates care for Ruth not just physically but for what people think of her.
- The joys and difficulties of living in a community where you are known.
- "And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women of the town said, Is this Naomi? (*Ruth 1:19*)
- "All that you have done for your Mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me." (*Ruth 2:11*)
- "All my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman." (*Ruth 3:11*)
- Why this matters

A Concern for Fullness

- "You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law" (17)
- "The Book of Ruth is all about the transition from emptiness to fullness-- from famine to abundance, from bereavement and childlessness to marriage and children. Naomi has told the women of the town 'I went out full and empty did the LORD bring me back', and now the same word appears in Ruth's report of what Boaz said. The fullness of the shawl bearing barley is a hint of the fullness of offspring and life that Ruth will enjoy and bring to Naomi." (*Robert Alter*)
- "I have come that they might have life and have it to the full." (*John 10:10*)

A Concern for Faithfulness

- "The man will not rest.... " (18)
- Now Naomi trusts in the dependability and good faith of their redeemer