

An Island of Grace



Redeeming Love in
the Book of Ruth

CHRISTOPHER WRIGHT

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

by
Christopher Wright

Chapter 1: An Island of Grace

1. What does the author mean when he says that the story of Ruth is “linear”?
2. In what way is the book of Ruth different from all other books in the Old Testament?
3. Why do you think the death of grown children is so hard for human beings to bear?
4. What are the two “bookends” in the book of Ruth, and why are they significant?
5. Who does the author say is the chief character in the book of Ruth? How does the author support this?
6. How would you feel about God if he should bring serious trouble and anguish into your life? What would you say to him? Would your relationship to him change?
7. How are you doing at loving your neighbor—your spouse, your family members, your neighbors, your coworkers, your brothers and sisters in your church?



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Chapter 2: Decision on the Road

1. Why is it important to think through big decisions carefully?
2. What exactly did Naomi hear that moved her to return to Bethlehem from Moab? What difference do you think it made that she believed in God?
3. Why did Naomi urge Orpah and Ruth to return to Moab so vigorously and persistently?
4. Why did Orpah decide to return to Moab?
5. How do you think Ruth came to the decision that she made?
6. It appears that Orpah was not redeemed. Was God unjust in not saving her?
7. Is your heart divided? Do you want, in your inmost being, to serve God? If you find that your heart is divided, what should you do?

Chapter 3: Provider and Protector

1. Why do you think the narrator describes Boaz so thoroughly before he comes to the harvest field?
2. What do you learn about Boaz's character from his interactions with the servant in charge of the harvest and with the reapers?
3. What gifts, graces, and motivations does Boaz display in his interactions with Ruth?
4. How is Ruth portrayed in Ruth 2? What gifts, graces, and motivations does she display?
5. In what ways is Boaz a type of Jesus Christ?
6. What do we learn about Jesus's self-understanding from his reading of Isaiah 61 and subsequent comments in the synagogue of Nazareth, as described in Luke 4?
7. What do you believe about the power of the gospel to change lives?

Chapter 4: I Will Redeem You

1. Can you give some evidences of Naomi's thankful spirit?
2. Which provisions of the Law of Redemption are set forth in Deuteronomy 25? Why did Ruth and Naomi particularly need to invoke that law?
3. Outline Naomi's plan for Ruth to meet with Boaz. Do you think it was a wise plan?
4. What is the beautiful connection between Ruth's request in Ruth 3:9 and Boaz's blessing in 2:12?
5. What is the beautiful connection between the narrator's description of Boaz in Ruth 2:1 and Boaz's description of Ruth in 3:11?
6. If you are a Christian, what brought you to seek Jesus? What makes Jesus uniquely qualified to redeem you?
7. What is so amazing about Jesus's words to Mary Magdalene in John 20:17?

Chapter 5: Redemption and Blessing

1. What is the difference between the man described in Deuteronomy 25:7–10 and the “closer relative” in Ruth 4:1–8?
2. What does *chayil* mean, and how does Boaz show in Ruth 4 that he is *chayil*?
3. How did God fulfill the blessing pronounced by the elders and others at the gate (Ruth 4:11–12)?
4. Boaz redeemed Ruth to perpetuate the name of Mahlon, her late husband, carefully following the provisions of God’s Law. What was ironic about the outcome?
5. When, why, and how was Jesus crowned with glory and honor? (Hebrews 2:9; Philippians 2:9–11; Psalms 72:12–19)

Chapter 6: The Unfolding of a Great Plan

1. Can you think of some truths that are partially hidden in the Old Testament and revealed more fully in the New?
2. List the ones blessed and praised by the women of Bethlehem in Ruth 4:14–15.
3. How do the women's words, "He shall be to you a restorer of life," point backward to events in Naomi's life, and how do they point forward to the 23rd Psalm?
4. How does Ruth 4 fit into the *toledoth* structure of the Bible?
5. Can you name some other times, besides the time of the book of Ruth, when the family line from Abraham to Jesus came near to extinction?
6. Why do you think Matthew mentioned several Gentile women in the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:1–17)?
7. What same thing happened a) at Obed's birth, b) on the hills near Bethlehem when Jesus was born, and c) when the wise men saw Jesus? How can you participate in this?