



Faithful & Fearless

RUTH & ESTHER

Lesson One

LA MIRADA CHRISTIAN CHURCH
DWELLING RICHLY BIBLE STUDY





Written by
Jennifer Richmond
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...Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...

Welcome!

Welcome to this Dwelling Richly Bible study. I started Dwelling Richly back in 1993 inspired to by the words from Colossians 3:16 to “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” I began writing songs from Scripture and now have written over 30 Scripture-based songs and 12 Bible studies that help us all to fulfill this verse.

My desire is to help others engage in God’s word through reading, writing, memorizing, sharing, singing, and of course, studying its truths. I want to live out what it means to truly let the Word dwell in me deeply and to help others do the same by encouraging women to love God and His Word with heart, soul, mind, and strength.

This study is designed to offer daily time and structure through the Word of God for the purpose of understanding better who God is and in so doing knowing ourselves and our purpose better. We’ll read, think, pray, write, consider, and apply the truths and concepts we find in the Word of God. But here’s the big goal, it’s great to grow personally, but we need to do more than grow...we must go! My prayer is to help equip you to be “able to teach” so you can in turn equip others.

Join the online Bible study community, or study on your own. Amazing rewards await those who take the time to read and study God’s Word.

You can complete the study on your own through these pages, or join the community and study together with a friend - either way, welcome!

Let’s enjoy the Word, and let it dwell in us richly!

In Christ,

Jennifer Richmond



How to Study the Bible

You might read the Bible for a quick read, a devotional time, or, like in this study, to really understand and learn more. Any time you read the Bible, you'll experience the true words and heart of God and God has promised that His words will not be empty. They're alive and powerful and able to change us! Since this is a Bible study, we want to be sure we know how to approach what we're reading in a way that helps us best grasp and apply what we're reading. Reading the Bible for study is different than reading it as a devotional.

GOAL: To get big picture, understand the point, meet the people, and understand the message in the context of the original audience, location, and events of that time

HOW:

1. Study is best from a translation – not a paraphrase.

- Translations – listed from most “word for word” to more “thought for thought”
 - New American Standard Bible / NASB
 - English Standard Version / ESV (used in this study)
 - Christian Standard Bible / CSB
 - New English Translation / NET
 - New International Version / NIV
- Paraphrases – Use a paraphrase for devotional time or to help get clarity
 - New Living Translation / NLT
 - The Message / MSG
- **TRY THIS** → Look up Ruth 1:16-17 on BibleHub.com and you'll see several translations and paraphrases of that verse.

2. Just read the Word. Avoid commentaries

- Many Bibles come with study notes which are helpful, keep in mind, the notes are the opinions of a person or team of commentators. These notes can be helpful when they you background and insights, but be mindful that they are not the Words of God.
- Read with the original author, audience, culture, and events in mind.
- Start first what you are reading about God and His truth, then how that truth will impact your life.
- Let “Scripture interpret Scripture.” Use a Bible that has cross-references which will point you to passages containing related words and themes connected to the verse you're reading.

TRY THIS! → Print Ruth and Esther without chapter or verse numbers. Go to Biblegateway.com

3. Pray. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you enter into the mind, culture, concepts, and heart of this book and to teach you about God and His nature.

- Pray for openness.
 - Psalm 119:18 “Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.”
- Pray for wisdom.
 - James 1:8 “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to Him.”
- Pray with a clean heart.
 - Psalm 139:24 “Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

4. **Grasp the big picture.** You wouldn't open a letter from your grandmother and jump to the middle. We're studying a book in the Bible which was originally a letter to a specific group of people from a particular person. They were living in a time period and place with events going on specific to their lives. All this matters and helps us understand what is being said.

5. **Read Actively.** Engage your heart and mind – all your senses too as much as possible!

- Ask questions
 - Notice the W's. Who, what, where, when and why of the passage
 - Why was this letter written?
 - ? Admonition? Encouragement? Teaching?
 - Are there any repeated themes? Words or phrases? Concepts?
 - What truths am I reading about...
 - ? ...God? ...Jesus? ...The Holy Spirit? ...The Church? ...Me?
 - What references to the Old Testament are there?
- Remember your grammar. Being able to identify the subject, verb, adjective, adverb, pronouns, and conjunctions will be amazingly helpful. I know you thought you'd never need that after grade school, but if you want to know the Word better, I promise, knowing your grammar will make a big difference.
- Use colored pencil to highlight:
 - God = **Blue**
 - Holy Spirit = **Light Blue**
 - Jesus = **Red**
 - People = **Brown**
 - Places = **Green**
 - Key verse = **Yellow**
 - Prophecy = **Orange**
- Mark any verses that you want to memorize
 - Write the passage on several Post-It Notes and place them around your home – mirror, car, fridge, etc.
 - Recite your verse before your study every day.

...Be Encouraged...

Reading the Bible for some makes them feel inadequate. It brings back memories of being in school and having to do a book report. For some, reading the Bible feels like a chore that they never feel good enough at doing. For others, the Bible can feel overwhelming – it seems like old words from a time and culture long ago and hard to relate to. Then again, perhaps you absolutely adore reading and so spending time in God's Word gives you the best of the worlds you love – reading and spiritual growth.

Wherever you are in your walk, as you approach this study please remember that we should not just “study” the Word, we should delight in it. Don't think of this as a requirement for your faithfulness any more than you would think of savoring a delicious meal as a requirement. You enjoy a meal because it was beautifully prepared with amazing ingredients by a skilled chef who poured their love and attention into its preparation. Savor God's Word like that. Enjoy each morsel. Breathe in the aroma of each word. Sense the love of the Creator in each page. Delight in the Word like you would delight in the best, most delicious, and nourishing meal you've ever eaten.

Pray. Ask God to give you a taste for His word, a thirst for it, a deep longing and hunger. Honestly, what a wonderful prayer to pray! God will give you a big, fat “Yes!” to that prayer!

Do. You will some days feel so excited to be in the Word, and other days you might feel “blah.” That's ok. Do it any way. Read it always. Never let life, mood, schedules, anything come between you and your time in the Word. Set aside time and keep that as high of a priority in your schedule as brushing your teeth or wearing deodorant! You wouldn't skip either of those would you? Why would you skip your time in the Word? It's been said that a Bible that is falling apart is a sign of a life that is not. Make time for what you value. Value the Word. You will be richly rewarded!

...Welcome! Lesson One Introduction...

Welcome! This is lesson one of a six-lesson study through Ruth and Esther. Each lesson will give you ten days to help you read, write, study, memorize, create, and share your way through this amazing book! The lessons are organized like this: Day One – Read and Write the chapter; Days Two-Nine – Study a portion of the chapter; Day Ten – Create & Share something you've learned and enjoyed through the chapter. We meet every other week, so be sure to mark your calendar. When we meet we'll have a time of fellowship, discussion over the previous chapter, then a time of teaching to recap and dig a little deeper into the chapter. At the end of this study you'll have grown closer to God and to the women in your group and you'll have grown in your understanding and love for the Word of God.

1. Finish this sentence: "My name is _____. My favorite candy bar is _____."
2. What are you hoping to gain from this Bible study?
3. What do you feel is the easiest and the hardest part of doing a Bible study?
4. Through this study we will see that God works in our lives to make us faithful and fearless. Do you think there's a difference between how the world sees faithfulness and fearlessness and the way God wants us to see it? If yes, how so?
5. Pass around the Prayer Journal. Please feel free to share aloud as you write your prayer/praise in your group journal. If you have a prayer request that is more private, you can share with your group leader or our teaching leader, Jennifer after the study.

Small group leaders will read and discuss our group guidelines.

...Group Guidelines...

📖 God's Word is our standard. We'll use the Bible - not personal opinion, popular teachers, or church tradition - as our guide for everything. We are using the English Standard Version (ESV) Bible for this study.

♥ We come from varying faith backgrounds, so please be thoughtful of denominational and religious differences.

🚫 Avoid commentaries or study notes in your Bible. Trust God, pray, ask for wisdom then read and answer on your own.

👂 We're all learning. Be gracious and patient with yourself and with others. No one has it all figured out.

✓ This isn't a personal opinion study. This is a Bible study. So, there are going to be "right" and "wrong" answers. Try your best and have a humble and teachable spirit.

🗨️ You don't have to share, but if you did the reading and the study this week, why not chime in? We all benefit from one another's thoughts and questions. I bet you have something great to share! 😊

🕒 Didn't finish the study this week? That's ok. Life gets busy. You're here! Yay you! This will be a good week for you to listen and perhaps jot down answers as others share.

🕒 Be considerate of your "slice of the pie" Share your thoughts, and allow time for others to do the same.

🕒 Watch the time. We'll usually return for teaching time by 7:45pm (evening) or 10:45am (morning) group. So, your leader will wrap up the discussion five minutes before that.

Faithful & Fearless

RUTH & ESTHER

We meet every other Monday, 6:30pm or Tuesday, 9:30am
Mondays: February 4, 18, March 4, 18, April 1, 15, 29
Tuesdays: February 5, 19 March 5, 19, April 2, 16, 30

Each of the six lessons in this study will guide you through the reading over the two weeks between each study get-together. There are 10 days organized for you during those two weeks:

Day 1.....Read
Day 2.....Write
Days 3-9.....Study
Day 10.....Create and share

Join the Dwelling Richly home study time with Jennifer "Live or Later"

LIVE

8am weekdays on the LMCC Women
Facebook page

LATER

www.YouTube.com/c/JenniferRichmond
www.DwellingRichly.Podbean.com
or any podcast app on your phone

Lessons pages are available at Bible study, church (just outside the front office), or online at
www.LaMiradaChurch.com/Women

Contact

Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com

562.755.4964



Bible Study Introduction

Listen at <http://www.dwellingrichly.podbean.com>

Love the Lord your God with all your heart - soul - mind - strength.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 and Luke 10:27

...Introduction to Ruth...

Welcome to this study through the wonderful book of Ruth. This book of the Bible has been called a “brilliant work of theological art that invites us to ask the question of how God is involved in the day to day joys and hardships of our lives.” You’re going to Ruth’s story is beautiful and unique in the Bible:

There are only two books in the Bible that are named after women and Ruth is one of them.

There are only five books in the Bible which are read in their entirety on Jewish holy days and Ruth is one of them

There are only five women named in the genealogy of Christ, and guess what... Ruth is one of them!

Only five women named in Jesus' family tree...Ruth is one of them

Ruth’s life exemplifies true faithfulness and fearlessness. Her story directly connects to us as followers of Jesus. Ruth is a gentile (not a Jew) and not only that, but she was a Moabitess – a cursed and hated nation. She is known for her kindness, loyalty, and faith. Her story weaves together God’s plan to continually “bless those who bless Him” and brings us moving reminders of where our hope lies.

Your heavenly heritage is greater than your earthly heritage.

The story of Ruth will remind you that your heavenly heritage is greater than your earthly heritage. Her story will remind you of how deeply God values kindness and loyalty. You’ll find joy and hope in recalling the power of redemption and sacrifice.

I believe that as you study, you’ll see the exciting story of love and hope woven through the genealogy of Jesus. Yes. The genealogy. You know, that part of the chapter we tend to skip? That list of hard-to-pronounce-names we stumble though? Those never-ending “begats” that we’d like to ignore? You will love them! At least I hope you will.

Our heart’s deepest longings swirl with desire for connection, hope, and significance. We want to matter. We want life in general and our own specific stories to matter. This study is a place for you to come to that place in your heart where you long for significance and to see that only in Christ – like Ruth – can that ultimately be found.

Are you ready? I am!

Let’s dwell in God’s word together!

...Lesson One - Day One...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:1-2

...DWELL IN THE WORD...

Over the next two days we're going to read Ruth. Today we'll *just* read Ruth. It's four chapters. You got this.. We'll also read the introduction to this Bible study. I know you probably already did that, but most people skip that stuff! Ha!

So, let's do that today. It's important for the rest of the study that we're on the same page.

- 1) Read the Introduction pages – then come back here.

Now, think about the fact that while we know "Ruth" as a *book* in the Bible, this was first an account of the lives of real people and real struggles who lived over 3,000 years ago. The account of Ruth was written down by Samuel – the man who anointed David as king of Israel. To this day, Ruth's story is read by observant Jews during their annual celebration of God giving the Ten Commandments.

Ruth was written for the Jewish people probably during the time when they were in exile. So, just read Ruth and try to disappear from modern day and reappear back to 1300BC. Read the words with the eyes and ears of a woman living in ancient Israel

Read it in one sitting without pausing to read notes in your Bible or other commentaries. Just Read. Tomorrow is for notetaking.

Oh, and don't forget...join the online weekday study group! I'll be doing my Bible study live every day on our Facebook page. You can join me "Live or Later."

- **Live** at 8am weekdays on [Facebook.com/lmccwomen](https://www.facebook.com/lmccwomen)
- **Later** on the Dwelling Richly podcast or [YouTube.com/c/JenniferRichmond](https://www.youtube.com/c/JenniferRichmond)

Also, you can access these lesson pages online on the Women's Ministry page here: [LaMiradaChurch.com](https://www.lamiradachurch.com)

- 2) Read Ruth – pray for wisdom and understanding before you read.
- 3) Write Psalm 42:1-2 in the box above. We'll be memorizing Psalm 42 throughout the "Faithful & Fearless" study. I've provided space at the opening of each lesson to write that lesson's verse. If another verse also stands out to you, please memorize that too! Hiding God's word in your heart will bring your great peace and blessing.

"LET THE WORD OF CHRIST
DWELL IN YOU RICHLY"

COLOSSIANS 3:16

...Lesson One - Day Two...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:1-2

...DWELL IN THE WORD...



1. Read and write Psalm 42:1-2. Share it on social media or send it to a friend with a word of encouragement.

2. Today we're reading and engaging through Ruth again. Write any notes, thoughts, questions, even drawings, that will help you engage and understand the Scripture.

Before you read, pray that God would open the eyes of your heart to see clearly the wonders in His word (Psalm 119:18) and that He would give you wisdom (James 1:5) to grasp and apply what you are reading.

Remember...The Bible wasn't written to you. The Bible was written over a period of about 2,000 years by 40 different authors from three continents and in three languages. There are 66 separate books each with a distinct author, intended audience, overall purpose, and genre. Each book falls into a basic category of law, narrative, poetry, prophecy, and letters, and most books have a blend of these! The words of the Bible were written as men "spoke from God, as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" and "all scripture is breathed out by God."

When you come to the Bible with a 21st century, American mindset you are bringing to the text your sensibilities, your worldview, your culture, and your understanding of how the world works. In order to grasp the content and the intent of Ephesians, you must enter with...

Prayer – God has promised to help you to understand His Words. Ask Him to, and thank Him.

Humility – Shed your own agenda, then honestly and humbly seek God's.

Time-Travel – Well, not literally, but be mindful that you were not the first intended audience.

Ruth was originally recorded and then read to Jews living in ancient Middle East. That's a vastly different culture and time! So, while the Bible wasn't written to you, it was most definitely written for you! You are the blessed recipient of the holy, inerrant, inspired words of the Creator of the Universe. As you begin your reading in Ruth, I pray that you will be filled with gratitude and love for what you have in your hands, that you will realize that God has not only revealed Himself through the Word of prophets but through the life of His Son. May your reading always draw you closer to Him.

As you read, jot down your thoughts, feelings, and questions. Use the pages provided or your own journal for extra room. We'll share these in our small groups when we come together after this lesson.

The Bible wasn't written to you, it was most definitely written for you!

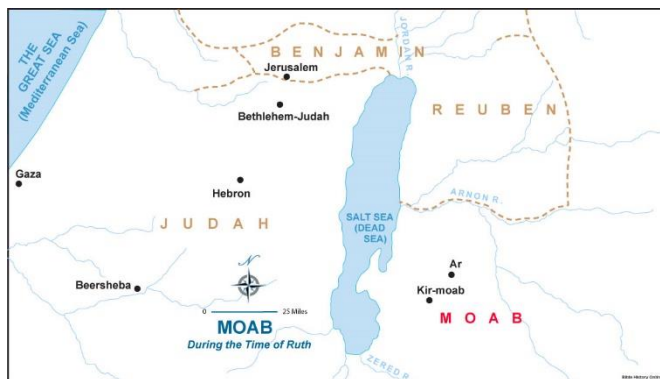
... ACTIVE READING THROUGH RUTH ...

Pro Tip – There were no chapters and verses when Ruth was first written. Try printing the entire book from BibleGateway.com and select the feature that removes chapters and verses. *Remember*, you can access the online pdf version of this study and all the links will go directly to the online pages. Super convenient, right? ☺

1. Read through the prompts *before* reading.
2. Read the last verses of Judges...the book right before Ruth. What's going in the land at that time?

3. Read the first verse of Ruth. Who's in charge and what is going on in the land at this time?

4. Highlight while you read.
 - ♥ Underline any words or concepts that point to a different culture and time period
 - ♥ Highlight names of God in **BLUE**
 - ♥ Highlight names (**BROWN**) and places (**GREEN**)
5. Find the places you highlighted and locate them on this map or a map in your Bible. Think about the distance from one place to another and the kind of land they would be walking on.



6. Write down emotions you're feeling and any emotions you think the people involved might be feeling...

	CHAPTER ONE	CHAPTER TWO	CHAPTER THREE	CHAPTER FOUR
<i>My feelings</i>				
<i>Naomi</i>				
<i>Ruth</i>				
<i>Boaz</i>				

...ACTIVE READING THROUGH RUTH...

7. Write or draw a character map connecting to Ruth to help you see the people in this account. Consider including little reminders of their age, relation to others, location, and even emotions associated with them. Use words, color, and symbols as helpful to you...



Ruth

...Lesson One - Day Three...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:1-2

...READ AND WRITE RUTH 1:1-2:2...



Over the course of the “Faithful and Fearless” study you’ll be writing your own copy of Ruth and Esther. At the end of this lesson packet, I have provided several blank pages for you to “WRITE THE WORD.”

While you study write any notes, thoughts, questions, even drawings, that will help you engage and understand the Scripture. Before you read and write, pray that God would open the eyes of your heart to see clearly the wonders in His word (Psalm 119:18) and that He would give you wisdom (James 1:5) to grasp and apply what you are reading.

TODAY’S LESSON:

1. Read and write Ruth 1:1-2:2
2. Write & memorize Psalm 42:1-2 – Review and meditate on this these verses daily. I’ve provided space at the opening of each lesson for this.

...CREATE & SHARE THINK AHEAD...

The last day of each lesson in this study is set aside to bring together your thoughts and feeling about what you learned through the passages we studied. Before you begin each lesson, look ahead to the “Create & Share” day so you can be thinking ahead and maybe even completing it as you go.



Where you go I will
go, and where you
lodge I will lodge.

Your people shall be
my people, and your
God my God.

Ruth 1:16

...Lesson One - Day Three...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:1-2

...DWELL IN THE WORD...

WE'RE GOING TO KICK OFF RUTH'S STORY WITH THE END...

...AND THE END IS REALLY JUST ANOTHER BEGINNING...

1. Read [Matthew 1:1-17](#) After reading verse seventeen, stand up and shout, "Tah-Dah!" Just kidding, but actually, I do feel like that after reading this! Now go back and read re-read the genealogy, and underline in the names of the women listed, then write their names here:

- a. _____ (v3)
- b. _____ (v5a)
- c. _____ (v5b)
- d. _____ (v6 not by name but by implication)
- e. _____ (v16)

The genealogy mentions five women: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba ("her that had been the wife of Urias"), and Mary. Not only is this unusual in a Jewish genealogy, but all of these women had a tarnished reputation in some way or another. How could women of such lowly reputation make it into the genealogy of the King of kings?

⚡ **TAMAR** had her children by acting as a prostitute.

⚡ **RAHAB** was a prostitute before she joined the Israelites.

⚡ **RUTH** was of Moab, a hated people in scripture.

⚡ **BATHSHEBA** had an adulterous affair with David.

⚡ **MARY**, though pure, was with child out of wedlock.

Rahab and Ruth were also Gentiles; something a Jew would not expect in the line of the Messiah. Certainly, the grace of God is displayed in this record and is a reminder that His grace is for all.

DO YOU EVER STRUGGLE with doubting that God could use you, bless you, fix you after all you feel you have done wrong in your life? Do you know someone who struggles with this?

2. What are some ways you've personally struggled with your place in God's plan? Have you found lasting resolution to this? Why or why not?

Satan is dedicated to keeping us in this defeated mindset. But God wants us to renew our mind and have the mind of Christ. He wants us to be daughters of Truth and Light not children of lies and darkness.

3. Read Ecclesiastes 3:11. Put the truth of this verse into your own words:

4. Think about God's greatness and plans for all mankind. He knew Ruth, Tamar, Rahab, Bathsheba, Mary...and He knows you. Right now. Where you are sitting. Reading this...He. Knows. You. How does the truth from this verse connect to your heart and what you're facing today?

5. We've all struggled with feeling like we're not faithful enough or we're too fearful to really move forward. enough or skilled enough to be used by God. How will your understanding so far of the story of Ruth help you see the truth of who God is and be an encouragement to you or a friend going through a similar struggle?

LET THIS STUDY EQUIP YOU TO OFFER WORDS
OF ENCOURAGEMENT AND WISDOM FROM GOD'S WORD TO THOSE HE BRINGS INTO YOUR LIFE.

...REFLECT ON THE WORD...

There's something so reassuring and connecting about that "you too?" experience. You know, whether it's a simple as finding out that someone else also loves sushi like you do or as significant as hearing someone say they've had the same serious doubts and fears as you have. Connecting to one another through our shared experiences brings us closer in community. I believe that's by design. One of the first words we have recorded in the Bible affirms this when God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Boom. Community. Identity. Purpose. God saw all that he created was good and saw also that one thing wasn't good enough...being alone. This is why the Word of God isn't a theology text. It's stories of how God connected with us, how we connected back – or missed the connection, and about men and women connected with one another. It's the accounts of men and women of faith and faithlessness, of fearless obedience and failures to trust. All these accounts point us to God's love and plan and desires for us. The account of Ruth's life will bring us through these kinds of connections and "you too?" moments together. As we move into this study let's set our intention together to see God more clearly and to connect in faithful fearlessness to one another as well.

...Lesson One - Day Four...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:1-2

...DWELL IN THE WORD...

THERE ARE ONLY TWO BOOKS in the Bible that are named for women: Ruth and Esther. The story of Ruth's life is one of the most touching reminders of God's grace in entire Bible.

If I told you that my relative kept her child in a closet and only let him see the light of day through a small opening in a locked window, that she fed him scraps of food, and never let him speak above a whisper, you would be horrified. But if I told you that my relative was a Jew living in 1934 during the reign of Hitler and she was hiding to save her child and herself from concentration camps, you'd shift your thoughts. You'd understand the context of their situation. Reading an entire book of the Bible, especially a narrative like Ruth, is so important to really grasping what is going on and understanding the times surrounding a person's story will give you a greater insight.

Let's begin with that kind of openness to understanding Ruth's story. We'll need to go back a bit to grasp what's going on...

1. [Read Ruth 1:1-2](#) and [Judges 3:7, 3:12, 4:1, 6:1, 10:6, 13:1 and 21:25](#) -- Who is ruling the land and what was life like during this time period?

2. From Ruth 1:1-2 what was happening in the land?

Where were the people mentioned living? _____

Later in Scripture, Bethlehem is also referred to as the “City of David.” We’ll see the reason for this at the very last chapter, verse and word in this book. (no peeking... just kidding, you should have already read the whole book...twice!)

3. From Ruth 1:1-4, write the names...(The man's, wife's and sons' names)

Man: _____ means “my God is king”

Wife: _____ means “pleasant”

Son #1: _____ means “sickness/weakling”

Son #2: _____ means “consumptive/destruction”

They traveled from where to where?

_____ to _____

Locate this journey on a map. About how many miles/kilometers is it? _____

How long do you think it would have taken? _____

You noted earlier that this was during a time when God's people were ruled by Judges – not kings.

A quick overview of Old Testament periods takes us from the time of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, plus Joshua through Moses) to the period of Judges when the Jews didn't honor God then to the time of the Kings (Saul, David, Solomon) and divided kingdom (Rehoboam/Jeroboam through Zedekiah/Hoshea).

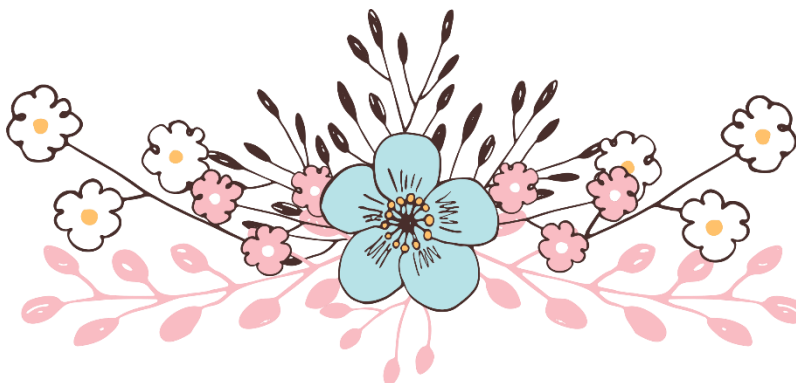
Ruth is set during the time of the Judges and again, to fully understand the power of this story – which we know ends not only happily, but triumphantly since from Ruth our own Savior, Jesus, is born – we need to understand the background. That's going to take us even further back...

We'll pick up here tomorrow!

...WORD STUDY...

Bethlehem is “beit+lechem” (בית לחם) which means “house of bread.”

Therefore, this verse is a pun since it says there was a “famine” in the “house of bread.”



...Lesson One - Day Five...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:1-2

...DWELL IN THE WORD...

From the opening two verses of the book of Ruth the entire story is set, but you'll miss the drama if you miss the background. Famine...husband leaves to find food for his family...travels to another country. He's just looking out for his family, right?

1. Read [Genesis 19:30-38](#) (not a nice story) Summarize basically what happens in this account...

2. So, what is the ancestral origins of the Moabite people?

The Moabites come from the disgusting and incestuous relations of Lot and his daughters. There's just no other way around it. They are descendants of this evil union and ultimately, they become bitter enemies of Abraham. They are cursed by God.

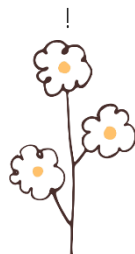
3. Read [Deuteronomy 23:3-6](#) The Ammonites and Moabites continued to be enemies of God and His people, so what does God declare against them in this passage?

4. THIS IS IMPORTANT...DON'T SKIP THIS ANSWER! Take note from Deuteronomy the length of time God says the Moabites will be forbidden. How many generations is the curse?
5. According to Deuteronomy 23:4, for what two reasons did God curse the Moabites? (Also, super duper important! Don't skip this one either!)
- 1) _____
- 2) _____
6. Re-Read Ruth 1:1-3 (especially verse 3) Elimelech ("el-ee-meh-leck" or "ee-lim-el-eck") takes his wife and sons out of the famine-stricken land – the Promised Land – and journeys to Moab. A cursed land of a cursed people. Why is this a cursed land? Read the following and note why God cursed Moab:
- [Numbers 22:1-12](#)
- [Numbers 25:1-3](#)
7. What did God admonish the Israelites not to do what with the Ammonites or Moabites? (Back in Deuteronomy 3-6.)

AND YET, IF YOU DO YOUR STUDIES, SOMETHING EXCITING IS REVEALED.

We read a turn in the stories that reminds us not only of God's sovereignty, but ultimately that true hope is found in Him!

Hang in there, we'll get to that part soon



...Lesson One - Day Six...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:1-2

...DWELL IN THE WORD...

The evil of the Moabites was well-known. They worshiped the god Chemosh to whom they offered live child sacrifices. This was an evil disgusting people whose ways were condemned over and over again by God.

And yet, Elimelech leaves his homeland the "house of bread" and travels to this accursed land of the people who had refused his ancestors bread and water (Deut. 23:4-5).

1. Would a man who truly believes that His God is King abandon his people at the time of famine? Explain...

2. Do you think he was leading from faith or fear? Explain...

3. Do you think Elimelech is leading his family in a way that is in line with his name's meaning (Lesson 1/Day 4) How so...or not?

In the Jewish commentaries the rabbis translate his name to mean: "kingship is due to me." He is leaving the blessed land and taking his family to the cursed land. Currently his homeland is under judgment through the famine, but why leave? Why not trust God to bless and deliver right there in the midst of the trial? There seems to be a disconnect between his name and his behavior, but perhaps he had a sense of entitlement instead of submission and humility before God. Which explains why he departs the blessed land and dies in the cursed.

When God called and set apart His people, He described exactly how He expected them to live. The essentials are outlined in the Ten Commandments and the details are recorded throughout Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy – The Torah or also called the Pentateuch.

4. Read [Leviticus 26:3-4](#) Who causes famine?

5. If you're under judgment (famine) from God what should you do?

What does Elimelech do?

Instead of staying and repenting through God's judgment, Elimelech "sojourns" or "went to live for a while" in Moab.

This isn't a short visit, is it?

6. From Ruth 1:4 What do Elimelech's sons do? And with whom?

...WORD STUDY...

Interesting to note that the Hebrew phrase for where Elimelech goes is not "land of Moab" but "field of Moab." Implying that he was intending to set up for a while and grow crops.

Now, you and I have an advantage here. We know the end of the story. We can see the big picture. But for a moment let's just read without that knowledge and see the situation as these characters would have seen it. These sons marry women from a cursed land in direct violation against God's law....

"Don't marry those evil people. They'll keep your heart from Me."

While Solomon - a direct descendant of Ruth - lived well after this time period, his story is a vivid reminder of why God said "No" to marrying women from this idolatrous nation.

7. Re-Read Ruth 1:4-5

How long had they lived in Moab? _____

Then what happens?

FOODLESS...FATHERLESS...FAMILYLESS

Naomi has been through a famine, the death of her husband and father to her sons and now, without sons, she has no prospects for a family to continue. Hard enough in our culture today for a woman to suffer such losses, but in Naomi's day she was done. Completely emptied of all that could fill her life with promise and blessing, by man's standards it's over for her.

The consequences of Elimelech's unbelief are severe.

Naomi is left with three graves...two daughters-in-law...and no way to provide for herself or these Moabite women.

And yet...we know that God indeed will provide,

and His provision will be a most tender and gracious kind. Close your time in prayer, trusting that in spite of how hard your circumstances may be, you will trust the God who Provides

...Lesson One - Day Seven...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:1-2

...DWELL IN THE WORD...

Naomi is of God's chosen people and yet she and her husband chose to reject His discipline seeking instead to find a way even in the most forbidden of places. Like a prodigal child running away from the protection and responsibilities of life with the father, the Elimelech family had attempted to run from God. Tragedy strikes and we see God's hand of judgment against the family. But the story begins to turn and the turning is as a result of the kindness and loyalty of the most unlikely of people: A Moabite.

1. Read Ruth 1:6a – What news comes to Naomi's ears? Write the verbs associated with what "the LORD" has done...

The LORD _____ and

The LORD _____

This is the first time the name of God is mentioned in Ruth. Note that it is the YHVH name of God – The "I Am" name given to Moses from the burning bush when Moses asked God, "Who should I say is sending me to Pharaoh?"

This is the personal name of God that reminds us of His desire to be in relationship with us.

As you read, it is interesting to understand what is recorded and what is done. Interesting also though, is what is NOT said or done.

2. Naomi hears that the Lord had "given them food" back home. What does this indicate that Naomi is interested in? What does this say about her priorities?

I see that Naomi wants to return to the land for food not for fellowship with God. Again, her priorities, like her deceased husband's are off. Am I being harsh on Naomi? Consider the following...

3. Read [Isaiah 55:7](#) – What is the plea of the prophet here?

We're asked to return to a "Who" not a "what." Return to God, THEN you get the blessing of food, land, peace, etc. Naomi's decision to go back home was the right one. But her focus is wrong. I don't think this is a harsh assessment of Naomi. If she had had right motives the book of the Bible might have been named "Naomi" instead of Ruth. But Ruth is the one who rises above and does the ultimate act. Naomi should have known better. Naomi was from the land of Promise and of the people of Promise. She should have acted accordingly.

4. Read [Ruth 1:6-7](#) – Hope for Naomi! After hearing of the food she prepares to do what and with whom?

Good job, Naomi! THEY prepare to return “home” from Moab. She’s bringing her daughters-in-law to the Promised Land!

5. Read [Ruth 1:8-9](#) A Shift. A second thought? What does Naomi tell her daughters-in-law to do?

Remember, where is Naomi heading? Home, and not just any home, the home of the Promised land and to the people of the Promise. Where is she leaving? A cursed land and a cursed people. Why on earth would she insist that these two Moabite women should stay in this land of cursing? Why not keep them with her?

6. Think about possible motivations Naomi might have in saying this. Write your ideas here...

7. Read [Ruth 1:11-15](#) Summarize what takes place in these verses:

8. Review Ruth 1:8, and 11-12 How many times does Naomi urge Orpah and Ruth to return?

Does this number seem significant to you? Where else in Scripture do we read of three urgings for the wrong thing? (Hint: [Matthew 26:69-75](#)) There is no direct correlation in the text to connect the account of Peter’s three denials to Naomi’s three urgings, however I found it interesting! In fact, re-read Matt 26:75 and note the word used to describe Peter’s weeping: _____
Keep that word in mind as we read on. So interesting!

...REFLECT ON THE WORD...

Naomi is clearly out. Of. Hope. Devastated by the losses she’s suffered, she has not kept her eyes on the God of the Promise. While she hears about what the I Am has done for the land she is not trusting what He could do in her life.

I HAVE SHARED in our previous studies of my own lack of hope that used to define my life. In a broken marriage to an abusive alcoholic husband, infertile, and lonely, I had all but lost hope for me on a personal level in my own life. I knew of hope – God’s hope – in the big picture, but for me personally in the smallness of my little life I was on the edge of despair...I will say this for Naomi, at least she’s on the right road.

The journey from Moab to Judah was about 60 miles – a two, maybe three-day journey. At least she was heading in the right direction albeit for wrong motives. Naomi is about to embark on a road that will take her from the land and experiences of despair to a land that will ultimately bring complete restoration. But she still needs an encounter and little does she know, but she’s trying to let go of the very person who will be an instrument of restoration in her life.

...Lesson One - Day Eight...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:1-2

...DWELL IN THE WORD...

1. Review [Ruth 1:11-13](#). Describe the scenario that Naomi paints for her future...

Naomi paints a ridiculous scenario as she tries to spell out how futile the future is for her daughters-in-law. I've often thought that if criminals were to spend the same amount of mental energy they use in plotting their schemes and apply that energy to getting a legitimate job then they'd be millionaires! She's not a criminal, but do you see a similar mindset here with Naomi? God promises so much good and abundance and blessing and promise to His people...Why not spend our energies in attempting to fathom the potential of God's blessing than in spinning a crazy scenario of ridiculousness?

2. Read [Ephesians 3:20](#) – What does this say to you about God?

3. Re-read Ruth 1:14-15 What does Orpah do? What does Ruth do? Note the difference responses and what they say to you about the heart of each woman...

A kiss and a cling. Another interesting parallel to the New Testament. Hmmmm...

4. Read [Matthew 26:47-49](#) – Summarize this passage:

While not a kiss of betrayal, Orpah still kisses Naomi goodbye, in effect betraying her own future. Rather than embracing the potential future in the land of Promise she returns to “her people and her gods.” Ouch. Her gods? Horrid. Her gods were the child-sacrifice demanding disgusting gods known for their vile requirements.

Orpah misses the out on the promise of God as she shows her preference for the practices of her gods. What about you? Perhaps you feel horror at Orpah’s choice, and yet are you prone to abandon the unknown for the known even though the known is not God’s best? Ruth on the other hand, clings to Naomi. Where else do we find this word “cling” in the Bible?

5. Read [Genesis 2:24](#) Write the verse here:

Depending on your translation you have the word “be united” or “cling.” In Hebrew, this word is **וַיִּדְבַּק** (weh-day-back) meaning “and shall cleave” and is a beautiful word picture of full and complete connection with the provision of God and His desire to establish “home.” The letter **ב** represents a house and is in the word for cleave! Do you see it there? So cool! So Ruth clings to Naomi and in so doing says in effect, “I’m going to make my house with you.” Maybe she even knows that the place to where they’re returning is indeed the “house of bread” Remember...Beth(house) + lehem(bread). Whether or not she knows, she is surely leaving the known for the unknown, the fields of the familiar for the road of risk. But it gets better. Ruth speaks the rich and famous words that have stood through the millennia to represent the truest of devotion and the paragon of godliness.

6. At this point, do you think Ruth become a believer in YHVH – The Lord? _____ Why or why not do you think?

Someone once said to me. “I can’t stand Christians. They’re so fake. They say one thing and do another.” The reality is – that’s true. Identifying myself as a follower of Christ – a Christian – isn’t a statement about myself and my worthiness as much as it is a statement about God and His. Christians are not unique in their hypocrisy. All faiths have their hypocrites. Judaism is no exception. Case and point: Naomi. She was actually a weak and hypocritical example of her faith. She was hardly a testimony of faithfulness much less a missionary for her Jewish faith in allowing her sons to marry Moabites or in urging her now widowed daughters-in-law to stay in a pagan land or in her lack of faith in YHVH to provide for her upon her return. Perhaps, however, in the decade that Ruth lived with Naomi she heard Naomi recite the Shema? The Shema is the daily Scripture recited by observant Jews. She may not have been living by faith at this moment, but she likely kept up some ceremonial activities. Reciting the Shema was probably a prayer she said every morning and evening and probably one that Ruth heard.

7. Read [Deuteronomy 6:4-5](#) What could Ruth have gleaned from the daily recitation of this Scripture?

Perhaps she observed the feasts as ordained by God? Perhaps she had the outward signs of faith even though when her life is marked with tragedy, she shows a lack of depth. I hope this is a reminder for each of us that in spite of our lack of faith, the world is still seeking and God still will be found. We don’t have to be a perfect testimony to point people to Jesus! Never forget this...and don’t let Satan speak otherwise to you. Naomi was imperfect, and yet God used her. Wait for it...we’ll get there.

...Lesson One - Day Nine...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:1-2

...DWELL IN THE WORD...

1. Read [Ruth 1:18-22](#) What emotional tone do you sense in this passage? What is Naomi's state of mind?

"I went away full...I've returned empty." Naomi and her husband had left Bethlehem a decade ago with the false hope that Moab would be the land of prospering. Naomi wants to be called Mara - "bitter" now instead of Naomi - "pleasant." Oh, Naomi -er, "Mara." So melodramatic! You're alive. You've made the journey from Moab to Bethlehem. You have a beautiful and loyal daughter-in-law. And yet still you cling to your past and your bitterness and your loss. Not only that, but you want to be defined by it.

Contrast her story with that of Job's! You remember him, right? Job famously gets assaulted by Satan – with God's permission - and literally loses everything and still he says, "Yet He slay me still I will trust in Him!"

2. At what time of year is Naomi returning to Bethlehem? (1:22) _____

3. Re-Read Ruth 1:1 and Ruth 1:22 Note what events are in stark contrast in the opening of this story and in the closing of the chapter...

| _____ and _____

THE BOOK OF RUTH is set right after the book of Judges in our Christian Bible. However, in the Jewish Bible, Ruth is set among four other books which are called the Megillot (Scrolls) and are a part of the third section of the Jewish Bible called the Kethuvim. The books of the Megillot are (in this order): Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther. They are set apart because they are each read aloud on the occasion of the feast days in the annual cycle.

YAWN?

Well, this tradition is actually helpful to our understanding as we read the next chapters in Ruth which take place during the barley harvest. Why is Ruth read aloud on this special feast day? We're going to need to do a little background digging so we can reeeeeeally grasp the super amazing provision of God here in this sweet story of LOVE and devotion.

When calling out His people, God tells them how he wants them to behave toward others and how He wants them to interact with Him. He sets up "appointed feasts" (mo-a-deem) for Israel to observe. Maybe your Bible has this passage divided and labeled to make it more clear what these feasts are.

4. Read [Leviticus 23](#) – Using the following verse guides, write the names of each of these feasts and when they are to be observed:

NAME OF FEAST and WHEN OBSERVED

v5: _____

v6: _____
 v10: FirstFruits or Wave Offering The day after the Sabbath following Passover
 v15: Feast of Weeks After counting off seven weeks after the Sabbath following Passover
 v23: _____
 v28: _____ v27: _____
 v34: _____

5. During which feast season have Naomi and Ruth arrived? _____ (Ruth 1:22)
 Now are you seeing the specialness? Highlight that above.

6. Read [Ruth 2:1](#) What words/phrases are used to describe this man?

From the clan of? _____

A man of? _____

Whose name was? _____

- His name means: "in him is strength"

7. Read [Ruth 2:2](#) What does Ruth ask to do?

...WORD STUDY...

In the Hebrew this word is "chayil" and means valor, strength, wealth, capability. Proverbs 31:10 "A wife of noble character who can find? –

Guess what the Hebrew word is here for "wife of noble character?" – **eshet chayil**. Boaz is uplifted as an ultimate man in a similar way that the Proverbs 31 Woman is lifted up as the ultimate woman.

8. Read [Leviticus 23:22](#) and [Deuteronomy 24:19](#) What did God's law instruct landowners to do?

9. For whom were they to do this? (4 people groups)

10. What does this law reveal to you about God's...Character? Priorities? Expectations for us?

11. I have heard people say that Testament as "God is mean and harsh in the Old" but the God of the New they describe as gentle and kind. Based on this reading, how would you respond to someone who said that?

Actually, in reading the Law I find this to be a fallacy and a sad one that causes us to distance ourselves from God. If God is the same "yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8) then there is no difference in the character of the God from 3000 years ago and now. a central characteristic of God and He outlined how His people would be defined by kindness from the very moments He called and set them apart. Think of the law we've read from Leviticus. In harvesting the fields God makes special provision for the "least of these" by instructing His people to leave to the poor the corners of the field and the grains that fall from the harvesting. That is a good God - a kind God.

12. What is your view of God? Have you ever thought that the God of the Old Testament was a mean God? The Strict One. The Harsh God? If so, how has this study impacted your view of God?

What benefit is there to you having a wrong view of God? None. Unless you're Satan! Satan wants us to think as many incorrect things about God's character as he can!

...REFLECT ON THE WORD...

Naomi has yet to acknowledge what God has actually done. Her husband abandoned God and God's people, her sons married pagans, and she is now returning widowed and childless – but...She. Is. Returning! Instead of wanting to be called “bitter” why not be called “God is providing for me in spite of myself because I have this wonderful daughter-in-law and I'm home in the place where God can surely bless me because I'm willing to repent and serve Him.”

Ok, maybe that's kind of long, I admit, but I'm sure there's a Hebrew word that she could have chosen! But no. Naomi's heart is still far from God. She is home in body only – not in heart. What about you? Is it possible that in some way you may be heading back to a Moab in your life? Or are you embracing Bethlehem where God's promises lie?

Is your life being defined by a willingness to totally and completely cling to God and His ways even if you honestly have no idea what is on the road ahead? Or are you defined by your loss and grief and your need for the familiar ways from your past? Take a moment as we close today to seek the Father in this. Ask Him to search your heart and reveal to you any tendency you may have to deny Him and avoid the road ahead He may have for you. I'm praying today that you and I will become women defined by our desire to dwell in the house of the Lord and feast on His bread of life...no matter the cost.

Chapter one concludes with words of “emptiness”, “affliction”, “misfortune” and “bitterness.”

Not a very happy scene. And yet, we see God moving, hearts turning, and hope is around the corner. What ever you're going through in your life today, I pray that you'll never forget that God is at work. God is moving in your life and in the lives of your loved ones. Trust him in that today. Pray that God would continue to work in your heart to help you keep your eyes on Him and grow as a woman who is truly faithful and fearless.



...Lesson One - Day Ten...

...WRITE & MEMORIZE THE WORD...

PSALM 42:1-2

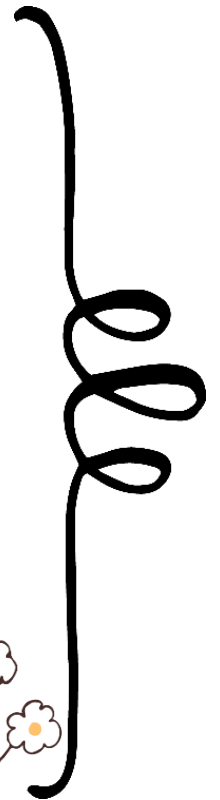
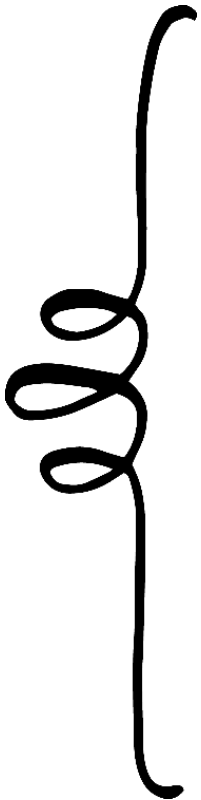
...CREATE AND SHARE...

In this first Create & Share day of our study I would like you to think ahead to the final day of our study. Where will you be in your faith? What will you have learned? How will you have changed? In the weeks to come we'll read, study, write, and memorize our way through Ruth and Esther, and hopefully so much more.

My heart as we begin is that you'll really come to love and actually be excited to know God better. How does that happen? Reading facts about God? Doing a Google search: "Who is God?" You might get to know some details, but will you actually know him? Not really.

You actually need to spend time with God to get to know Him. Doing a Bible study is a great start. Reading your Bible faithfully is good too. Have a daily devotional? That's great also, but if your desire is to truly know God you can't just read about Him, you must spend quality time with Him. Take some time today to write out what you already know about God and then write what you'd like to know better. How will knowing God help you know your purpose and help you live your faith? Write your thoughts below, then share them with a friend so you can enjoy this process together.

...WHAT I KNOW...WHAT I WANT TO KNOW...



Ruth



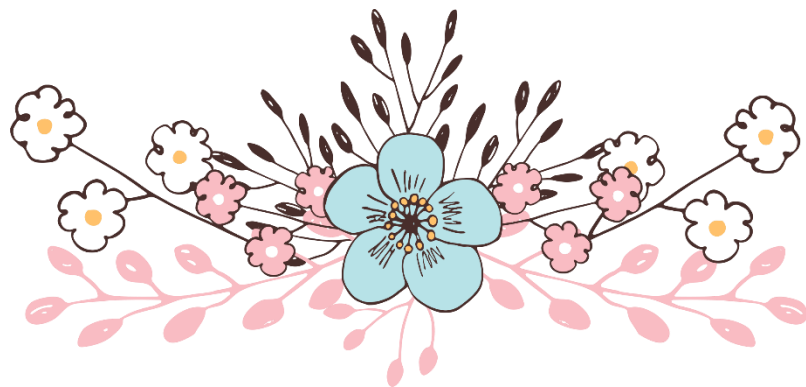
A decorative border with intricate floral and geometric patterns runs vertically along both the left and right sides of the page. The patterns include circular motifs, floral designs, and geometric shapes like triangles and squares, all rendered in black and white. The border is positioned on the left and right edges of the page, framing the central writing area.

A series of horizontal lines for writing, spanning the width of the page between the decorative borders. There are 20 lines in total, providing a structured space for text.

Ruth



A series of horizontal lines for writing, framed by decorative borders on the left and right sides.



*Faithful &
Fearless*
RUTH & ESTHER

