"The Life God Loves to Partner With"

Ruth 2

STRENGTH for the Journey with Joe Stowell
Part of the RBC family of Ministries

Group Study Introduction

Use the following questions and exercises as your group time allows. Feel free to skip one or more questions in each section as necessary. If you have less then thirty minutes for group discussion, we recommend skipping the "Getting Started" section. Be sure to save time for prayer at the end of your meeting, using the "Strength through Prayer" section.

Getting Started:

Joe Stowell challenges us that if people of other races, nationalities, or religions live on our block and we don't like it, to "get a providential life"!

- How integrated was your neighborhood when you were growing up? How did you feel about that?
- How integrated is the neighborhood where you live now? How do you feel about that?
- How would you feel if someone of another nationality moved in on your block? Would you be the first to take them a welcome dinner?

Strength through Scripture:

Open your Bibles to Ruth 2 and have a volunteer read verses 1-17 out loud.

1. Joe shares five marks of a convergent heart of someone who, like Ruth, is at the bottom. The first is hardworking (see verse 2). How did Ruth's choice to do some hard work bring her into a place where she could be a part of God's providential plan? Can you see how God may have providentially put you in your workplace to be a testimony through honest hard work?

2. The second mark of a convergent heart that Ruth demonstrates is humility (see verse 7). If you had been Ruth, how tempting would it have been to have the attitude, "If you knew my life story, you wouldn't push me around"?

Notes:

"May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord," she said. "You have given me comfort and have spoken kindly to your servant—though I do not have the standing of one of your servant girls."

Ruth 2:13

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3. The third mark of a convergent heart that Ruth models is gratitude (see verse 10). If you're really honest, how much do you tend to think that life owes you a living?

4. The fourth mark Ruth illustrates is being willing to reach out, from the bottom, to bless someone else (see verse 11). What made Ruth the talk of the town in that regard?

5. The fifth mark Ruth reveals is trusting in God's care (see verse 12). Do you know anyone like the motion picture executive's Christian maid, who trusted God and put herself under His overseeing power so that she was free to be industrious, humble, grateful, and to reach out and help others?

Digging Deeper:

If your group has enough time (i.e., you've listened to the audio on your own), answer one or more of these optional questions.

1. Joe shares three marks of a convergent heart of someone who, like Boaz, is at the top. The first is aligning one's resources with the passions and purposes of God. How did Boaz align himself with God's burden and plan for the poor and for foreigners?

2. The second mark of a convergent heart Boaz displays is that he became God to Ruth. Did it ever cross your mind concerning the people you are praying for that maybe you are the answer to their prayers—that it's time for you to "become God" to them?

3. The third mark Boaz exhibits is abundant generosity. He takes his resources, at sacrifice, to share with the poor and needy. Do you have a "Boaz" living in your heart?

Strength through Sharing:

1. Decide as a group whether you are going to do the exercise in the "Call to Action" below now or later on your own.

2. Are you going to compete or converge with God's provident work in your life?

Notes:

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Notes:

Strength through Prayer:

Spend a few moments as a group in silent, personal prayer. Thank God for what we can learn from the examples of Ruth and Boaz.

You may want to begin your prayer with these words:

"Thank You, Father, that whether my circumstances are at the top or at the bottom I can have a heart that converges with Your providence. I want to partner with You to be a blessing to others. Help me to align my resources with Your passions and purposes. Just as You are so abundantly generous, may I be moved from greed to generosity. As I trust in Your care, I commit myself to a life of hard work, humility, gratitude, and service."

When you are finished with this time for silent, personal prayer, you may want to move into a time of group prayer, praying for one another.

Closing Call to Action:

Make a list of your resources: money, time, energy, spiritual gifts, skills or talents.

Now ask God to let you take a portion of that list to somebody's heart who is in need. Sometimes it's little stuff—a phone call, a hug, a check.

If you're going to converge your life with the providential plan of God, you need to understand that God has given you much in order that you might bless someone who doesn't have much.

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