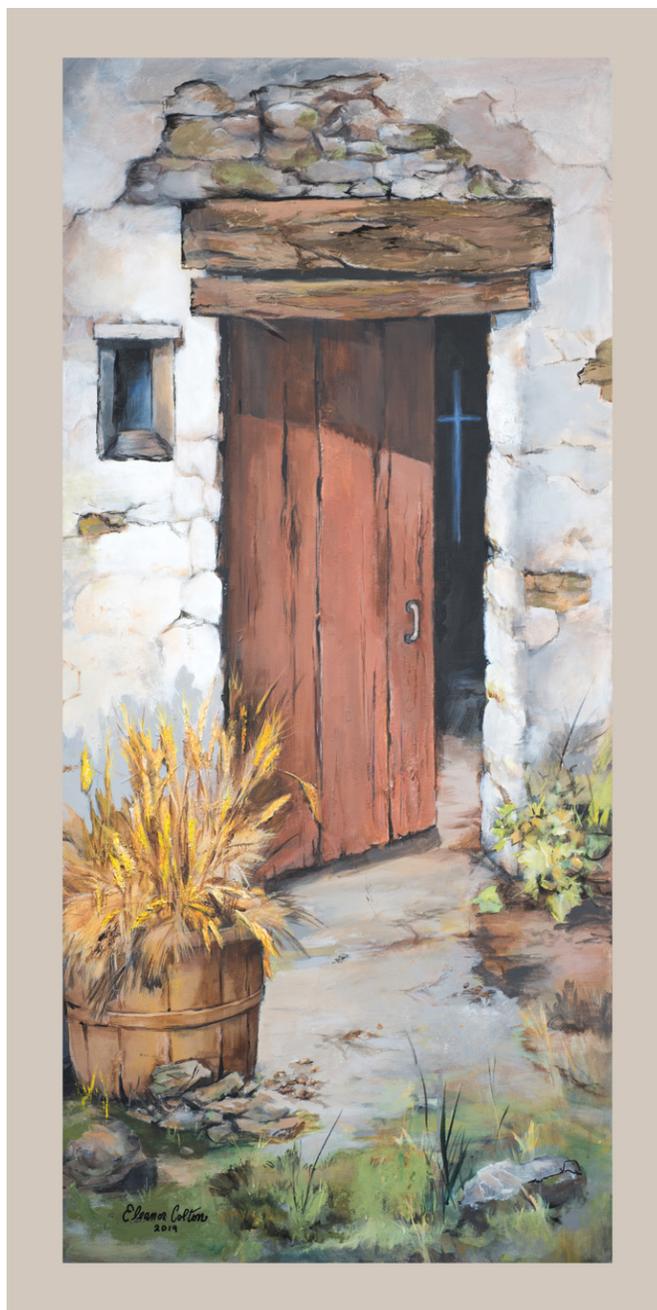


Transitions and the Book of Ruth



Welcome to our Old Testament Bible Study

www.radiowannabe.com/transitions



3 Question Bible Study Directions

These are the Directions for the Daily Lessons.

Read the Assigned Scripture Passage First, then follow these steps.

1: What Does God's Word Say? List the facts	2: What Does God's Word Mean? Learn the lessons	3: What Does God's Word Mean To Me? Listen to His voice
<p>Be Literal.</p> <p>Make a verse by verse list of the most obvious facts using the actual words from the passage itself. Do not paraphrase. Do not get caught up in the details. Ask yourself: Who is speaking? Who is the subject? Where is it taking place? When did it happen?</p>	<p>Be Spiritual.</p> <p>Look for a spiritual lesson or principle within each fact. Ask yourself: What are the people in the passage doing that I should be doing? Is there a command I should obey? A promise I should claim? A warning I should heed? An example I should follow?</p>	<p>Be Personal.</p> <p>Put the lessons you found in Question 2 into the form of a question that you would ask yourself or your child, spouse, parent, neighbor, co-worker, friend or church member. As you write out the questions, listen for God to communicate to you through His Word. Don't rush. Take the time to prayerfully meditate and discover what God is saying to you.</p>
<p>What Will I Do To Live It Out? Live in Response Date: _____</p> <p>Read the lessons prayerfully, objectively, thoughtfully, and attentively as you listen for God to speak. He may not speak to you through every verse, but He will speak. When He does, record the verse number, what it is He seems to be saying to you and your response to Him.</p>		

Bible Study Example

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
<p>Look into God's word: Read the passage.</p>	<p>List the facts: What does the passage say?</p>	<p>Learn the Lesson: What does the passage mean?</p>	<p>Listen to His voice: What does it mean to me?</p>
<p>Naomi Widowed</p> <p>1 In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.</p> <p>2 The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there.</p> <p>3 But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons.</p> <p>4 These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years,</p> <p>5 and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband</p>	<p>During a famine when the judges ruled, a man, his wife and two sons went to sojourn in the country of Moab.</p> <p>The names were Elimelech, Naomi the wife and two sons, Mahlon, Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Judah. They moved to and remained in Moab.</p> <p>Elimelech dies and Naomi is left with her sons.</p> <p>The sons take Moabite wives: Orpah and Ruth.</p> <p>After 10 years Mahlon and Chilion die.</p>	<p>When in a crisis, look into options. Some people react to a crisis by moving, leaving, not remaining in place. How I react can affect other people.</p> <p>When transitioning to a new phase of life take your faith with you. Don't leave your faith, your Bethlehem, behind.</p> <p>Our passing may occur at an unexpected time.</p> <p>Life goes on after the death of a spouse.</p> <p>Life can go from bad to worse. There is a time to grieve, to acknowledge loss, to mourn.</p>	<p>How do I react in a crisis? My tendency is to freeze, stay in place. How do my reactions and decisions affect my family? What are my options?</p> <p>How do I react to change, to moving? Moving is not easy for me. I'm not very portable. Is my response to leave the fellowship of other believers?</p> <p>Is family my source of security? How can my husband and I prepare for our passing?</p> <p>Do I believe some good can come out of my crisis?</p> <p>What losses am I mourning today?</p>

Book of Ruth

Chapter 1: 1-22

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Look into God's word: Read the passage.	List the facts: What does the passage say?	Learn the Lesson: What does the passage mean?	Listen to His voice: What does it mean to me?
Naomi Widowed <p>1 In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.</p> <p>2 The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there.</p> <p>3 But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons.</p> <p>4 These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years,</p>			

Book of Ruth

Chapter 1: 1-22

5 and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

Ruth's Loyalty to Naomi

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the Lord had visited his people and given them food.

7 So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

8 But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

9 The Lord grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

Book of Ruth

Chapter 1: 1-22

<p>10 And they said to her, “No, we will return with you to your people.”</p> <p>11 But Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?”</p> <p>12 Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons,</p> <p>13 would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me.”</p> <p>14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.</p>			
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Book of Ruth

Chapter 1: 1-22

15 And she said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.”

16 But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.

17 Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.”

18 And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

Naomi and Ruth Return

19 So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, “Is this Naomi?”

Book of Ruth

Chapter 1: 1-22

20 She said to them,
“Do not call me
Naomi; call
me Mara, for the
Almighty has dealt
very bitterly with me.

21 I went away full,
and the Lord has
brought me back
empty. Why call me
Naomi, when
the Lord has testified
against me and the
Almighty has brought
calamity upon me?”

22 So Naomi
returned, and Ruth the
Moabite her daughter-
in-law with her, who
returned from the
country of Moab. And
they came to
Bethlehem at the
beginning of barley
harvest.

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Main Personal application:

Date: _____

Book of Ruth

Chapter 1: 1-22

Transitions

Devotional by Charlene Perkins

The book of Ruth begins with a string of tragedies – Elimelech dies, Mahlon and Chilion die, and three women are left to figure out life on their own in a culture that made that hard. To be sure, there is lots of grief on lots of levels: the loss of family, the likely loss of a home, the loss of an expected future that included children and grandchildren, and the emotional turmoil of floating in a never, never land, in between certainties and without clear direction on how to move forward.

Our first reactions to grief are ones that preclude us from facing it head on. It could be complete denial that anything has changed or a manic attempt to fix it, to make it go away. I hear this from Ruth and Orpah if I read between the lines in chapter 1: “We can still live with Naomi. Nothing has really changed. Or, maybe Naomi could have more sons for us to marry!” Naomi did well by her daughters-in-law to correct their thinking: “Turn back, my daughters; Why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying?”

The point is, we all know grief. By definition, it is a part of any transition we make because transitions mean something is gained but something is also lost. Our transition could be devastating, like the death of a loved one, or minor, like getting reading glasses. It could be something that happens to us, like an accident, or something we choose, like buying a new house. They are all transitions; they all require letting go; they all cause grief. The trick is to manage our grief in helpful ways. Here I go back to Naomi as she says, “... the hand of the Lord has gone forth against me.” You know what I hear there?

1) acceptance and 2) an acknowledgment that God is in it. We all eventually get to #1 – acceptance. #2 can be more challenging, but by faith we can trust that God is in every transition - the ones we choose and the ones we don't choose – because He promises in Matthew 28:20, “I am with you always.”

You know what I don't hear in Naomi's words? “I have this all figured out.” Isn't that a burden we put on ourselves in the midst of change, “How can I make this work?” We add stress to stress. But if God is in all our transitions, we can let Him drive, and we can just “be.” We don't have to figure it all out; we just need to take the next step, remembering what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2:19, “[God's] grace is sufficient for you, for [His] power is made perfect in weakness.” So, in the transitions before you right now, let go and let God. He is faithful; He is good; He is victorious.

Other verses to consider: Psalm 139:7-12; Isaiah 30:20-21; Jeremiah 29:11; Ephesians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 2:9

Questions:

1. Think of a personal grief experience. How did your psyche initially respond? Do you see that pattern in other transitions in your life?
2. Do you fall more into “Let go and let God” or a “God helps those who help themselves” mindset and how does that impact your approach to transitions?
3. What do you think is the best middle ground between those two perspectives and why?
4. What is your response to passages like Psalm 139:7-12 and Matthew 28:20?
5. In your current situation, what is one way in which you can acknowledge that God is in it and allow Him to work?

Book of Ruth

Chapter 2: 1-23

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Look into God's word: Read the passage.	List the facts: What does the passage say?	Learn the Lesson: What does the passage mean?	Listen to His voice: What does it mean to me?
Ruth Meets Boaz 1 Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. 2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." 3 So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech. 4 And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered, "The LORD bless you."			

Book of Ruth

Chapter 2: 1-23

5 Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"

6 And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.

7 She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest."

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women.

9 Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn."

Book of Ruth

Chapter 2: 1-23

10 Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

11 But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before.

12 The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!"

13 Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

Book of Ruth

Chapter 2: 1-23

14 And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over.

15 When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her.

16 And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her."

17 So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

18 And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied.

Book of Ruth

Chapter 2: 1-23

19 And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz."

20 And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Naomi also said to her, "The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers."

21 And Ruth the Moabite said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'"

Book of Ruth

Chapter 2: 1-23

22 And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted."

23 So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

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Main Personal application:

Date: _____

Book of Ruth

Chapter 2: 1-23

The Best Place to Be

Devotional by Charlene Perkins

Do you ever find yourself in a place where you just don't know what to do? You can see no clear way out. You don't have the resources, time or energy to recreate your world. You have no idea how it's all going to end up. You might be fearful or you might be too tired to care.

Naomi might have felt something like that when they arrived back in Bethlehem. Her old life had fallen apart, and she had to do something, so she moved home. Once there, she is still unsure about what to do next. Ruth kindly suggests they find some food. Naomi's response was simply, "Go." There was no strategy or master plan in play. No maneuvering for the perfect end game. Only, the next step, "Let's find some food." You know the rest. God shows up big time. He orchestrates Ruth's gleaning to be at the home of a wealthy relative who in turn favors Ruth, and by extension Naomi, and the tide begins to turn. Yay God.

It seems like the future is a bit brighter for these ladies, but I suggest their future will be **better** because of their current hardship. You see, hardships do for us what nothing else can do. They reveal our inabilities. In turn, we seek out God and depend on Him and not ourselves. We become humbler, and God becomes greater – 100% trustworthy and faithful. So, while being in a hard spot is not the **easiest** place to be, it might well be **the best place to be**. Like it says in James 1:2-4, ***"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."*** Lacking in nothing.

But there's another beautiful illustration in this narrative. Notice what Boaz does for Ruth: he provides for her (vs. 8-10), he protects her (vs. 15), and he blesses her (v.16). Ruth responds with, "Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" Doesn't that sound like the gospel? We were enemies of God, foreigners to His household (Eph. 2:19). Yet, He chooses to be Jehovah Jireh (the God who provides), Yahweh Nissi (the God who protects) and El Shaddai (the Almighty God who abundantly blesses). You see, the Word of God, in every detail, describes and reflects the character of God. It is consistent throughout because He is consistent – without variation or shifting shadow (James 1:17). This is the One we can trust in our transitions – He is our Boaz. In your current situation, believe God will show up big time to provide, protect and bless, and believe you are in **the best place to be**.

Additional verses to consider: Psalm 73:28; Romans 5:3-6; Ephesians 2:19; Philippians 4:10-13, 19; Hebrews 4:14-16

Questions:

1. In the context of fight or flight, how do you deal with personal hardship? How is that tendency exhibited - what behaviors does it create?
2. Given this passage of scripture and the verses above, how do you critique the adage, "God helps those who help themselves"? How about, "Let go and let God?"
3. What is a personal example of a hardship that developed good things in your character and life? Note the circumstances and the results.
4. If you were trying to encourage someone in a hard place, what would you say to them? What practical steps would you suggest?
5. Consider Boaz's relationship with Ruth and Naomi and explain in what ways Boaz is a prefiguration of Christ.

Book of Ruth

Chapter 3: 1-18

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Look into God's word: Read the passage.	List the facts: What does the passage say?	Learn the Lesson: What does the passage mean?	Listen to His voice: What does it mean to me?
Ruth and Boaz at the Threshing Floor 1 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? 2 Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 3 Wash therefore and anoint yourself and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do."			

Book of Ruth

Chapter 3: 1-18

5 And she replied, "All that you say I will do."

6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her.

7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down.

8 At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet!

9 He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer."

10 And he said, "May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.

Book of Ruth

Chapter 3: 1-18

11 And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman.

12 And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I.

13 Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the Lord lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning.”

14 So 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.”

15 And 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.

Book of Ruth

Chapter 3: 1-18

16 And 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,

17 saying, "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.'"

18 She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

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Main Personal application:

Date: _____

Book of Ruth

Chapter 3: 1-18

Playing by the Book

Devotional by Charlene Perkins

I don't know about you, but my first read of Ruth chapter 3 was, "Wait. What's going on here?" On the surface, it seems like Naomi's direction to Ruth is a bit risqué and a bit risky. She is asking a young widow to climb in bed (albeit the foot of the bed) with an older man. Many, many things could have gone wrong. Boaz could have become angry and shunned Ruth. Boaz might have been dishonorable and taken advantage of her. Others might have seen Ruth and her reputation would have been ruined. So, "Why did Naomi do this? Is she trying to force God's hand? Was this acceptable to God?"

We'll come back to that but let me pause here and direct those questions to our everyday lives. One of the beautiful mysteries of God is that He is fully knowable yet never fully known. We will never get to the end of Who He is. We may be surprised by what He does and find that He is not black and white but rather a wonderful blend of all color – including shades of gray. In tandem, one of the beautiful things about living in faith and under grace is our freedom from the Law. As a result, your faith will not always look like my faith, and a decision that is right for you might be wrong for me and vice versa. That can be important in dealing with transitions because no one else's answers are guaranteed to work for you, and no one else's judgements matter. And when we look at others, we need to acknowledge we don't know everything about God or the situation. There is likely more to the story. Which takes us back to Naomi. What is the rest of her story?

The answer to that is in the cross references of your Bible where it points to Deuteronomy 25:5-10. There it states that a male family member is to take a family widow as his wife if she is without a son. Under Jewish law, Boaz, as a kinsman to Ruth's husband, would be in line to support Ruth. So, you see, Naomi wasn't being strong-headed or desperate or forcing God's hand. She was "playing by the book," doing what God commanded, and was gently encouraging Boaz to do the same. That may not have been our first impression of the passage – sometimes looks are deceiving - but what a lovely, gracious example for us to do the same, to encourage one another to play it by the book, not the book of the law but the book of faith. God is good; God is great; we are free.

Additional verses to consider: Genesis 50:18-21; Joshua 2:1-7 & Hebrews 11:31; 2 Samuel 6:6-11; 1 Corinthians 10:23-30

- 1) Consider the passages above from Genesis, Joshua, Hebrews and 2 Samuel. What do you find surprising in these passages? How have they impacted your understanding of God?
- 2) Consider the passages from Romans and 1 Corinthians. What does it mean to live by faith?
- 3) What does it mean to allow others to live by faith?
- 4) How do you respond when someone does or says something you think is spiritually or morally incorrect?
- 5) How can you encourage others to live by the book of faith

Book of Ruth

Chapter 4: 1-22

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Look into God's word: Read the passage.	List the facts: What does the passage say?	Learn the Lesson: What does the passage mean?	Listen to His voice: What does it mean to me?
Boaz Redeems Ruth 1 Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, "Turn aside, friend; sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down. 2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. 3 Then he said to the redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. 4 So I thought I would tell you of it and say, buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you." And he said, "I will redeem it."			

Book of Ruth

Chapter 4: 1-22

5 Then Boaz said, "The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance."

6. Then the redeemer said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it."

7 Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel.

8 So when the redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself," he drew off his sandal.

9 Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon.

Book of Ruth

Chapter 4: 1-22

10 Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day.”

11 Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem,

12 and may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the Lord will give you by this young woman.”

Book of Ruth

Chapter 4: 1-22

Ruth and Boaz Marry

13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son.

14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel!"

15 He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."

16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse.

The Genealogy of David

17 And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Book of Ruth

Chapter 4: 1-22

18 Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron,

19 Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab,

20 Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon,

21 Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed,

22 Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.

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Main Personal application:

Date: _____

Book of Ruth

Chapter 4: 1-22

The Long View

Devotional by Charlene Perkins

We live within the constraints of time. It began, well, in the beginning, when God said in Genesis 1, “Let there be light,” and He separated the light from the darkness, and there was evening and morning, one day. From that point forward, God showed His people how to mark life through festivals and seasons and years. We do the same. We see life as a collection of years, days and minutes that we chunk up into events, obligations and responsibilities. We measure forward progress by looking ahead to the next thing. It is a very linear view of life. Here’s the challenge – It is easy to see life events, at best, as mere stepping stones to something else, or, at worst, as being completely unconnected. We can then begin to measure our whole life on how today is going – or this year - or maybe this minute. That’s the short view.

But our lives are more than a string of unconnected events. Instead of being meted out like yardsticks, they are long flowing ribbons that weave in and out connecting our past to our future with purpose. Here’s why I say that:

- Everything in your life is connected and designed by God. Psalm 139:16, ***“In your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.”***
- We cannot understand what God is doing by looking at one day. He and His work exist outside of time. 2 Peter 3:8, ***“with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”***
- And, relatedly, we cannot measure what God is doing using our system of time. 2 Peter 3:9, ***“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness.”***

That’s the long view, and it requires us to trust what we cannot yet see. It’s like looking at the back of a tapestry. You see chaos and nothing that resembles intentional design, but when you flip it over, you see a masterpiece where every dark hue and bright hue work together to create art. Or think of Ruth and Naomi. In the short view, their lives were filled with sorrow and hardship. But in the long view, God was weaving them into the lineage of Jesus and into the world’s plan of salvation. They couldn’t see it at the time, but God’s plan, the long view, was perfect.

In the midst of your transition, be it easy or hard, remember that it is only one piece of a bigger puzzle that is being worked out for you, for your family, for the world. Trust what you cannot see; trust the long view.

Additional verses to consider: Psalm 90:4; Psalm 139:1-18; 1 Corinthians 2:6-9; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 2 Corinthians 5:1-5

Questions:

1. Think back to when you were 18 and what you imagined your life would be. How closely does your life match that expectation?
2. Have you ever looked back on your life and seen connections that you didn’t see at the time? How did that impact your current attitude or situation?
3. When you encounter those retrospective epiphanies, where is God in that narrative?
4. Why is practicing the long view difficult?
5. What is one thing you can do to practice the long view?

Creative Project

1. Pick a verse or verses that are especially meaningful to you.
2. Write a paragraph explaining why you picked that verse/phrase and how it relates to a lesson you learned or a personal application.
3. Share a creative project that reflects your learnings. It could be a song, painting, poem, photograph, craft project or a simple note you write to a friend. The sky is the limit.

Example



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...but Ruth clung to her.

-Ruth 1:14

One lesson I learned from the book of Ruth is when going through hard times things can always get worse, not better! So, accept help now. I am grateful for faith, family and friends that have helped me through times of turmoil and transition - especially the Lord Jesus Christ – to whom I cling.

Janet Maltbie