

Small Group Guide THE RISK OF LOVE

The Church at Brook Hills,

Dr. David Platt

July 19, 2009

Ruth 3

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

Connect . . .

Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.

Option 1

Invite learners to share a time when they were unsure of their future, when they could not see God working at the time. Encourage them to share any resolution if they experienced it. Ask the following questions:

- How did you feel at the time?
- How did your relationship with God change at the time?

Explain that today we are going to look at how God's love is demonstrated in the life of Ruth, despite her lack of knowledge about how He was working in the future.

Option 2

Invite learners to share about a time when they were preparing for a big event, such as a championship game, proposal, presentation, or test. Ask the following questions:

- What did you do while you were waiting for this event to happen?
- What did "waiting" mean for you at the time?

Explain that today we will look at what waiting meant for Ruth.

Review the Message . . .

Remind learners that the story of Ruth depicts God's character throughout. Explain that His character is not depicted in just one character but is seen throughout the various actions of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz.

Enlist one or two learners to read Ruth 3. Point out the word "kindness" used in Verse 10. Read Ruth 1:8 and Ruth 2:20. Emphasize that the word used for "kindness" in all three of these verses is the Hebrew word "hesed." Remind learners that the English language does not translate this word well, and it means "love, loyalty, compassion, grace, mercy, and faithfulness" all combined together. Its most important meaning is that it is a kind of love that comes from God alone and reflects His loving character. Explain that this kind of love is what is depicted in Ruth 3.

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The Indescribable Love of God...

- Love is _____ patient _____.

Discussion Questions

- Enlist a learner to read Ruth 2:23-3:1. Remind learners that we last saw Ruth continuing to glean in Boaz's field throughout the barley and wheat harvest. Does any indication exist that a relationship between Boaz and Ruth had progressed during the harvest time?
- Did Ruth know what her future held as a widow and a servant prior to her encounter on the threshing floor?
- Read Ruth 3:3-4. Explain that Naomi's instructions to Ruth are an indication that Ruth had been in mourning and was now publicly illustrating that she was able to move on. How had this time of mourning required patience for Ruth?
- Enlist a learner to read Ruth 3:11. What had Ruth been doing and how had she been acting according to her reputation throughout the city?
- Note Ruth 3:18. Describe the way Ruth was "waiting" on God's plan to unfold? How did she demonstrate patience?
- Read Isaiah 40:31. Explain that "wait" in that verse actually means to bind or twist together. How does this meaning shed understanding on Ruth's patient love?

Application . . .

- How often do we know what the future holds for us according to God's plan?
- What is our normal course of action when we are waiting to see God's ultimate plan?
- According to Ruth, what does waiting actually mean in our lives? Is it passive or active?
- How can we make times of waiting opportunities to grow in our relationship with Christ?

- Love _____ protects _____.

Discussion Questions

- Read Ruth 3:1-2. How did Naomi want to protect Ruth?
- According to Boaz's position as a kinsman redeemer, how could he protect Ruth and her family?
- Note Ruth 3:13. How did Boaz protect Ruth from harm that night?

Application . . .

- How do we see our responsibility as Christ followers to protect others?
- Can we view God as our protector if we lack trust in His plan for our lives?

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- Love is _____ pure _____.

Discussion Questions

- Remind learners that this event took place during the time of the Judges, where most Israelites did whatever they thought was right in their own eyes, and sexual immorality was rampant. How did Ruth and Boaz interact with one another in a counter-cultural way?
- Direct learners to Ruth 3:6-14. Point out that Naomi's instructions and Ruth's obedience would have given the original readers a sense of sexual overtones. But, how did Boaz and Ruth maintain purity throughout the encounter?
- How did Boaz protect Ruth's purity?

Application . . .

- How does our culture compare to the time of the Judges concerning sexuality?
- Point out that even in the sexual nature of Ruth's encounter with Boaz, the relationship maintained purity. Did God intend for relationships between men and women to be sexual? When is sexual expression appropriate for a relationship between a man and woman?
- How can we protect the purity of our brothers and sisters in Christ?
- What does it mean for God to have a pure love toward us?
- How do we maintain a pure relationship with God?

- Love _____ provides _____.

Discussion Questions

- Enlist a learner to read Ruth 3:12-13, 17. How was Boaz in a place to provide for Ruth and Naomi?
- How had Boaz provided for the immediate needs of Ruth and Naomi?
- How did Boaz intend to provide for future security and food for Ruth and Naomi?

Application . . .

- How are we in a place to provide for others in need?
- How do we see God as our provider?
- What must we believe about God in order to trust Him as our provider?

- Love has a _____ price _____.

Discussion Questions

- Note Ruth 3:5-13.
- What did Ruth risk as she encountered Boaz in this way? How did she place her future in his hands?

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- How could her status in the community change if he rejected her?
- How was Boaz risking his standing in the community by seeking to redeem Ruth?

Application . . .

- What are some of the risks we take when we love others such as outcasts, the poor, and those who are racially different?
- Why is the risk worth it?
- What is the price we pay to love?
- What was the price paid for us to have a relationship with God?

The Irresistible Lure of the Gospel...

God, in patient holiness, _____ shelters _____ us from His wrath and
_____ saves _____ us from our sin by _____ sacrificing _____ His Son.

Discussion Questions

- How do we see the gospel played out in the story of Ruth and Boaz?

Application . . .

- How can we demonstrate the Gospel in the way that we love others?