

Bible Handling for Women Part 2 : 20 June 2022

Preparing a Bible-Study – Ruth Chapter 2

Introduction

Why it's important to handle the Bible correctly. 2 Timothy 3: 16-17

"Home, church, community and country desperately need the influence of women who know why they believe what they believe, grounded in the Word of God. They desperately need the influence of women who love deeply and actively the God proclaimed in the Bible" Jen Wilkin, *Women of the Word*

Getting started...

Pray! Remember we always need the help of the Holy Spirit when we read the Bible (Ephesians 11:17-19; Psalm 119:18). We're studying God's living Word not doing an English comprehension test!

Read the passage – read, re-read and re-read – out loud, slowly, look at other translations, print out (Bible Gateway).

Read Ruth Chapter 1

Then...

1. Orientate (Context) – Where does it fit in the Bible?

Ask yourself:

- Where does book of Ruth fit into the Bible storyline?

i.e. *Creation → Fall → Redemption → Restoration*

Can also be seen as: *Pre-old Covenant (Creation) → Old Covenant (Rest of OT) → Trans-covenant (gospels) → New Covenant (everything flowing from the gospels)*

- What is the genre and type of writing? (Remember there's letter, wisdom literature, history, prophecy, poetry, narrative etc)
- When do the events take place – what is the historical backdrop?
- Ideally, for a book like Ruth, try and read the whole book first to get the flow and see how the passage fits in.

Preparing the Bible-Study: Are there one or two relevant questions you might ask here to clarify the context of the passage?

2. Observe – What do I first notice? (Time to underline/highlight/scribble!)

(Remember the example of taking in the details of a scenery from a viewpoint)

- Briefly summarize what happens in the passage.
- What main details are we given about the characters?
- What is said about God in the passage?
- Look at the structure of the passage ... where does the main action take place?
- What places are mentioned and how do they feature in the story?
- Notice any repetition, contrasts, comparisons.
- Any words or details that strike you – any you might want to look up?
- Is there a highlight or turning point in the story?
- Any narrator's comments?
- What do you think are the main points or themes so far?

Preparing the Bible-Study: What questions could you ask to help with getting to know the passage better? What do you need to draw attention to?

3. Understand – what does it mean, what am I learning?

A good time to get out a commentary, Bible dictionary, concordance, look at other translations, listen to a good sermon – visit the Carey library (in the small room to the left of the pulpit)!

A good commentary will highlight: Deuteronomy 32:15-18, 23-24, 36-39 about famine signifying God's judgement; Deut. 23:3-6 about God forbidding association with Moabites; the Biblical meaning of "kindness" (Ruth 1:6; 2:20; 3:10) or "loving-kindness" ('hesed') = the Lord's covenant love and commitment to his people (Exodus 15:13, Dt 7:9, Psalm 145:5-9)

Time to think about what I have noticed so far - What are the main things the author wants me to focus on and learn from in this chapter? What are the details I've observed in the passage pointing me to?

- How do we learn more about the characters through the events of the story?
- What do I learn about the character and purposes of God?
Are we pointed to Jesus Christ? (Remember Luke 24:27)
- Sum up the main lessons of the chapter. What do you think the author really wants you to learn from the story so far?
- (For subsequent chapters in Ruth you could think about they fit with the over-arching message of the whole book)

Preparing the Bible-Study: What questions could you ask to help focus on and deepen understanding of the meaning/message of the passage?

4. Apply – what does it mean to me? How can I apply it and put it into practice?

It's vital not to miss this stage in studying a passage. Remember 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – God's Word won't be effective unless it changes our hearts and lives.

Think carefully ..

- How does this passage challenge my understanding about who God is and what he is like?
- Is there a specific attitude or behaviour I need to change in response to this passage?
- How will it affect my life today, this week?
- How will it change the way I pray – for myself or someone else?

Preparing the Bible-Study: What sort of questions could you ask to help apply this passage in practice? How could you make these personal and direct, rather than general? In what way might these questions differ in a 1:1 and in a group context?

5. Conclusion/Summary

It's good to draw things together at the end with a summary statement and maybe point to how that might be linking with the next passage or chapter you'll be looking at. It's good to keep the overall message/theme of the book in mind and think how what you've learned fits with that. (Is there a Bible verse, quote or song/hymn that is relevant?)

Take time to pray about what you've learned AND the ways you've thought about how you could apply in personally.

6. General notes

Structure – think about breaking the passage into sections.

Title (more for group Bible-study) – can be helpful to highlight main theme.

Introduction – “ice-breaker” question/scenario or that relates to the theme. Don't force it!

Time – how long should you allow for the study?!

Finally ... when could you put all this into practice and who could you share this with?!