**Chapter 9: the faith of a foreign woman**

**Icebreaker Question**: Describe a time when you felt uncomfortable, out of place, and far from home.

1. Meanings of Biblical names are always significant. Elimelek’s name means “my God is King.” Naomi’s name means “my pleasantness,” while Mara means “bitterness.” Ruth’s name means “friendship.” Boaz’s name means “swift strength.” Who best lived up to their names and who did not?

2. Compare Naomi’s attitude at the beginning and end of this story. How does her view of God and the Upper Story change?

3. Consider Ruth’s and Boaz’s interaction with Naomi. What can you learn about the challenges and benefits of caring for an aging parent? Can you relate to some of these challenges?

4. The period of the Judges was marked by weak faith and irresponsible living among the Israelites, yet this foreign woman, Ruth, provides an alternative example. What specific examples of strong faith and responsible living can you find in the characters of Ruth and Boaz?

5. The story of Ruth demonstrates laws that God had given Israel to take care of marginalized people (Deuteronomy 25:5-10, Leviticus 25:25, Leviticus 19:9-10). What do these laws and customs reveal about the heart of God for the poor, the widow and the orphan? How could your group care for the less fortunate and thereby reflect the heart of God?

6. The love story of Ruth and Boaz stands in contrast to many of the “love” stories we’re familiar with today. What can single men and women learn from their example (note Ruth’s reputation in the community, p. 123, 125).

7. The word for *redeem* is used twenty times in this story, making it a key theme. What does it mean to be redeemed? How does Boaz’s redeeming of Ruth compare to our redemption found in Christ?

8. What some people might call *coincidence* others call *divine providence*. What are some key examples of God’s divine providence in this story? Relate a recent example of God’s providence in your own life.

In the time remaining ask your group members to share any of their personal reflection insights from their journal entries.