

# Lesson Four

## Engaging Our Minds

To this point, we've been looking at an overview of the Bible—of its reliability, its story, and its setting. In this lesson, we shift gears and begin to focus more on the *practice* of reading the Bible.

In the Introduction, we talked about engaging our minds, hearts, souls, and strength as we seek to know and love the Lord more through His written Word. Mark 12:30 encourages us:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”

Today, we'll pay more attention to our *minds* as we read. Remember, though, that your mind is not completely separate from your heart, soul, and strength; instead, each is an aspect of your whole self. We do not disengage our hearts as we use our minds!

Take a moment before you begin your study today to ask the Lord to use everything you learn with your *mind* to cause your *heart* to love Him more and your *soul* to long more purely for Him and for the *strength* to live in His ways.

### RECAP OF RUTH

Take a moment to recall what you have already learned about the book of Ruth. Anytime we open a book of the Bible, these are some of the questions we want to pay close attention to so that we can better read and understand the Scriptures.

I'm going to walk you through the steps I would use when I begin to study a book of the Bible. I've also included a chart at the end of this lesson that you could use to take your notes.

The first thing we want to do is read the Bible! (As we talk about study tools and resources, we can't forget to keep first things first. And the *first* tool we have is the Bible itself.

With that in mind – and without dismissing this as something you already did in this study – read through all of Ruth in whatever translation you choose.

1. What translation did you read? Is it more functional or more formal? (See the listening guide for Lesson 1.)

After we have read and become familiar with the Bible's text, our next step is to find out about the writing of the book—about the *source* itself.

*NOTE: You might have to do some research here. If your Bible has "introduction" pages, those will likely be helpful, or you might be able to find more online through [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org) or another source.*

2. What do we know about the origin of Ruth?

- Which testament of the Bible is in it? (Old or New?)
- Consider the list of Old and New Testament books found on your Lesson Two Listening Guide. How is Ruth classified?
- Who wrote it?
- To whom was it written?
- When was it written? (This may differ from the question below about when the events occurred.)
- How does understanding the origin of Ruth inform the purpose and intent behind its writing?

3. What do we know about the setting of Ruth?

- When did the events occur? (Remember, this will likely differ from when the book was written.)
- Where are the events of the book set?
- Which covenants were in effect?
- Who are the main characters? What do you know about them?

4. How does the story of Ruth move us along in the storyline of God's plan to rescue mankind and restore His creation?

## GENRE

In the lecture this week, we learned about the different genres of Scripture. Look back at your listening guide as you answer the following questions.

5. What are the different genres of writing that are found in the Bible?
6. In which genre would you classify the book of Ruth?
7. How should that inform the way that you read Ruth?

## WORD STUDY

We also discussed the use of word study tools to investigate the original and intended meaning of the text.

8. Looking back at your listening guide notes, what should be the goal of doing a word study?
9. Write out Ruth 3:12 from the version of the Bible you are using (and note which version it is):

Word studies can be done online at [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org) using the NASB or the KJV of the Bible. Here is Ruth 3:12 from the NASB20<sup>3</sup>:

"But now, although it is true that I am a redeemer, yet there is also a redeemer more closely related than I."

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<sup>3</sup> The New American Standard Bible was revised in 2020. The common way to denote whether one is using the 1995 or 2020 edition is to mark it either NASB95 or NASB20.

10. Circle the word "redeemer" in the NASB version of verse 12. Does your Bible use a different word for redeemer? If so, what is it?
11. Complete the following steps to do a word study. I showed in the lecture how to use the Blue Letter Bible app on a mobile device or computer. If you don't have access to either, you could use a concordance, or you can skip this. (*This is a great tool if you have access to it, but if you don't, you can still read and understand the Bible!*)
- Go to [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org) and look up Ruth 3:12 in the NASB20 translation.
  - Click on the "Strong's" box in the upper right-hand corner. This should make numbers appear next to the words in the verses.
  - What number is written after "redeemer" in Ruth 3:12? (This is its "Strong's" number.)
  - Click on that number. The link will take you to what looks like a dictionary entry.
  - What is the transliteration of that Hebrew word? (The transliteration is the Hebrew word put into the English alphabet.)
  - Look below that. What are other ways that the same Hebrew word is translated in other places in the Bible?
  - Read the "Outline of Biblical Usage" and the "Strong's Definition." Take note of anything you learn:
12. Remember the goal of a word study: What do you think the author was trying to convey by his use of *this* word in *this* context?

## CROSS-REFERENCES

Cross references in the Bible are useful tools in helping us to recognize how and when Scriptures refer to one another. They can be helpful in identify when one Scripture is quoting another. They can also point us to other places in the Bible where a similar topic or subject is addressed.

Recall from the lecture that a lot of Bibles have these in the margin or at the bottom of the page with small letters as footnotes. Not all Bibles have these, however. Cross-references can also be accessed using an online tool.

Let's use Ruth 2:2 to see how cross references might aid our understanding of the passage.

13. Read Ruth 2:2. What does Ruth ask Naomi for permission to do?
  
14. Using the cross-references in your physical Bible or on [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org), what other Scriptures are listed? (The cross-references on [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org) or the mobile app can be found by clicking on the "tools" button and then selecting "cross-references." The cross-references will be listed out below the verse.)
  
15. Look up several (or all) of the verses referenced. How do these other verses aid in your understanding of gleaning?
  
16. How had God provided for Ruth?

## WRAP UP

The title of this lesson is "Engaging Our Minds," but we never want to do that at the expense of engaging our God!

17. How have these exercises encouraged you to understand something about who God is based on who He is revealed to be in the book of Ruth? Is there anything you have learned about Him that you didn't know before?

18. How might this understanding of who God is affect the way that you relate to Him in your personal life this week?