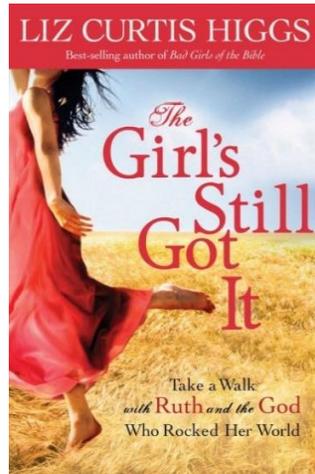


Word by Word with Liz Curtis Higgs on the Faith Radio Network

Bible Study Guide for April 21-22, 2018 | Ruth

from *The Girl's Still Got It* by Liz Curtis Higgs



1. Abraham was commanded by God to leave his country and his people. No such heavenly calling is recorded in the book of Ruth, yet she too left her country and her people. To whom in your life could you gladly say, “Where you go I will go”? What might compel you to do so? Love? Duty? Compassion? Faith? Now read Matthew 4:18–22. Why did these four men follow Jesus? How does their example challenge you? What does Jesus require of his followers, as recorded in Matthew 10:37–39? And in Luke 18:29–30, what does Jesus promise those who leave behind loved ones for God’s sake?
2. Ruth’s biggest leap of faith came when she pledged to Naomi, “Your God my God.” Naomi grew up knowing the God of Israel, while Ruth, raised among a pagan people, committed her life to God as an adult. In what ways might when and how we meet the Lord shape our relationship with him? Scripture doesn’t reveal the steps that led Ruth to embrace Naomi’s God, but clearly something happened. Read Deuteronomy 6:6–9, noting those things that Naomi might have done to share her faith with Ruth. Which of those ancient methods might you incorporate in your life today? And what are some new, twenty-first-century ways to share your faith with others?
3. One of the ways Ruth handles life’s challenges is common to many of us: she immerses herself in work. How might your own efforts as a working woman—paid or unpaid, in or out of your home—bless others, as Ruth blessed Naomi? Read Psalm 90:17 and Proverbs 31:17 as you picture Ruth gleaning in the field. What truth do you find in these verses that speaks to Ruth’s situation? And how might that truth address your current situation?

4. The arrival of Naomi and Ruth in Bethlehem at harvest time is significant. Jesus used a harvest analogy to teach his disciples. Read Matthew 9:35–38. What harvest is Jesus referring to? Whom does he have in mind to work the fields? And how will that be accomplished? What ripe fields do you see around you? In keeping with Jesus’s teaching, what’s the next step you should take? Then in 2 Corinthians 9:10–11 we find Paul using a harvest theme to encourage generosity and gratitude. According to the passage, who supplies not only the seed but also the harvest? And what’s the point of being fed, of being blessed? What prompts you to be generous? And how can you be sure God gets the glory rather than you?
5. As a writer of many psalms, David repeatedly turned to the vivid imagery of a bird gathering its chicks under its wings to describe how God nurtures and protects his own. David’s great-grandfather Boaz reached for the same word picture when he spoke this blessing over Ruth: “May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.” Read the following verses in the book of Psalms, then choose one, and describe how it comforts or encourages you: 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7. What aspect of being beneath his wings most appeals to you? Is it the closeness? The assurance of protection? The physical warmth? The sense of being hidden from view? The peacefulness? How is that essential need for intimacy currently being met in your life? If it isn’t, what’s an appropriate and meaningful way for that longing to be satisfied? And how might you put that in motion?
6. What’s the most important lesson you learned from the story of Ruth, a woman who pledged her life to God and her hands and heart to her mother-in-law?