"The Life God Loves to Partner With"

Ruth 2

STRENGTH for the Journey with Joe Stowell

Part of the RBC family of Ministries

Individual Study Introduction

After listening to the audio segment, use the following questions as your time allows. You may want to record your answers or jot down thoughts and notes in a personal journal. You may also want to use your journal as a record of your prayer time with God. Write out your prayer or simply record your requests and the areas of your life you are releasing to God. This written record will help you to watch God's movement in your life. You'll see more clearly the ways God is giving you "strength for the journey"!

Getting Started:

Joe Stowell compares our playing a part in the outworking of God's sovereign providence to watching Monet paint a masterpiece and then having him hand the brush to you to finish it, or to being summoned to bat with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning of the seventh game of the World Series.

- Which of those two scenarios sounds more frightening to you?
- Can you recall an occasion, like a sporting event or a musical or drama production, when you were under great pressure?

Strength through Scripture:

Read Ruth 2:1-17.

1. Joe states that, for reasons best known to Himself, God has decided to include human initiative in His sovereign providence. Why is that such a scary thought?

2. How do you think Boaz's servants felt about his instructions in verses 15-16?

Notes:

"May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord," she said. "You have given me comfort and have spoken kindly to your servant—though I do not have the standing of one of your servant girls." Ruth 2:13

© 2006 Strength for the Journey

"The Life God Loves to Partner With"

Ruth 2

STRENGTH for the Journey with Joe Stowell

Part of the RBC family of Ministries

3. How do you think Ruth felt when she realized she had gleaned about 20 times as much as a poor person would normally glean from the edges of a field (see verse 17)?

4. What does Joe mean by saying that God doesn't have the words coincidence and lucky in His vocabulary?

5. How hard would it be for you to take those two words out of your vocabulary?

Digging Deeper:

If you have enough time, answer one or more of these optional questions. But be sure to save time for the final two sections.

1. What does it mean to you that God is sovereign?

2. What does it mean to you that He is a God of providence?

3. Even though the storyteller in the book of Ruth doesn't explicitly say that God was in the details of the story, how do we know that is the case?

Strength through Reflection:

1. How can you illustrate from your own life experiences the fact that we often see the providence of God "in the rearview mirror"?

2. How hard is it for you to align yourself with the character of God, believing that He is at work in your life in His sovereign, providential, loving way?

Notes:

© 2006 Strength for the Journey

"The Life God Loves to Partner With"

Ruth 2

STRENGTH for the Journey with Joe Stowell

Part of the RBC family of Ministries

Strength through Prayer:

Spend a few moments in prayer. Thank God that He is a sovereign, providential God who is characterized by loyal love for us.

You may want to begin your prayer with these words:

"Lord God, thank You for loving me—no matter what—and for being at work in my life. I am amazed and humbled that You have decided to include human initiative in Your sovereign providence. I want to cooperate and partner with Your plans and purposes. Help me develop the good habit of looking for Your hidden hand in my life."

Closing Call to Action:

God is at work—count on it—in His sovereign, providential, loving way. Don't get in God's way! How do you stay out of the way? Align yourself with what God is: God is a forgiving God; God is a serving God; God is a generous God.

As you align yourself with the character of God, you get in the groove of what He is doing in your life. Get in God's power groove, and wait for Him to show you what He is doing.

Notes:

© 2006 Strength for the Journey