"Whispers in the Dark"

Ruth 2:19-3:1

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:

In this teaching, Joe Stowell shares about Susanna Wesley, who gave birth to 19 children (and was herself the youngest of 25 children).

- What's the largest family you've known?
- How many children were in your family? How many children do you have? What do you see as the ideal family size?

Strength through Scripture:

Read Ruth 3:1-11.

1. Joe challenges us to take a stand against Satan's attack against this generation. He says it won't be easy for those who are single parents. Yet how does God give special strength to single parents? How can the example of Susanna Wesley encourage single parents?

2. Likewise, Joe says this won't be easy for single persons or for married couples who are childless. If you're in one of those categories, how can you still impact the next generation?

Notes:

"The LORD bless him!" Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. "He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead." She added, "That man is our close relative; he is one of our kinsman-redeemers."

Ruth 2:20

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3. What was the temptation for Ruth on the threshing floor?

4. What was the temptation for Boaz?

5. How can we be sure that Ruth and Boaz didn't give in to temptation?

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. How would an ancient Hebrew, along with people in many parts of the Middle East today, know that what happened on the threshing floor represented a marriage proposal?

2. If Ruth and Boaz had yielded to sexual temptation, what effect would that have had on the end of the story?

3. What does Joe mean when he says that God's plans from a human perspective are at risk today because of the toxic tensions of temptation in a morally decadent environment?

Strength through Reflection:

1. Read the "Call to Action" below. Which of these four steps are you doing well?

2. Which of these four steps do you need to work on?

Notes:

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Notes:

Strength through Prayer:

Spend a few moments in prayer. Ask God to help you to be a person like Boaz or Ruth and to rear children who are sexually pure.

You may want to begin your prayer with these words:

"Dear God, I know that one of Satan's tools is to take the good things You have given us, including our sexuality, and to distort them and get them out of bounds. Your plans for marriages and families are at risk because of the great temptations in our world. Show me where I am weak. Help me to build a fence, based on Your Word and my intimacy with You, around that weakness. Give me a godly attitude toward others. Lead me to a fellow believer to whom I can be accountable."

Closing Call to Action:

Here are four steps toward "staying the course" of sexual purity:

First of all, note your weaknesses and know where you are weak: your thought life, what you're tempted to watch, what you're tempted to say, flirtatious moods, and so on.

Second, make a decision to build a fence around that weakness so it doesn't grow and lead you to failure. That fence includes memorizing the Word of God about moral purity and about the dangers of sexual failure. Proverbs and Psalms have some wonderful passages on this subject. Make this weakness a part of your prayer life. And don't just pray that you won't do something wrong. Pray that you will be a person of purity; pray toward the end game. Part of that prayer may need to be repentance: God, I come to You. I repent of this, and I want You to wash me and make me clean.

Third, change your attitude toward people of the opposite sex. Plan to love them, help them, and protect them, instead of using them on the altar of some fantasy or self-serving desire you might have.

Fourth, find a friend of the same sex to whom you can be accountable. Two friends holding each other accountable to be people of moral strength and purity will be a great support to your resolve not to let Satan mess up God's plan in your life through moral failure.

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