

FAITHFUL OBEDIENCE AND GOD'S PROVIDENCE

Ruth 2

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- How would you describe God's providence? What does it look like in your life?
- What is obedience and why do we sometimes struggle with it?

Little children are very vocal about any perceived lack of fairness when they don't want to obey. "Joey didn't have to make his bed today! Why should I have to?" Unfortunately, this isn't a problem only young kids struggle with. It can be difficult to remain faithful and obedient when what's required of you seems unfair or when any reward for your faithfulness seems nonexistent. "Why should I make my bed? It just gets messed up again when I sleep." But the perspective of a young child is often much more limited than a parent's. The parent may know that someone is coming to visit later that day, or that Joey was already punished for not making his bed, or that making one's bed is a beneficial habit to learn young. Like young children, we do not always understand the big picture as God sees it. Studying the second chapter of Ruth gives us a rare glimpse at the whole picture of God's providence. It shows what he can do when ordinary people are simply faithful and generously obedient to his commands, no matter the perceived personal cost.

Listen: [*Faithful Obedience and God's Providence*](#)

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- Hosts Dave Bast and Scott Hoezee observe that Boaz is a landowner, rich...but not overly rich, who works alongside his hired hands. When Boaz is introduced in Ruth 2:1, different biblical translations offer varying meanings of the Hebrew phrase describing him:
 - English Standard Version: "worthy"
 - New International Version: "man of standing"
 - New Revised Standard Version: "prominent rich man"
 - King James Version: "mighty man of wealth"
- In her book, *The Gospel of Ruth: Loving God Enough to Break the Rules*, Carolyn Custis James suggests the Hebrew phrase has a stronger meaning. Something closer to "might and valor." The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines valor as "*strength of mind or spirit that enables a person to encounter danger with firmness; personal bravery.*" What do all these meanings communicate to us about Boaz? Why do you think it was important to the biblical writer to communicate this about Boaz's character?

- Has someone ever praised you for something that was no big deal to you? Maybe you just felt you were doing what you were supposed to do/what was right/what you felt any person would do. Where have you seen God do big things from simple acts of faithfulness?
- Are there any of God's laws you find challenging to obey? How might your simple obedience in this area allow you to partner with God in his greater work of providing and caring for his people? How might we miss these opportunities if we follow the letter of the law, but do not keep in mind the spirit of the law?
- Has anything about the book of Ruth surprised you so far? Are there things that maybe you haven't noticed or realized in previous readings?

Related Passages

- **Leviticus 23:22**
- **Matthew 25:31-46**
- **Matthew 22:34-40/Mark 12:28-34**

Conclusion

Read Mark 12:28-34. How can you grow in faithfulness to this commandment? Think about the spirit of the law. Then think about places and people you encounter over the week. In prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes and heart, revealing to you any personal resistance that might be keeping you from following God fully with faithful obedience. If you're willing, consider also asking him to make you a vessel of his providence.

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