

Transforming Daily
“. . . gleaned in the field after the reapers . . .”
Ruth 2:3

Gleaning is the process of going into a field after the farmers have harvested the crop. It doesn't matter what the crop is, there is always something left behind. What is left over isn't much as far as a farmer would be concerned, but it is usually enough for an individual or small family. In some cases, such as it is here in the book of Ruth, the owner purposefully leaves something behind for the very purpose of gleaning.

Gleaning may reveal something about the character of the one who gleans. It may reveal a good work ethic, a desire to work rather than beg. Gleaning isn't easy. In some cases, gleaning takes meticulous searching, and is harder to do than harvesting the crop in the first place. Gleaning before the first harvest is called stealing. So it shows restraint and patience on the part of the one doing the gleaning to wait. It may be an indication of the level of desire and determination on the part of the one doing the gleaning. It also may reflect the kindness of the one leaving that which is to be gleaned.

As the story turns out, Ruth not only receives more than she expected to glean, but gleans enough for she and Naomi for some time. It just so “happened,” which is a word in Scripture to indicate the divine intervention of God on the behalf of whomever it is that experiences it, in this case, Ruth, that she gleaned in Boaz's field. He was a kinsman of Naomi. Ruth was just looking for enough food for the day and God supplied, through Boaz, enough food and resources for a lifetime.

From time to time, due to life's circumstances, we may find ourselves “gleaning” the fields onto which we “happen.” There is no shame in “gleaning.” It isn't about what we have or don't have. It's about what we do with what we have and are willing to do for what it is we need. Laying down and giving up is not an option. Staying down after a failure or failures is not an option. If you belong to God, He has a plan for your life to accomplish His purpose through you. “Gleaning” is but a season, but it provides enough for its time.

“Gleaning” is hard work. It takes time and patience to wait on the Lord. But it does reflect the character and integrity of whomever it is that is doing the “gleaning.” Maybe you're going to school and raising a family at the same time. Maybe you're a single parent which circumstance was thrust upon you very suddenly and unexpectedly. Maybe you just retired and you're getting acclimated to a new set of disciplines. Maybe you are recovering from a physical, psychological, emotional or spiritual injury, and you feel like it's all you can do just to get through the day, one day at a time. Once again, “gleaning” is only a season, it will pass. Do not lean on your own understanding. Trust God, He will provide according to His good pleasure, but for now it may seem that you have only “gleaned in the field after the reapers.”