



My Drift

Title: Bible – The Book of Ruth

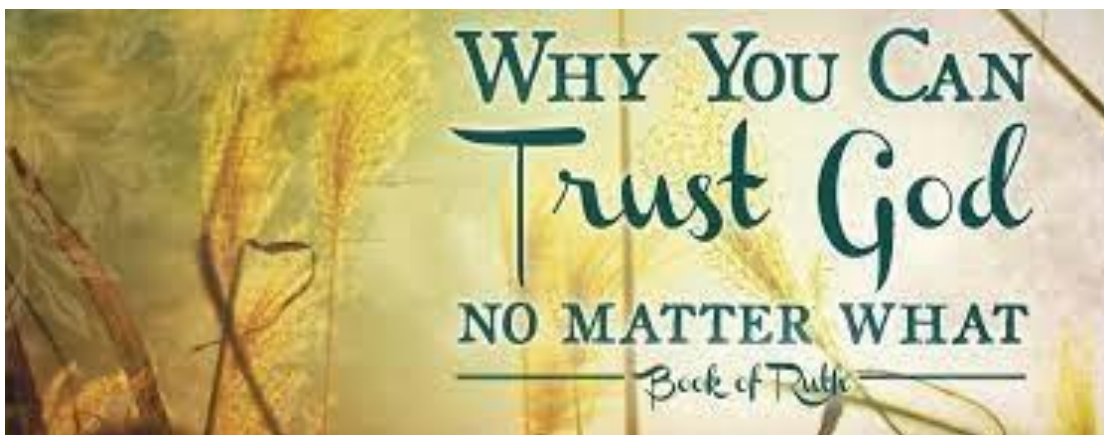
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The Book of Ruth is one of the shorter books of the Bible, but the story it tells is one of the most movingly ‘human stories’ in all of the Old Testament. However, how the story of Ruth should be interpreted is not an easy question to answer. Let’s delve deeper into the Biblical Book of Ruth to discover a world of outsiders, love, law, and mysterious customs involving shoes.



Ruth Chapter 1 Verses

Naomi Loses Her Husband and Sons

1 In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. So, a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. **2** The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

3 Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. **4** They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, **5** both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

Naomi and Ruth Return to Bethlehem

6 When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. **7** With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

8 Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the Lord show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. **9** May the Lord grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband."

Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud **10** and said to her, "We will go back with you to your people."

11 But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? **12** Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons—**13** would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the Lord's hand has turned against me!"

14 At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

15 “Look,” said Naomi, “your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her.”

16 But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. **17** Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me.” **18** When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

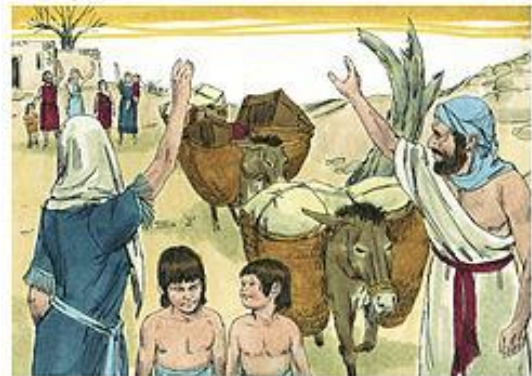
19 So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, “Can this be Naomi?”

20 “Don’t call me Naomi,” she told them. “Call me Mara because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. **21** I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”

22 So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.

Ruth Chapter 1 Summary

Ruth chapter one begins with the tell of a famine in the land Judah during the days of the judges of Israel. During this famine, a man named Elimelech took his wife, Naomi, and their two sons out of Bethlehem-Judah to go live in the country of Moab.



Unfortunately, while there, Elimelech died. His two sons took wives in the land of Moab, but sorrowfully, once again for this family, the two sons also died there leaving the family with no males. The son’s wives were named Orpah and the other was Ruth. As the famine ended, Naomi returned to the land of Judah, but she told her daughters-in-law they should go back to their land and to their families.

She blessed them and thanked them for their kindness to her and her sons. These were the days and times when mother-in-laws and daughter-in-laws got along. The daughters wanted to stay with Naomi, but Naomi was finished with child rearing (having children) and had no sons to give to them (a custom in Israel).

Orpah kissed Naomi and returned to Moab, but Ruth said no-way, she desired to stay with Naomi, her mother-in-law. Ruth told her mother-in-law that her people Israel were her people, and Naomi's God is her God. She was firm on that and there was nothing Naomi could do about it.

Ruth Chapter 2 Verses

Ruth Meets Boaz in the Grain Field

1 Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side, a man of standing from the clan of Elimelek, whose name was Boaz. **2** And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor."

Naomi said to her, "Go ahead, my daughter." **3** So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek. **4** Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, "The Lord be with you!" "The Lord bless you!" they answered.



Boaz and Ruth

5 Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters, "Who does that young woman belong to?" **6** The overseer replied, "She is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi. **7** She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.' She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter."

8 So Boaz said to Ruth, “My daughter, listen to me. Don’t go and glean in another field and don’t go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me. **9** Watch the field where the men are harvesting and follow along after the women. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled.”

10 At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?” **11** Boaz replied, “I’ve been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. **12** May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”

13 “May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord,” she said. “You have put me at ease by speaking kindly to your servant—though I do not have the standing of one of your servants.” **14** At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar.”

When she sat down with the harvesters, he offered her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over. **15** As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men, “Let her gather among the sheaves and don’t reprimand her. **16** Even pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don’t rebuke her.”

17 So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah. **18** She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough.

19 Her mother-in-law asked her, “Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!” Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. “The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz,” she said.

20 “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 guardian-redeemers.” **21** Then Ruth the Moabite said, “He even said to me, ‘Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain.’”

22 Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with the women who work for him, because in someone else’s field you might be harmed.” **23** So Ruth stayed close to the women of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

Ruth Chapter 2 Summary

Ruth chapter two brings together a special union. The chapter began with the introduction to a man named Boaz. He was important because of who came out of his lineage. He was a kinsman of Naomi’s late husband Elimelech. Ruth went to find work in the fields, and she found work in Boaz’s vineyard. Boaz asked about her and his workers gave her backstory, the gossip, the intel to him.

He was impressed and began to show her favorable treatment. Boaz told Ruth to work in his field and no one else’s and drink water without worry. She was surprised at his gesture, especially because he knew she was a stranger. Boaz told her he was aware of how she left her parents and the land of her nativity to stay with Naomi and the children of Israel. The LORD will repay you, Boaz told Ruth.

Her kindness to his kinsman Elimelech was what impressed Boaz. One day, Ruth returned home with plenty of food after her day of work, she had enough for Naomi, and this surprised Naomi. The mother-in-law wondered why. Ruth told Naomi about Boaz, and Naomi knew that God was in the midst of blessing and comforting them through Boaz, a near kinsman.



Naomi and Ruth

Ruth Chapter 3 Verses

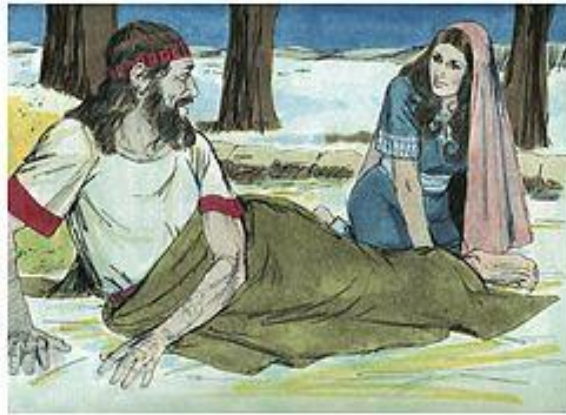
Ruth and Boaz at the Threshing Floor

1 One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, “My daughter, I must find a home for you, where you will be well provided for. **2** Now Boaz, with whose

women you have worked, is a relative of ours. Tonight, he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. **3** Wash, put on perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. **4** When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do."

5 "I will do whatever you say," Ruth answered. **6** So she went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do.

7 When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. **8** In the middle of the night something startled the man; he turned—and there was a woman lying at his feet!



9 "Who are you?" he asked. "I am your servant Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family."

10 "The Lord bless you, my daughter," he replied. "This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. **11** And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character. **12** Although it is true that I am a guardian-redeemer of our family, there is another who is more closely related than I. **13** Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to do his duty as your guardian-redeemer, good; let him redeem you. But if he is not willing, as surely as the Lord lives I will do it. Lie here until morning."

14 So she lay at his feet until morning but got up before anyone could be recognized; and he said, “No one must know that a woman came to the threshing floor.”

15 He also said, “Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it out.” When she did so, he poured into it six measures of barley and placed the bundle on her. Then he went back to town.

16 When Ruth came to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked, “How did it go, my daughter?” Then she told her everything Boaz had done for her **17** and added, “He gave me these six measures of barley, saying, ‘Don’t go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.’”

18 Then Naomi said, “Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today.”

Ruth Chapter 3 Summary

Naomi coached Ruth on how she should find more favor with Boaz (their close kinsman). She gave Ruth instructions on how to get close with Boaz, really close. In essence, she told her to let him know you’re interested (eyebrows flaring up and down). She literally told her daughter-in-law to go lay next to him at bedtime just see what he would tell her to do next.

At midnight, Boaz awoke and found Ruth laying next to him. Then he asked what she was doing? She told him to lay with her because he is her next of kin. This might sound freaky or different because it is. If it wasn’t for the “Israeli” custom of marriage and widowhood, many would have closed off this story. What is the custom? If a man died without having a child with his wife, his next of kin was responsible to provide a child for him through his widow.

In addition, the next of kin would also be responsible to raise the child up for the man who passed away. Most cultures don’t have this instilled so it indeed sounds and would feel weird. Ruth was following the custom in Israel. Boaz thought it very honorable and virtuous of a stranger to take part in the custom of Israel. He was also happy because he was a little older, she could have attempted this with one of the younger fellows.

Nevertheless, Boaz checked first to see if a closer kinsman would do the part, and if not, he would. She returned and told Naomi all that took place.

Ruth Chapter 4 Verses

Boaz Marries Ruth

1 Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat down there just as the guardian-redeemer he had mentioned came along. Boaz said, “Come over here, my friend, and sit down.” So, he went over and sat down.

2 Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, “Sit here,” and they did so.

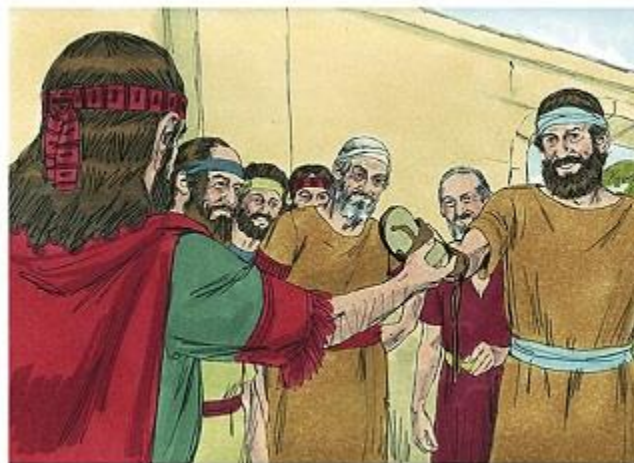
3 Then he said to the guardian-redeemer, “Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelek. **4** I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line.”

“I will redeem it,” he said.

5 Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the dead man’s widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property.” **6** At this, the guardian-redeemer said, “Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it.”

7 (Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal (shoe) and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.)

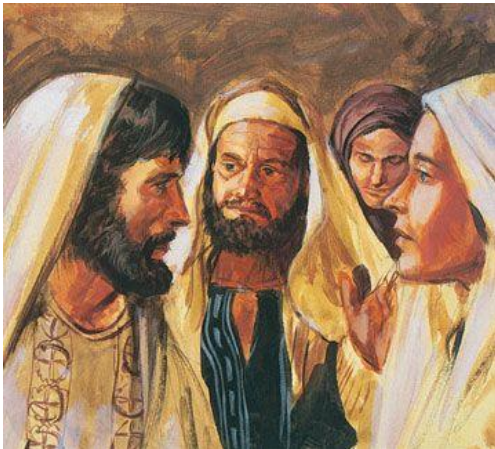
8 So the guardian-redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it yourself.” And he removed his sandal and gave it to Boaz.



This signaled that he relinquished all claim to Ruth or her dead father-in-law's land. Marrying Ruth would damage his own inheritance from his father (presumably for marrying a Moabite foreigner) so he declined. Boaz announced that he would marry Ruth.

9 Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, “Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. **10** I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!”

11 Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. **12** Through the offspring the Lord gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”



Ruth and Boaz get Married and have a Baby Boy

Naomi Gains a Son

13 So, Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. **14** The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! **15** He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.”

16 Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. **17** The women living there said, “Naomi has a son!” And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

The Genealogy of David

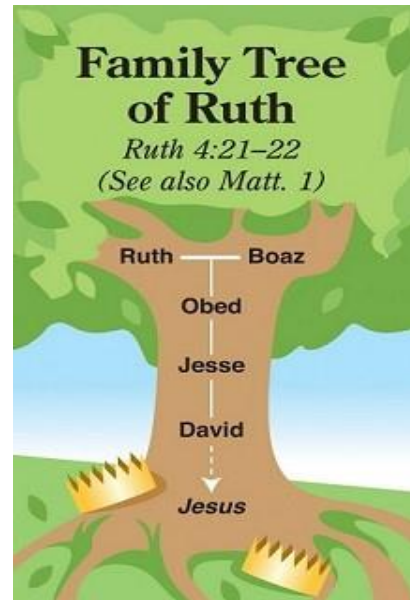
18 This, then, is the family line of Perez:
Perez was the father of Hezron,

19 Hezron the father of Ram,
Ram the father of Amminadab,

20 Amminadab the father of Nahshon,
Nahshon the father of Salmon,

21 Salmon the father of Boaz,
Boaz the father of Obed,

22 Obed the father of Jesse,
and Jesse the father of David.



Ruth Chapter 4 Summary

Chapter four of the book of Ruth begins with a man named Boaz informing the family member who was next of kin in redeeming the land and heritage of Elimelech (Naomi’s husband), and that heritage included Ruth, his daughter-in-law.

In Israel, if a man died, he left his belongings to his children, if he had no children, he left his belongings to his brothers, and so forth it went. His belongs included the responsibility of raising up a son for his name.

The family member originally agreed, believing he only taking over Elimelech’s land, but when he realized he had to take Ruth also, he backed out of the deal. He gave up his right of near kinsman and forfeited it to Boaz.

Boaz made the announcement before the elders that the name of Elimelech, Chilion and Mahlon, sons of Elimelech and Naomi, their names would not be cut off as Boaz and Ruth will raise up seed in their stead. The elders said, let Ruth be like Leah and Rachel, which did build houses in Israel. Naomi’s name was resurrected in Israel, and Ruth was more a blessing than seven sons.

Naomi held and nursed the newborn son, and they named him Obed. Later, Obed from the house of Elimelech and Boaz became the father of a man named Jesse. Jesse is the father of a man and great king in Israel named David.

What did we learn from the Book of Ruth?

Themes



- *hesed* – a theoretical term meaning compassionate loyalty
- Faithfulness
- Loyalty
- Selflessness
- Friendship

7 Powerful Lessons

Lesson #1 – There is Hope Even in the Most Devastating Times of Our Life

The book of Ruth begins by looking at the life of Naomi. After moving to Moab with her husband and sons, she loses her husband and becomes a widow. Just 10 years later her sons die, too. It seems that Naomi's entire life crumbles in those years.



It's crushing to lose a spouse. It's heart-wrenching to lose a child. And Ruth, she also lost her husband. She left behind her family to go with Naomi back to Bethlehem. When these two women arrive back in Naomi's hometown, they are destitute, devastated, and broken. Neither of them knew how they'd survive. But both of them had faith that somehow things would work out. They had hope for their future.

Lesson #2 – The Past is Not Our Final Destination When We Trust God

At the very beginning of the book of Ruth, she's living in Moab, her home nation. Moab was a place that most Israelites didn't like. It was an enemy nation, and Israelites tended to look down on the Moabites. On top of that, she was a widow, she was childless, and she lived with her mother-in-law.

That journey to Israel must have been frightening. She made a choice to stay with Naomi and help her, all the while knowing that she was going to a country that wouldn't like her very much. Her country of origin already made her an outcast, and being a childless widow gave her plenty of reason to shrink back into a shell and simply live her life in obscurity.



But that's not what she did. She declared that she was going with Naomi to Bethlehem, left her country and her family behind, and refused to let her past hold her back. She chose to serve the God of Naomi, and she believed there was still life left for her to live.

No matter your past, you still have a purpose. Your past is not your final destination when you make a choice in faith. While your confidence may be wavering, God's promises are not.

Lesson #3 – Doing the Right Thing Often Takes Great Sacrifice

Doing the right thing isn't always easy. In fact, it often takes great sacrifice. Naomi reminded Ruth that she was free to leave and go back to her family. She was free to go back to her gods and free to search for a new husband to take care of her. But even when her sister-in-law chose to go back, Ruth made a different decision.



Ruth chose to go with her mother-in-law, showing not only how dedicated she was to Naomi, but also her dedication to the God of Israel. In that instant, she decided, "...Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

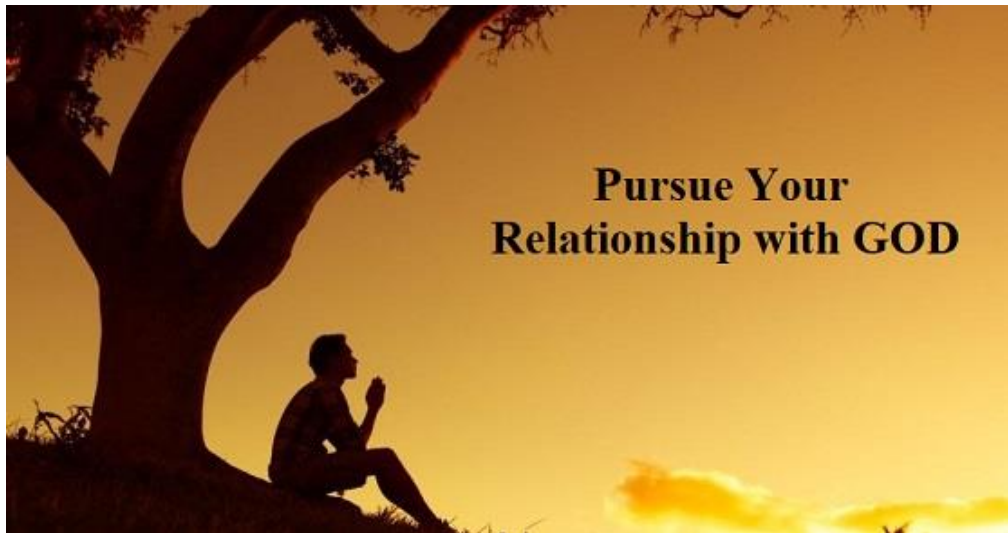
It was a sacrifice for Ruth to refuse to return to her family. Her commitment to journey on with Naomi was a beautiful, selfless act, and a stunning example of the love of Christ – the same Christ who would be of her bloodline years later.

Lesson #4 – Sharing Openly About Our Relationship with God Brings Intimacy to Relationships

The story of Naomi and Ruth are woven together closely that their stories are nearly inseparable. In fact, we know more about the relationship between these two women than we know about them individually. Their relationship offers a beautiful model of a good relationship – a stunning look at a blending of lives.

The two women shared great sorrow, but they also shared great affection for one another. We also see the freedom in their relationship. Naomi loved Ruth, but she was willing to let her go back to her family. But it was Ruth's love for Naomi that made her willing to leave her country to return to Israel. Even though Naomi knew that a new marriage for Ruth would change their

relationship, she still played an important part in arranging the marriage of Boaz and Ruth.



It was their faith that was at the center of their relationship and intimate communication. Through Naomi, Ruth learned about the God of Israel and chose to put her trust in him. Naomi's ability to be open and honest with Ruth about her relationship with God is inspiring.

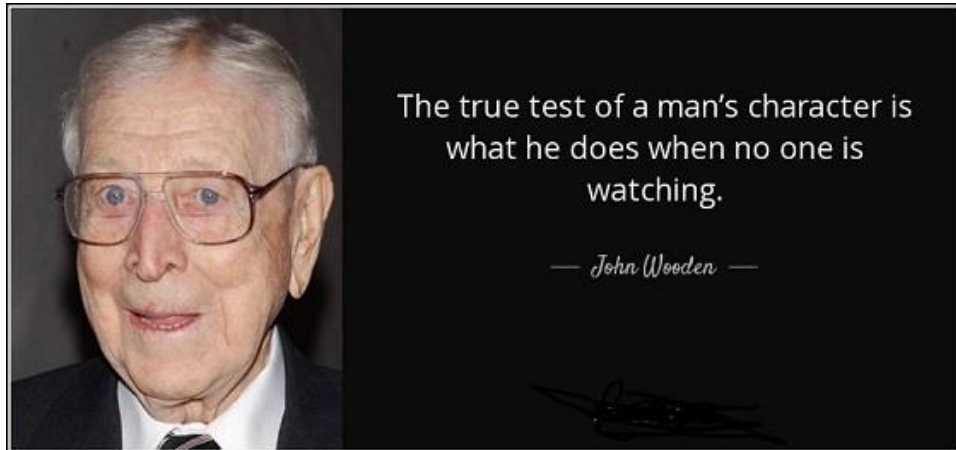
Lesson #5 – We See a Preview of Christ's Redeeming Power

Throughout the Bible, we see previews of Christ. In the book of Ruth, we see Boaz as a "type" of Christ – he's the "redeemer" of Ruth. These previews of Christ are a bit of a "foreshadowing" that falls across Old Testament pages, fully coming to reality in the New Testament with the birth of Jesus. Years later Jesus would become the "redeemer" for mankind.



Lesson #6 – We Must Be People of Character Even When We Think No One is Watching

Character – it's who you really are when no one else is watching. Ruth had no idea that millions of people would read her story. She lived a simple life in obscurity. Yet she showed incredible character.



Ruth went above and beyond in the way she honored and respected her mother-in-law, and in doing so became known in the entire city as a “virtuous woman.” She worked hard to provide food for her and her mother-in-law. Everything that she did showed her character, and because of that character, she was honored by God. Like Ruth, we also need to work to be women and men of integrity.

Lesson #7 – God Uses Unlikely People for His Purpose

Ruth was a poor, outcast widow. She grew up in an evil country – an enemy of Israel. She was childless. She moved to a foreign land where she knew no one but her mother-in-law. They struggled with poverty. She had to go gather behind the harvesters in the fields to get a bit of barley so they could survive. Anyone who looked at this foreign widow would have never guessed that God would choose her bloodline for the line of the promised redeemer – Jesus.

Ruth reminds us that no matter what lies in our past, and no matter how difficult our circumstances may be, a little bit of faith makes a huge difference. And even in our obscurity, and in the mess of what may be our lives, God finds a way to use the most unlikely people in ways that we could never imagine.

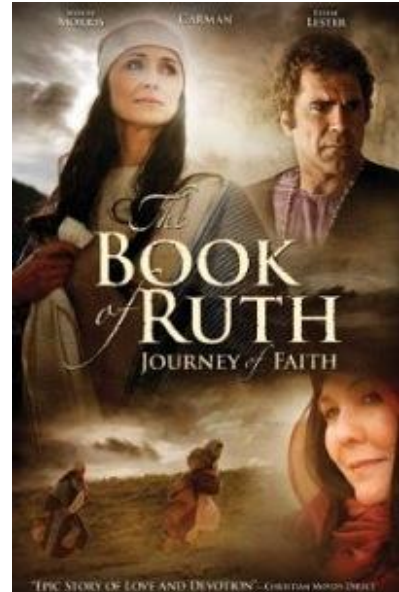


Did you know that they made a movie about the Book of Ruth?

The Book of Ruth: Journey of Faith is a 2009 Christian film directed by Stephen Patrick Walker. It is based on the Book of Ruth, and was aired January 8, 2010, on the Trinity Broadcasting Network. The film stars Dan Haggerty, Lana Wood, Eleese Lester, Carman, and Sherry Morris as Ruth.

Plot

The Book of Ruth is about a Moabite woman who loses her Israelite husband, her father-in-law, and her brother-in-law. With no men to provide for her and the rest of her family, her mother-in-law decides to set her daughters-in-law free for them to be able to remarry. But Ruth instead opts to stay with her mother-in-law out of the great love that she has for her. They both travel to Israel in hopes of a better harvest and probably even a better life. There Ruth meets Boaz, a man of noble character. He takes care of Ruth by letting her glean on his property and making sure she is safe in his field. Naomi and Ruth then decided to take the situation in their own hands by making Ruth do an certain noble act – laying down near his feet when he was sleeping at the threshing floor. She then asks Boaz to redeem her family and so he does. But, before he gets to do so, he must be able to receive the permission of a closer relative Naomi's family has. In the end, Boaz and Ruth was able to get married and after a while they gave birth to a son whom they named Obed. From Obed's grandson came the line of King David and the royal house.



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