

RUTH: Inspiring Story of “Positive Regard” and Positive Relationships

In the story of Ruth we find two of the most inspiring relationships in the entire Bible – the story of Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi, and the love story of Ruth and Boaz. We can learn valuable lessons on building strong and healthy relationships. We also see how God can work to turn around negative life situations into positive outcomes.

Background:

One of the ways that God disciplined Israel for her sin was to bring famine into the land. During one of those episodes of famine, Elimech from Bethlehem took his wife Naomi and his two sons (Mahlon and Kilion) to the neighboring country of Moab. During the lean years the family lived in Moab, Elimech died leaving Naomi a widow. Her two sons grew up and married Moabite women (Ruth and Orpah). Then the sons die, and Naomi was left only with her daughters-in-law.

Major characters:

Naomi (likely means “pleasant”): Jewish wife of Elimech. She was a godly woman who cared about the welfare of others. In the story we see her transformation from despair to happiness due to God’s blessing her through the selfless acts of Ruth and Boaz.

Ruth (likely means “friendship”): A Moabite, who was greatly influenced by Naomi and who became a follower of the one true God. Ruth had many exemplary characteristics and is an inspiring role model to us today. Ruth may or may not have been a beautiful woman on the outside, but she did possess an extraordinary inner beauty marked by a meek and quiet spirit, unpretentious humility and loyalty that made her one of the loveliest women in Scripture. She also ended up marrying Boaz and became the great grandmother of King David and was in the lineage of Jesus Christ.

Boaz: Jewish, related to Elimech. In the upper class, but was humble not proud. Like Ruth, he was a person of high character and exhibited many desirable attributes. He was older than Ruth when they met. Boaz’s mother was Rahab, the Gentile inn-keeper prostitute who risked her life to save Joshua’s Israelite spies at Jericho - and who became a follower of God and married an Israelite and became a converted Jew.

Chapter One Highlights (Naomi and Ruth):

Chapter Two Highlights (Ruth meets Boaz):

Chapter Three Highlights (Ruth and Boaz at the Threshing Floor):

Chapter Four Highlights (Ruth and Boaz Marry and Live Happily Ever After 😊):

Some of the Key Lessons from the Story of Ruth:

- 1) Naomi modeled how to reach people for the Lord – love on people and live a life worth emulating. Ruth wanted the peace, character and loving kindness she saw in Naomi.
- 2) Having a positive relationship with God is a great foundation for having positive human relationships.
- 3) Loyalty and kindness are great relationship builders.
- 4) True marital love grows of commitment to values far more significant than mere good looks. Character counts in life and in relationships!
- 5) We can great relationships despite differences (e.g. age, gender, ethnic origins, economic standing, social status, etc.).
- 6) We can build great relationships by having **common** values, goals and relationship with God.
- 7) Other?