

PERSONAL APPLICATION
BOOK OF RUTH

Seek guidance from the Holy Spirit in prayer before you read the book of Ruth.

Review

1. After you have read the notes on Caleb, list enemies you have that you can hope to overcome only with the help of Jesus.

2. What was the greatest lesson you learned from the life of Caleb?

Ruth 1:1–6

3. What catastrophe introduces the story of Ruth? How did the Bethlehemite try to deal with the catastrophe?

4. List the family members.

5. In Moab, what further disaster befell this family?

6. How do the following references shed light on the lesson this family learned?

a. Acts 14:22

b. 1 Corinthians 10:13

c. 1 Peter 1:7

Ruth 1:7–22

7. What decision did Naomi make for herself? For her daughters-in-law?

8. How did Orpah meet this suggestion?

Write the well-known words Ruth spoke to Naomi.

9. Give the pessimistic words with which Naomi greeted the people of Bethlehem. Upon whom did she place the blame for her misfortunes?

10. From Romans 8, try to find the answer you might have given to Naomi in her grief:

Verse 18

Verse 28 _____

Verse 31 _____

Verse 32 _____

Verse 35 _____

Verse 37 _____

Verse 38–39 _____

Ruth 2:1–23

11. Under what circumstances did Ruth meet Boaz? From the dictionary, give the meaning of the word “glean.”

12. What are some of the things Boaz said that show he was attracted to Ruth? Describe two kindnesses that Boaz showed to Ruth.

Ruth 3:1–18

13. Write the suggestion Naomi made to Ruth that would make Boaz more conscious of her.

14. The behavior of Ruth certainly could have been misconstrued. But what did Boaz say to show that he did not regard her as a loose woman?

15. Of what ancient Jewish law did Boaz remind Ruth (Deut. 25:5; Mark 12:19)? By suggesting this law, Boaz indicated he wanted to marry Ruth, but what was one hindrance?

Ruth 4:1–22

16. Describe how Boaz and the others resolved the matter for Ruth and Naomi.

17. The Ruth and Boaz story had a happy ending. What was the name given their son? _____

What relation was he to King David and what honor was to befall Ruth? (Matt. 1:1, 5–6)

18. Share with your group one characteristic of Ruth that you admire.



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RUTH – PICTURE OF FAITHFULNESS

God the Creator made many beautiful things. Nature simply abounds in beauty. Visit the Butchart Gardens outside Victoria on Vancouver Island or the Canadian Rockies with their glaciers and Lake Louise. Take a drive through Glacier National Park in Montana, Yellowstone, or Yosemite, and you will see how beautifully the Lord has created this world. All this comes from the hand of Him who cares for us (Psalm 121:2).

Nor is it simply the spectacular places that speak His glory. Visit the Wild Animal Park in San Diego or the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, or take time to observe the birds outside your own window and appreciate the variety. Each animal, each bird is unique, each one able to live in a particular area of the world showing the loving care of their Creator.

We know the crown of all God's creation was mankind, whom God made in His own image that he might have dominion over all the rest of His creation. Then God made a woman from one of Adam's ribs. She was designed to be a suitable helper, friend, and wife.

It seems in our age women have become the backbone of our society. In many instances, it is the woman who draws the family together, has the most to do with the molding of the character of the children, and who most often plays the major role in the church life of the family. Is there any area of life today where she does not play an important role? It is no

mere sentiment to say that women are the most lovely creatures of God's creation. You may be even more inclined to agree with me as we look at the life of Ruth. We want to use her as a model of Christian behavior, for we see in her a PICTURE OF FAITHFULNESS.

RUTH – A FAITHFUL CHILD OF GOD

Ruth had been born of heathen parents, yet through her husband and his family, she had come to believe in Yahweh, the God of Israel. Having accepted Him as her God, she did not merely give Him lip service. She was determined to live the way a true child of God is expected to live, remembering she was now one of His faithful followers.

Ruth's life became one of service. She was first devoted to the husband of her youth until he died (Ruth 1:2–5). She was particularly dedicated to the care of her mother-in-law, Naomi (1:16–17). She was devoted to her second husband, Boaz, who had shown her so much kindness. She poured her love upon her son, Obed. She was determined to please her adopted people. But above all, she was devoted to her God. Wouldn't it be wonderful for any woman to have such words written as her memorial?

Ruth did not think of her own personal welfare, considering instead only what would help others. As a result, she was a great source of comfort to others. Her warm-hearted devotion had its effect on everyone she touched, and each was a better person for having known her. This is what makes her such a wonderful example for all Christians.

In Ruth, we have the basic characteristics which make women God's special creation. At the center is their willingness to serve others. Praise the Lord for all the women today who have patterned their lives after Ruth, who

entirely forget themselves in their efforts and desires to help the members of their family and the people in their community and church. They become a real source of strength and comfort when difficulties arise. Their personality cheers all who come in contact with them.

We would be remiss if we did not mention the secret that made Ruth an obedient child of God. It was her deep faith in the Lord (2:12). She absolutely trusted in His goodness, even though she had lost the husband of her youth, the husband who had helped her find the Lord. She seems not to have questioned the Lord's way with her. She realized that in God's sight, she was a frail and sinful woman, but God still desired her salvation. As a part of the faith community of Israel, she looked forward to the Messiah to come, and her faith gave her life new and solid footing.

Ruth did not know the role she was going to play in the drama of redemption, that she was going to be the great-grandmother of King David and the ancestor of our precious Lord Jesus. But she did know that God was faithful to His Word! Her steadfast faith in God and His promises made her a child of God. This same faith in God and His promises, now come true in Jesus Christ, is the motivating force in Christian women today. They have been loved with such a great love it gives them an eagerness to love others.

RUTH – A FAITHFUL DAUGHTER

Being a child of God, Ruth would show herself to be a faithful daughter. In this age of rebellion, daughters can learn from Ruth rather than follow a course that demands release from the role of wife or mother, and freedom to go their own way and do their own thing. Instead, they would do well to listen to the advice of concerned mothers who have gone through the same frustrations and can speak from experience.

By being a faithful daughter, a young woman can show herself to be lovely. Recall again the touching scene when Ruth's mother-in-law, Naomi, who had lost her husband in the land of Moab, decided to return to her home in Bethlehem because the famine had ended. She instructed her two daughters-in-law, both of whom had lost their husbands, to remain in Moab where they would have a better chance for happiness because they could more easily find suitable husbands.

One cannot forget the words of Ruth which have been cherished over the years: "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God" (1:16). Think, too, of the manner in which Ruth cared for her mother-in-law when they returned to Bethlehem. Naomi was probably old and very frail, and you sense that Ruth tried to help her any way she could. She made every effort to make life easier for Naomi, and before long, everyone was speaking about her faithfulness to Naomi.

RUTH – A DEVOTED WIFE

For every woman, the biblical ideal is faithfulness to the Lord in the life "to which God has called [her]" (1 Cor. 7:17). For some, as Paul explains in the same chapter to the Corinthians, it may be the single life. For most it is the married life.

Ruth was a model of a devoted wife. We regret the Bible doesn't go into detail in describing the married life of this God-fearing woman because we feel she might have given us some good advice. From what we know of Ruth, she no doubt was a faithful wife to Naomi's son, who died soon after their marriage. Naomi was still able to keep a close relationship with her.

When we refer to the Christian woman as a wife, we are thinking of:

- women who by their faith in God and faithfulness to their husbands have influenced their husbands in such a way that together they have been drawn nearer to the Lord;
- women who have done all they could to help their husbands succeed in whatever vocation they may have chosen for themselves and made whatever sacrifices were necessary; and
- women who have encouraged their husbands when things were rough and have been a source of joy to their husbands.

Such a woman does not have to strive for position or equality. She already has it in the love and respect of her husband. She is fulfilling a high role in life. She deserves the highest honor her husband can bestow upon her. What a blessing when her husband cooperates with her to make life as pleasant for her as he possibly can. She is God's helpmate for him.

The manner in which Ruth negotiated the courtship that led to her marriage was perfectly proper. We should not allow our modern day social standards to flavor what actually happened. We need to be aware the customs of those days were different from ours. Ruth's action in going to Boaz on the threshing room floor merely indicated to him that she was available and ready for marriage. We do not know if Boaz had been married before. He very likely was a bachelor with timid bachelor ways. Yet it appears both of them were attracted to each other from the beginning and love developed rapidly.

Once Boaz realized what had happened, the door was opened to him by the ancient law of

levirate marriage. This law allowed the closest of kin to take a widow as his wife, and if she was childless, to provide a child to the honor of her deceased husband. However, in Boaz' case there was one kinsman who was closer to Ruth than he, and so it was necessary for Boaz to clear up this matter with his relative first. In the end, love conquered and a blissful marriage was consummated. Boaz foreshadows Christ Himself, who could be called our own "kinsman redeemer," even as we are, collectively, His bride!

RUTH – A FAITHFUL MOTHER

Another gift of God to women is the role of motherhood. Even as not all women are called to be wives, so not all wives are able to be mothers. But all may know the joy of their salvation and the certainty that each may serve the Lord "in whatever state" as contented children of God (Phil. 4:11). Many have discovered that motherhood may be more than biological. It may include the nurturing care that any woman may give a child.

We see Ruth, who had been widowed and then lived as a single person for a time, in her glory as a very faithful mother. By now, we know Ruth was a very special mother, even as Elizabeth and Mary were in New Testament times. Her son Obed (remember Boaz belonged to the tribe of Judah) was the one through whom the Messiah's line of descent was to continue, all the way back to Abraham and forward through King David. Ruth actually was the grandmother, many generations removed, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What a blessed thing it is for us that Ruth was able to be a mother, and thus the hope of salvation could be carried on. God, in His love, knew what He was doing when He chose Ruth to be the wife of Boaz, when He led her into the land of Israel with her mother-in-law, Naomi; when He caused her to say, "Your people shall be my people, and

your God my God." Boaz was the one who had to perpetuate the Messianic line and he needed a wife to do so.

The ancient Hebrews had a proverb, "God could not be everywhere, so He made mothers." This expresses a beautiful thought even though we know that God can be everywhere. Mothers are able to render valuable service for the Lord to others so God's purpose in the lives of those around them can be accomplished.

For this reason, the Lord gives women not only the glorious experience of motherhood, but also the strength and the wisdom to be good mothers, if they will allow Him to work in them. This means they are to lean heavily upon Him, follow the instructions He has outlined in His Word, and seek His assistance as they approach Him in prayer.

If we have, or had, pious and God-fearing mothers, God gave us a priceless treasure. If we have been "mothered" by someone else whom God provided at a time we needed such mothering, we've also known that blessing. We need to show continual appreciation to our mothers in the many things we can do for them. What a privilege that is! What an honor! What a responsibility!

Ruth surely is an example of Christian womanhood because she presents to us a PICTURE OF FAITHFULNESS.

(Note: I did not attempt to find substantiating Bible passages for all the things I wrote because I felt that my ideas are in the spirit of what the Bible tells us when it speaks of human relationships).