

# Judges & Ruth

God's *Faithfulness* Remains

women's | BIBLE STUDY

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LESSON *Seventeen*

At the Threshing Floor

After seeing the extraordinary kindness that Boaz showed Ruth, Naomi took action. She instructed Ruth to go down to the threshing floor under the cover of night, knowing she would encounter her kinsman redeemer. Ruth followed Naomi's instructions, and Boaz proved his worthy character by accepting her proposal of marriage. While Boaz was willing to marry Ruth, there was one problem: a closer relative must be given the option to marry her first.

## THRESHING FLOOR

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Naomi instructed Ruth to meet Boaz at the "threshing floor." A threshing floor was a smooth, flat circular area used to separate the grain from the kernel, an act known as winnowing. Threshing floors were often outside the city gate in an open area.<sup>92</sup>

## PROTECTION

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Boaz might have been sleeping at the threshing floor to protect his harvest from robbers.<sup>93</sup>

## MARRIAGE

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Remember, in this period, marriage was almost a necessity for a woman. It was one of the only ways Ruth would be provided with food and housing. God provided for those unmarried, but life was certainly harder. It was not a choice of romance, but of survival.

**Read Ruth 3 before answering the following questions.**

1. Take a minute to reflect on God's love for you, using the following verses for insight.

*Romans 8:14-17, 31-39*

*1 John 4:7-18*

How does God's love inspire you to love others? What often holds you back from fully loving other people as God loves them?

**Read Ruth 3:1-5.**

2. From Ruth 3:1-5, recount Naomi's instructions.

What was Naomi's hope for Ruth? Do you think this instruction was wise or evidence of a lack of trust in God?

3. Close your eyes and imagine you are Ruth. You are widowed, in a foreign nation, and without the provision a husband would offer. Your mother-in-law just gave you instructions that require courage and deep trust in God. How would you feel? What thoughts are running through your mind? What would you be afraid of? (See Appendix: Courage.)
  
4. Ruth listened to Naomi. Why do you think Ruth trusted in Naomi's counsel? How do you evaluate counsel from others? If possible, give a recent example from your own life.

**Read Ruth 3:6-13.**

5. Ruth startled Boaz. Using the chart below, briefly list the order of events that occurred after Boaz woke up.

VERSE 9	VERSES 10-12	VERSE 13

## LOYALTY

Ruth's response to Naomi echoed Israel's response to God in Exodus 19 and 24. Read these passages. However, Ruth demonstrated loyalty to God and her mother-in-law that the nation of Israel never quite grasped.

## "UNCOVERING BOAZ' FEET"

There are two ways to interpret "uncovering Boaz' feet." First, some believe this could be a euphemism for sex, though this is unlikely because Boaz esteemed Ruth's character in verse 10. Second, it could be a signal of Ruth's availability for marriage. Whatever the interpretation, it is clear that Ruth was a woman of integrity, and she was not doing something outside of God's will and way.

## SPREAD YOUR WINGS

Ruth asked Boaz to spread his wings over her as he was her redeemer. This statement relates to what Boaz said in 2:12 and is seen as a proposal of marriage. (See also Ezekiel 16:8.)

## WORTHY

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The word “worthy” that Boaz used in 3:11 is the same word used to describe a wife of excellence in Proverbs 31:10.<sup>94</sup>

## VERSE 11

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“According to 3:11, [Boaz] was willing to accept Ruth’s request, not because he was under legal obligation to do so, but because she was a woman of worthy character and good reputation.”<sup>95</sup>

## EMPTY VS. FULL

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The author used the term “empty-handed” which indicated a reversal of Naomi’s emptiness from chapter 1 is coming.<sup>96</sup>

6. Boaz agreed to redeem Ruth because she was a “worthy woman.” Where thus far have you seen her demonstrate worthiness? (See also Proverbs 31:10-31.)

7. When Ruth went to Boaz on the threshing floor, she could not have predicted what God had planned for her. She was simply being faithful without knowing what lay ahead. How do you respond when you face the unknown? In what situation can you more fully trust God’s faithfulness and provision?

**Read Ruth 3:14-18.**

“The way of kindness comes with risks. The way of kindness is vulnerable and unsafe. The way of kindness should not expect a thank-you and may even receive a rebuke. Living this way means taking initiative and sometimes stepping into a pile of rejection.”

– B. H. Corey<sup>97</sup>

8. Boaz was a powerful, wealthy man. However, he used his power and resources, not for his gain, but to protect the vulnerable. How do you see him protecting the vulnerable in this section?

Be encouraged. Boaz agreed to redeem Ruth no matter the high cost. Jesus has done the same for you today. He too paid a high cost. Though He was fully God, He came to earth as a man, died on a cross, and rose from the grave so you could be saved. Colossians 1:13-14 says, "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have the redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

9. Kindness breeds kindness. In this case, Ruth's loyalty, kindness, and love for her mother-in-law inspired both Naomi and Boaz to act. How might things have been different if Ruth made decisions based on what was easy?
  
10. Both Boaz and Naomi asked Ruth to wait for the outcome of their conversation with the closer kinsman-redeemer. God's plan sometimes involves waiting. In what situation are you having to wait? How can Psalm 27:14 and Psalm 130:5-6 help you?
  
11. How has Naomi's situation changed from chapter 1 to chapter 3? How has God been faithful to her? (Hint: Look for the theme of empty/full as discussed in lesson 15.)

## HESED

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We see the word "hesed" (loyal, steadfast love) repeatedly. So far, this word has appeared in Ruth 1:8, 2:20, and 3:10. Don't miss this aspect of God's character seen in those who love Him.



BIG IDEA

What is your biggest takeaway from this week's lesson?

Notes