



THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES
UNIT 9 • SESSION 3

FOLLOWING GOD'S GUIDANCE

MAIN POINT

God accomplishes His plan through love.

RUTH 1:6-9, 16-17 • LOVE COMMITS

6 She and her daughters-in-law set out to return from the territory of Moab, because she had heard in Moab that the LORD had paid attention to his people's need by providing them food. **7** She left the place where she had been living, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, and traveled along the road leading back to the land of Judah. **8** Naomi said to them, "Each of you go back to your mother's home. May the LORD show kindness to you as you have shown to the dead and to me. **9** May the LORD grant each of you rest in the house of a new husband." She kissed them, and they wept loudly. ... **16** But Ruth replied: Don't plead with me to abandon you or to return and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live; your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. **17** Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD punish me, and do so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.

RUTH 2:2-3, 8-12 • LOVE PROTECTS

2 Ruth the Moabitess asked Naomi, "Will you let me go into the fields and gather fallen grain behind someone with whom I find favor?" Naomi answered her, "Go ahead, my daughter." **3** So Ruth left and entered the field to gather grain behind the harvesters. She happened to be in the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was from Elimelech's family. ... **8** Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen, my daughter. Don't go and gather grain in another field, and don't leave this one, but stay here close to my female servants. **9** See which field they are harvesting, and follow them. Haven't I ordered the young men not to touch you? When you are thirsty, go and drink from the jars the young men have filled." **10** She fell facedown, bowed to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor with you, so that you notice me, although I am a foreigner?" **11** Boaz answered her, "Everything you have done for your mother-in-law since your husband's death has been fully reported to me: how you left your father and mother and your native land, and how you came to a people you didn't previously know. **12** May the LORD reward you for what you have done, and may you receive a full reward from the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."

RUTH 4:9-17 • LOVE REDEEMS

9 Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today that I am buying from Naomi everything that belonged to Elimelech, Chilion, and Mahlon. **10** I have also acquired Ruth the Moabitess, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, to perpetuate the deceased man's name on his property, so that his name will not disappear among his relatives or from the gate of his hometown. You are witnesses today." **11** All the people who were at the city gate, including the elders, said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is entering your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built the house of Israel. May you be powerful in Ephrathah and your name well known in Bethlehem. **12** May your house become like the house of Perez, the son Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring the LORD will give you by this young woman." **13** Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. He slept with her, and the LORD granted conception to her, and she gave birth to a son. **14** The women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you without a family redeemer today. May his name become well known in Israel. **15** He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. Indeed, your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him." **16** Naomi took the child, placed him on her lap, and became a mother to him. **17** The neighbor women said, "A son has been born to Naomi," and they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

INTRO OPTION 1

LOVE AND COMMITMENT

SUPPLIES LIST

NO SUPPLIES NEEDED.

Have students consider commitment for a brief amount of time. What is commitment and what does it look like in their lives? Then, have students consider if they were the coach of a team and a leader for an organization, what would be the standards people would have to follow? What would be things that would not be a big deal?

Help them see that the things that we love, we will commit to. In today's session, we will look at the story of Ruth. In this story, we see that love moves us to commit and to protect. We will also be reminded of God's love, a love that redeems us through Jesus.

INTRO OPTION 2

FRIES

SUPPLIES LIST

FRENCH FRIES (OPTIONAL).

Give students the chance to decide who has the best food fries. Have them list reasons why McDonald's fries are better than Burger King's fries. Then, have them plan out how they would convince everyone else (market) these fries as the best. Have them think through things such as size, price, taste value, etc. These series of choices can make or break their plans.

In today's session, Ruth makes a series of choices. But with each choice she makes, God is providentially orchestrating a story. Through her actions, the story God writes sets the stage for King David, and eventually, King Jesus.



SCRIPTURE READING

MAIN POINT

God accomplishes His plan
through love.

1. LOVE COMMITS

READ RUTH 1:6-9, 16-17

Naomi's sons had married Moabite women, one of whom was Ruth. Naomi's husband and two sons died, leaving the three women as widows. When Naomi decided to return to Israel, Ruth had a life-altering decision to make: to stay in Moab or to go with Naomi. Her choice would change the rest of her life and history.

WHAT WAS RUTH CHOOSING BEYOND THE DECISION TO GO WITH NAOMI?

Ruth made a decision that was very similar to Rahab's. She wasn't merely choosing Naomi. She was also choosing Naomi's God and people. This was Ruth's fork in the road, and at the critical moment, she chose to follow the God of Israel. Though she was a Moabite, she turned to the God of Abraham and became an Israelite.

HOW MIGHT RUTH'S DECISION CHALLENGE US TO LOOK IN THE MIRROR AT OUR OWN DECISIONS?

At some point in our lives, each person must take that defining step of faith. We must decide who we will belong to. No one gets to choose their biological family, but like Ruth, we all can choose our spiritual family. Who will we follow and who will have our highest allegiance: will it be Jesus and His people, or something else?

2. LOVE PROTECTS

READ RUTH 2:2-3, 8-12

Boaz, the son of Rahab, became a prominent man in Bethlehem. He was related to Naomi's late husband, Elimelech. Ruth just so happened (by God's hand, of course) to be gathering grain in the portion of fields that belonged to Boaz.

WHAT DOES BOAZ TEACH US ABOUT NEIGHBORLY LOVE?

Boaz was generous and hospitable. Ruth was free to gather grain in his field and drink his water. It's like when someone comes to your house and you tell them, "Make yourself at home; drinks are in the fridge and snacks are in the pantry." But he also demonstrated love through protection. She was safe on his property. Ruth would not be harmed or violated in any way while she was in Boaz's field and with his people.

The church community should be a place where people are welcomed and protected, a safe place for everyone. Love demands that we protect the most vulnerable among



RUTH 1:6-9, 16-17

1:6-9. “By sending each of her daughters-in-law home to her ‘mother’s house,’ Naomi is releasing them to remarry...The firmness of Naomi’s double command to Orpah and Ruth to return to their mothers’ homes is matched by the tenderness toward them she expressed in a double blessing.”¹

1:16-17. “Ruth stood between a rock and a hard place. Would she choose her own people the Moabites and their god Chemosh with whom she was no doubt familiar, or would she cast her lot with her mother-in-law and her alien kinsmen, and their God Yahweh, whom she knew only through the grid of Naomi’s imperfect faith? The first act reaches its climax as she declares her answer in vv. 16–17 ... Few utterances in the Bible match her speech for sheer poetic beauty and the extraordinary courage and spirituality it expresses.”¹

1:16-17. “With radical self-sacrifice, she abandons every base of security that any person, let alone a poor widow, in that cultural context would have clung to: her native homeland, her own people, even her own gods.”¹

RUTH 2:2-3, 8-12

2:2-3. “The Mosaic law displayed particular compassion for the alien, the orphan, and the widow by prescribing that harvesters deliberately leave the grain in the corners of their fields for these economically vulnerable classes and not go back to gather (liqqēt) ears of grain they might have dropped (Lev. 19:9, 10; 23:22; Deut. 24:19). As a Moabite and a widow, Ruth qualified to glean on two counts. But for these same two reasons, she could not count on the goodwill of the locals,



BIG QUESTION

DO OUR CHOICES MATTER IF GOD IS IN CONTROL?

Ruth’s story is a beautiful example of the relationship between human choices and God’s providence. Naomi chose to return to Israel. Ruth chose to stay with Naomi and serve Israel’s God. Ruth chose to glean in a field. Boaz chose to welcome her, and Ruth chose to propose to him. The kinsmen chose not to buy the field, and Boaz chose to marry Ruth. Each of these choices was real and free. But it cannot be ignored that God was at work in each of these people and orchestrated the story that He had planned. Choose to obey God every day and trust that He will use your choices to accomplish His sovereign plan.



SCRIPTURE READING

MAIN POINT

**God accomplishes His plan
through love.**

us. From pastors to parents, from leaders to students, we all must take ownership for each other's protection. Decide, like Boaz, that with all the power you have, you will choose to exercise that power for the care of others.

WHAT DOES RUTH TEACH US ABOUT THE VALUE OF HAVING A GODLY REPUTATION?

Word of Ruth's commitment to Naomi had gotten around. Ruth's reputation preceded her in the best of ways. She ought to inspire each of us. Regardless of your background (Moabite) or troubled past (widow), those things do not define you. You can develop character and make choices that build a godly reputation.

3. LOVE REDEEMS

READ RUTH 4:9-17

In chapter 3, Naomi desired for Ruth to remarry because she loved Ruth. She instructed Ruth propose to Boaz, which Ruth did. But there is a relative who was first in line to marry Ruth. Boaz promised to marry Ruth if the other relative wouldn't.

Boaz went to the city gate and told the relative that Naomi was selling the field of Elimelech, but buying it would include the acquisition of Ruth as well. This was no small request, since by law, the relative would have been required to give Elimelech heirs through Ruth and provide them with an inheritance. He didn't want to take on that kind of obligation, so he refused. But Boaz stepped up to marry Ruth.

HOW DOES BOAZ SHOW US THE REDEEMING LOVE OF CHRIST?

Boaz took responsibility for Ruth and Naomi's welfare. He was not obligated to take the matter into his own hands, but his love for Ruth compelled him to act on their behalf. Their redemption would come at a cost. Boaz had to buy the field, take Ruth as his wife, and provide for an heir. But Boaz was willing to pay the price. Boaz points us to Jesus, the One who loved us enough to take responsibility for our redemption. He paid the ultimate price to redeem His bride, the church.

HOW DOES THIS GENEALOGY HELP US SEE THE IMPORTANCE OF RUTH'S STORY?

The promise of a Messiah was given to the line of Judah. But at this point in Israel's history (the time of the judges), that promise seemed forgotten. Israel was occupied by the Philistines and far from God. But God had not forgotten or abandoned His promise. In the town of Bethlehem, He was continuing His plan. Boaz, the descendent of Judah, fathered Obed. Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David. In this way, Obed continues the messianic line that leads to Jesus and serves as a reminder that even in some of the darkest days in Israel's history, God had not forgotten His people.



BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

hence her concern to glean behind someone who would look upon her with favor.”¹

2:3. “By excessively attributing Ruth’s good fortune to chance, [the author] forces the reader to sit up and take notice, to ask questions concerning the significance of everything that is transpiring. The statement is ironical; its purpose is to undermine purely rational explanations for human experiences and to refine the reader’s understanding of providence. In reality he is screaming, ‘See the hand of God at work here!’ ...Ruth’s ‘chance’ arrival at the field of Boaz is providential.”¹

2:6-12. “From the first time Boaz opens his mouth until the last words he utters (4:9-10), his tone exudes compassion, grace, and generosity.”¹

RUTH 4:9-10, 13-17

4:13-17. “Ruth now sees restored all that she has given up—and more.”²

4:15. “These words also enshrine the story’s ultimate evaluation of Ruth by stating that she has meant more to Naomi than seven sons—the ideal number in the Old Testament (1 Sam. 2:5; Job 1:2; 42:13; Acts 19:14-17).”²

4:17. “The original point of the narrative is extended beyond showing God’s providence and care in the life of one family. It now concerns the life of the entire nation, for in the son born to Naomi, the history of God’s rule through David has begun. Furthermore, God’s rule through his ultimate ideal king, a son of David and God’s own Son, will come through Naomi’s son. This has ramifications throughout both history and the future.”²

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ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE

BRIDE OF CHRIST

The church is described as the bride of Christ, faithfully waiting for the day when Christ will return and heaven and earth will be one. Made up of all believers from all tongues and nations, the church is the bride that Christ redeemed. The picture of a bride also speaks to the permanence of Christ’s relationship with the church, for marriage was intended by God to be a lasting covenant between a man and a woman (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:5).



CHRIST CONNECTION

Boaz was a family redeemer who showed undeserved kindness to Ruth, a foreigner, and made her his wife. In a greater way, Jesus is our Redeemer who has shown unmerited kindness to us by providing us forgiveness from sin and making us His bride, the church.



HEAD



HEART



HANDS

HOW DOES THIS STORY REMIND US THAT GOD IS ALWAYS AT WORK?

God is hardly mentioned in the book of Ruth, but He is far from absent. When Ruth and Naomi's husbands died, they surely wondered, "Where is God and why is this happening to us?" But God was working behind the scenes. He was weaving the story, by His providence, to bring about His good and beautiful plan. The same is true for us. Even when we don't see or understand what God is up to, we can trust that He is working to fulfill His word and do good to His people.

WHAT DO RUTH AND BOAZ TEACH US ABOUT LOVE AND ACTION?

Ruth loved Naomi, and that led her to leave her family and homeland. Her loyalty and sacrifice were motivated by love. The same is true of Boaz. His love for Ruth motivated his generosity, protection, and sacrifice. This story shows us again and again that love takes action. Love should compel us to do something, because love for a neighbor cannot sit on the sidelines when someone else is in need. May we all love in word and in deed.

WHAT CHARACTER TRAITS IN THIS STORY WOULD YOU LIKE TO GAIN OR HAVE MORE OF?

There are many godly qualities on display in the book of Ruth: love, loyalty, generosity, protection, initiative, responsibility, sacrifice, etc. These were uncommon virtues in the days of the judges, but Ruth and Boaz show that you can have character even in a broken society. Discuss which traits connected with your group the most and how you can develop the kind of character that is demonstrated in this story.