

KINDNESS

Showing others they are valuable by how you treat them

Ruth and Boaz

Ruth

MEMORY VERSE | Luke 6:31

A long time ago in a land far, far away lived a woman named Ruth. While Ruth had grown up in Moab, she married a man who had traveled there from Bethlehem when food ran low. Her husband's family had come too, though his father had since died.

Ruth's new mother-in-law, Naomi, was happy to welcome her to the family. "Are you sure you've had enough to eat?" she always asked. "Try a little more."

But Ruth's happily-ever-after quickly fell apart. In a short time, her brother-in-law died, and then so did her own husband. While Ruth, at least, was living near her own friends and family, she must have worried about Naomi, who had lost both her husband and her two sons.

"She's all alone!" Ruth exclaimed to her sister-in-law, Orpah. "She's got no family here but us."

"Naomi's made of sturdy stuff," Orpah said, shrugging. "She'll pull through."

But Naomi could find no peace in Moab. "God's given food to His people in Bethlehem again. I'm going back home," she announced.

"Then we're going with you!" Ruth declared. "Wait right there. We'll be packed in a jiffy."

Ruth and Orpah joined Naomi as she began her long journey. But before they even made it out of town, Naomi stopped.

“Both of you go back,” she told them. “You were kind to your husbands, who have died. You have also been kind to me. So may the Lord be just as kind to you.”

Orpah nodded. She kissed her mother-in-law and left. But Ruth wouldn’t budge.

“Look at your sister-in-law,” Naomi said, waving in the direction of town. “She’s going back home to find a good Moabite boy. You go too.”

“Don’t try to make me leave you and go back,” said Ruth. “Where you go I’ll go. Where you stay I’ll stay. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God.”

“Don’t try to make me leave you and go back,” said Ruth.

“You’re not gonna listen to me, are you?” Naomi sighed. But she hid a tiny smile.

Ruth followed her mother-in-law every step of the way, helping her over the rough spots and working hard to set up their home in Bethlehem.

Naomi’s old friends and relatives were shocked to see the deep lines of grief in her face.

“How can this be Naomi?” cried one.

“She really ought to do something with her hair,” said another.

“Don’t call me Naomi,” Ruth’s mother-in-law declared. “Call me Mara. [God] has made my life very bitter.”

Ruth refused to play along. “You’ll feel better when you’ve had something to eat. Let me go out to the fields and pick up the leftover barley,” she said.

Bright and early the next morning, Ruth went out to follow the workers cutting grain, so she could collect the leftovers. The field was owned by a man named Boaz, a relative of Naomi’s husband.

When Boaz arrived, he questioned the foreman to discover who Ruth was. Then he caught up with her at the edge of the field. “Don’t go anywhere else to pick up grain,” Boaz told Ruth. “I’ve made sure no one will bother you. When you get thirsty, please help yourself to the water jars.”

Ruth was stunned to receive such treatment from an important man like Boaz. She bowed low. *“Why are you being so kind to me?”* she asked. *“I’m from another country.”*

“I’ve heard about everything you’ve done for your mother-in-law,” explained Boaz. “May the Lord reward you.”

At lunchtime, Boaz offered Ruth a meal. He even made sure his workers left extra grain behind for her to gather. So when Ruth carried home all the barley she’d picked up, her mother-in-law was surprised.

“God bless the person who helped you!” exclaimed Naomi.

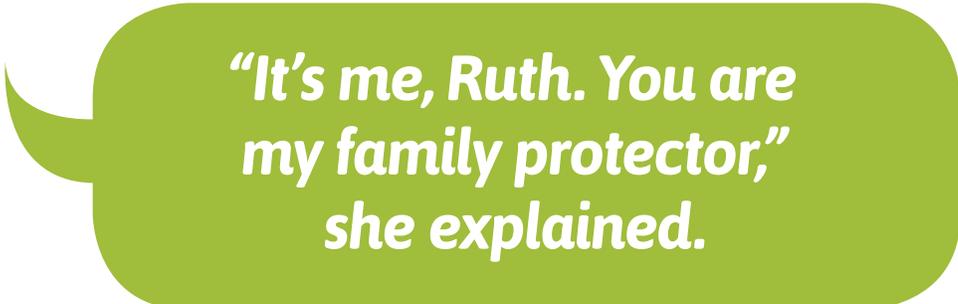
Ruth continued to gather grain in Boaz’s fields until the end of the harvest. “My daughter,” Naomi began. “You’ve worked so hard. We need to find you a good home, a good Jewish boy to provide for you. So go to Boaz and do just as I tell you.”

Boaz and the workers were busy at the threshing floor that evening, beating the sheaves to separate the grain from the straw. The hard work was followed up with plenty of good food. Weary from the day's work, Boaz lay down near the huge pile of grain and slept.

Some time later, Ruth approached and twitched aside the blanket that lay over Boaz' feet—just as Naomi had instructed. Then she lay down herself.

Boaz was startled when he awoke. Rubbing his eyes, he tried to make out the figure lying there in the moonlight. "Who is it?" he whispered loudly.

Ruth sat up quickly. "It's me, Ruth. *You are my family protector,*" she explained. "So please . . . take care of me."



"It's me, Ruth. You are my family protector," she explained.

"*May the Lord bless you,*" Boaz replied. "*Don't be afraid. I'll do . . . everything you ask.*"

Before Ruth left in the morning, Boaz gave her some of the newly threshed grain to take home to Naomi. The Jewish law required Boaz to check with another man, a closer relative, before he could fulfill his promise to Ruth.

"I'd like to buy the land that belonged to Naomi's husband," Boaz said. "And marry Ruth, too." The closer relative quickly agreed, and soon after, Boaz and Ruth were married.

Naomi was delighted. “I just knew you’d find a good Jewish boy!” she exclaimed. “Now I could do with a grandchild, too.”

Within a short time, God gave Ruth and Boaz a baby boy. Everyone in town clustered around to meet Naomi’s new grandbaby, Obed.

One of Naomi’s friends exclaimed, “Naomi, *[Ruth] is better to you than seven sons!*”

Ruth and Boaz smiled at Naomi as she cradled the tiny child in her arms. Through the kindness of Ruth and of Boaz, Naomi’s bitter heart had become soft again, and she continued to care for her brand-new grandson with great joy.



Let's
Talk!

Share with each other something kind you did today (or this week) for someone in your family or a close friend.

Was it easy to remember—or difficult to think of? Truth is, we all know that we should be kind to the people we’re close to. But it’s the people we spend the most time with—like family and friends—that we also get annoyed with, too! And when you’re going through a tough time, it’s easy to take it out on them. This week, think about Ruth; when things got tough, instead of getting angry at Naomi, she chose to treat her with kindness. And it changed everything! Pray for each other, that instead of getting frustrated with your family or close friends, you’ll choose kindness.