

Ruth

Match-maker, Match-maker

INTRODUCTION

- What does love look like? How does love behave?
1 Corinthians 13:4-8
- Hese: Loving kindness, selfless giving to another, covenant faithfulness, bond of loyalty
- Review of Ruth 1-2/ Ruth 1:16-17 / Ruth 2:11-12

NAOMI'S PLAN (vv.1-4)

PRINCIPLE #1: There is a time to _____ & a time to _____.

PRINCIPLE #2: Receive God's _____; act on God's _____.

- Seven-Step Plan to Catch a Man
 - ➊ Find a secluded place for a private conversation (vv.2-3)
 - ➋ Look and smell your best (v.3)
 - ➌ Wait until Boaz is fed and happy (v.3)
 - ➍ Spy out his exact whereabouts and wait for the cover of darkness (v.3-4)
 - ➎ Sneak up on him when he's asleep (v.4)
 - ➏ Uncover his feet & lie down at his feet (v.4)
 - ➐ When he wakes up, "He will tell you what to do" (v.4)

RUTH'S EXECUTION OF NAOMI'S PLAN (vv.5-7)

PRINCIPLE #3: A life of faith involves _____.

- Question about the meaning of "feet" in Ruth 3:4, 7
- Going a step beyond Naomi's instructions Ruth 3:9

BOAZ'S RESPONSE (vv.8-15)

PRINCIPLE #4: HESED love _____ selfish
_____ & _____ what is _____.

Hebrews 13:4 – *Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure.*

➤ Elements of Boaz's response to Ruth's request

- ➊ Shocked & pleased by Ruth's request (v.10)
- ➋ Blesses Ruth (again) v.10
- ➌ Feels flattered (v.11)... she didn't go after the younger guys, rich or poor!
- ➍ Promises to act right away (vv.11, 13)
- ➎ Compliments Ruth for her noble character (v.11)... she had a great local reputation
- ➏ Informs Ruth of another kinsman-redeemer (v.12)... a love triangle with uncertainty!
- ➐ Assures Ruth she will be married that day (v.13)... he swears with an oath
- ➑ Gives Ruth / Naomi a big gift (v.15)

- Six "measures" of barley = _____ - _____ pounds of grain

RUTH'S RETURN HOME (vv.16-18)

- Boaz is headed for Bethlehem (v.15)
 - ➊ Naomi is anxiously waiting (v.16)
 - ➋ Ruth spills out the whole story (v.16)
 - ➌ Ruth presents Naomi with Boaz's gift (v.17)
 - ➍ Naomi instructs Ruth to wait (v.18)

Prayer

Take a few moments to make introductions and reacclimate everyone to the group. What are you hoping to get out of your LifeGroup experience this season?

My Story

Did your parents ever encourage you to date, or even marry a person that they “picked for you?” How did that go?

Digging Deep

1) How do you recognize true love? How can you differentiate between someone showing a genuine form of love toward you, as opposed to a superficial or even selfish kind of behavior?

2) In the first 2 chapters of this book, Ruth shows herself to be a young woman filled with a genuine, self-sacrificial form of love (*HESED*) as she seeks to provide for her mother-in-law, Naomi, and herself. Discuss the character traits you would expect to see in a person that is described as “self-sacrificing.”

3) Of the following qualities that Ruth exhibits in this story, what do you need to show more of in your life?

- courage and willingness to take risks
- loyalty toward those I love
- discipline to work long and hard at a task
- respect and appreciation for others
- humility

Digging Deeper

4) **Read Ruth 3:1-4.** Why do you think Naomi advises her daughter-in-law to take such a strange (and risky) course of action at this point in the story?

5) During Sunday’s message, the pastor stated that “there is a time to wait and a time to act.” Is there an area in your life in which God is waiting on you to act? Would you be willing to share that thought with your LifeGroup?

6) **Read Ruth 3:5-6.** Ruth shows a great deal of courage and trust in doing what her mother-in-law asks her to do. Do you consider courage to be a part of your faith journey? Can you share an example or two of biblical steps of obedience which require courage?

7) **Read Ruth 3:7-18 & Psalm 27:14.** Boaz responds to Ruth’s bold faith with a promise to have himself or another man take care of her and Naomi, but he asks Ruth to wait. After years of suffering and having the hope of redemption almost in your grasp, how difficult or frustrating is it to be told to wait even longer than you already have? What does it mean to “wait on the Lord?”

Taking it Home

8) Ruth shows commitment and *HESED* (faithful love) toward her mother-in-law Naomi. Boaz, in turn, responds by showing *HESED* (faithful love) toward Ruth. What makes commitment, sacrifice and loyalty so important in the Christian life? How does such commitment reflect one’s character?

9) Self-sacrificing, *HESED* love builds a better tomorrow even if we don’t see the fruits of our labor today. Why does God ask us to live a life displaying this kind of servant-love, yet still requires us to have patience in our obedience?

Praying Together

Pray that God will grow the *HESED* kind of love in each person present, so that all of us will have a greater, more positive impact on the hurting world you live in.

