

Ruth

May 20, 2018

I. Five Character Qualities of Ruth

1. Commitment

A. Commitment breeds confidence

Ruth 1:16 But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.

James 1:8 Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

B. Commitment gives clarity.

Ruth 1:19 So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"

Ruth 1:22 So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.

2. Initiative

A. Initiative opens the door to God's plans.

Ruth 2:1-3 Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side, a man of standing from the clan of Elimelek, whose name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor." Naomi said to her, "Go ahead, my daughter." So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek.

B. Initiative reveals the state of the heart.

Ruth 2:5-7 Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters, “Who does that young woman belong to?” The overseer replied, “She is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi. She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.’ She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter.”

Proverbs 24:30-34 I went past the field of a sluggard, past the vineyard of someone who has no sense; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest— and poverty will come on you like a thief and scarcity like an armed man.

3. Humility

A. Humility allows us to respond with respect.

Ruth 2:10 At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?”

B. Humility is key to living in favor.

Ruth 2:2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor.”

Ruth 2:17 So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah.

James 4:6 But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

James 4:10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

C. Humility is not always the fastest way, but it is God's way...

Proverbs 25:6-7 Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among his great men; it is better for him to say to you, “Come up here,” than for him to humiliate you before his nobles.

4. Vulnerability

Ruth 3:1-4 One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, I must find a home for you, where you will be well provided for. Now Boaz, with whose women you have worked, is a relative of ours. Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. Wash, put on perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do."

Ruth 3:5 "I will do whatever you say," Ruth answered.

A. Vulnerability recognizes our need for others.

Ruth 3:1 One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, I must find a home for you, where you will be well provided for.

Ruth 2:12 May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."

B. Vulnerability positions us for further blessing.

Ruth 3:7-9 When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. In the middle of the night something startled the man; he turned—and there was a woman lying at his feet! "Who are you?" he asked. "I am your servant Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family."

Ecclesiastes 4:13 Better a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no longer knows how to heed a warning.

C. Vulnerability allows us to love and be loved

"To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable."

— C.S. Lewis, The Four Loves

5. Love

A. Love is always best as a team sport.

B. Love requires action.

Ruth 3:9 “Who are you?” he asked. “I am your servant Ruth,” she said. “Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family.”

Ruth 2:12 May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.”

C. Love covers.

Psalm 17:8 Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings

1 Peter 4:8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.