

4 Lessons Today's Couples Can Learn From Ruth and Boaz

"Now it is true that I am a redeeming kinsman. Yet there is another redeemer closer than I am. Stay here tonight, and in the morning if he wants to redeem you, very well. Let him do so. Yet if he does not want to redeem you, then I will redeem you. I will, as the Lord lives! Sleep here until morning" (Ruth 3:12-13).

The story hits a crisis when Boaz reveals to Ruth that as a law-abiding man, he must find a way to marry her legally. Because Naomi had chosen to welcome Ruth as a full daughter, the women had the legal right to their family land. And, closer to the women than Boaz was another family member who had the first right to redeem the women and obtain their land.

With such a quick answer, it appears that perhaps Boaz had been thinking about marrying Ruth and considered the obstacles in his way. But Boaz's mind was already racing to devise a plan by which he could obey the law and still marry Ruth. In this we see that Boaz was a man of action who was highly motivated to act quickly and decisively. Furthermore, Boaz trusted the providence of God to work through the legal system—and in not sexually sinning with Ruth or breaking the law, Boaz showed a determination to act in holiness and in faith that God would bless them.

Boaz then invited Ruth to lie at his feet for the evening. In doing this, he didn't engage in any sexual activity. Rather, knowing that a single woman trying to walk home in the dark of night would be in grave danger, he kept an eye on her as her defender and protector.

Early the next morning before anyone else awoke, Ruth and Boaz arose, and he sent her home before they were seen to safeguard

her character from scandalous gossip and unfounded rumor. Before sending Ruth home, Boaz asked her to open her shawl and filled it with an unspecified amount of grain, which was likely very valuable—showing himself yet again to be a generous and gracious man. Furthermore, Ruth received his kindness in the same way God asks us to humbly and gladly receive His grace and provision in our lives.

Naomi then demonstrated full faith in both God and Boaz by counseling Ruth to do nothing but wait patiently in faith. She was certain Boaz loved Ruth and was a worthy man who got things done, and he would have everything taken care of that very day so they could be married.

Principally we learn four things for singles from this scene of the story:

- Don't overlook the person in front of you. Boaz was single, but somehow overlooked Ruth, whom God placed in front of him.
- Feel free to get in someone's way. This is precisely what Ruth did, which allowed their relationship to move forward.
- Every relationship has obstacles to overcome, which reveals how committed one person is to one another. In this case, it was the legal and financial hurdle that blocked the path to marriage for Boaz with Ruth.
- Every relationship has character tests that show us and the one we are with who we truly are. These tests, if passed, become part of our testimony, as was the case with Ruth and Boaz.

In conclusion, the story of Ruth and Boaz is one of the greatest love stories in Scripture. As such, it's a little love story that's a part and reflection of the big love story of Scripture (e.g., Ezekiel 16:8) where Jesus is "our glorious Boaz" who redeems His bride, the church. Jesus does this by grace, without any obligation, by doing all the work to redeem

those who come to Him in faith—just as Ruth came to Boaz seeking redemption and then waited patiently as he alone redeemed her by grace.

How can you grow in being a person who gives and receives wise counsel? {eoa}

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