

9 Character Traits of Spiritually Safe People

So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should acknowledge me, a foreigner?" Boaz answered and said to her, "I have been told all that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband, and how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to a people you did not know before. May the Lord reward your deeds. May you have a full reward from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge." Then she said, "May I find favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and have spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not like one of your servant girls" (Ruth 2:10-13).

Boaz simply wanted to give to Ruth and take nothing from her. Boaz answered Ruth's question by publicly praising her character as a woman with faith in God and faithfulness to her mother-in-law. Boaz also prayed for her, despite having only known her briefly, and asked that God would reward and protect her. Boaz's prayer is one of many in the book; each were prayed for someone else and all were answered by the conclusion of the book (1:8–9; 2:12, 20; 3:10; 4:1–12, 14).

Two things are most curious about Boaz's prayer for Ruth. First, not only did he pray that Ruth would be rewarded by God for her faithfulness, he also answered his own prayer. In this, Boaz is like Jesus, who prayed that sinners would be forgiven while hanging on the cross and then died to answer His own prayer and enable forgiveness.

Second, Boaz was apparently a frequent reader of the Psalms because he included a common theme from the Psalms as part of his prayer for Ruth. Boaz essentially referred to Ruth as a

lovely but vulnerable small bird that God had taken under His wing. This word picture is a heart-warming reminder that God doesn't use His proverbial wings to fly from us, but rather cover us that we might have safety (Ps. 17:8), refuge (Ps. 36:7, 57:1, 61:4, 91:4) and joy (Ps. 63:7).

In the example of Boaz, we see nine aspects of safe people:

- Safe people understand the Father heart of God.
- Safe people care about our safety.
- Safe people introduce us to other safe people.
- Safe people enforce good boundaries.
- Safe people are generous.
- Safe people encourage our character.
- Safe people pray we would flourish.
- Safe people provide comfort and kindness.
- Safe people point us to God as our safe place.

In conclusion, we see that although Ruth was a despised Moabite who had worshipped a false god (Deut. 7:1–4, 1 Kings 11:1–2) called Chemosh (Num. 21:29, 1 Kings 11:7), God both saved her and blessed her. God did this through His invisible hand of providence that was made visible through the hand of Boaz, a masculine man of honor who walked hand-in-hand with Him. Likewise, to God we are each Moabites—outcasts, idolaters and unworthy of grace or favor. But just as Boaz came to his field to speak with and care for Ruth, so Jesus, our great Boaz, came to His earth to give us gracious favor and take us under His proverbial wing.

FOR MEN: Boaz has the Father heart of God for Ruth and Naomi. How can you receive this kind of heart and nurture in safe and life-giving relationships with the women in your life?

FOR WOMEN: Boaz presents a human picture of the Father's heart for His daughters. Is it easy or difficult to believe that God has the same love and care for you? Is it easy or difficult to believe men like Boaz exist who are safe for the women in

their lives? Why? {eoa}

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