

Lessons from the Book of Ruth

1. Your Past is Not Your Present or Your Future

In the Book of Ruth, we see that she was a “lowly” Moab, a widow and, possibly barren. Life looked pretty bleak for her.

Despite her circumstances and past, she boldly moved forward, followed her mother-in-law and looked to the future.

No matter what you have been through, God is not done with you. He has a plan for you and as a follower of Christ; don't look to your past. Look to your future and trust that He has a plan for you.

3. Don't assume or discriminate

He does not discriminate. He doesn't look at where we live, what race or nationality we are or how much money we earn.

Ruth was a Moabite. She was not an Israelite. Others treated her as inferior but God loved her the same. God does not discriminate, and He loves all people just the same.

4. God Views Men and Women Equally in Importance

God cares about men and women all the same. We are all His creation and He loves us deeply. Many religions and cultures place men in higher esteem and degrade women, the only one true God views men and women the same. There is no difference in His loving eyes.

5. No One is Unimportant to God

As mentioned above, many viewed Ruth as “less than”. She was from Moab (you may recall that Moab is a nation that resulted from an incestuous relationship between Lot and one of his daughters. Not a great start to her life. She was poor. She was a widow and she was far removed from where she was born and raised.

God, however, saw her as loved and important. He even saw her as part of His plan for bringing the world a redeemer. (she was the grandmother of King David).

God regularly uses “regular” people, often the least ones we would expect to do great things.

6. Character Matters

They say that character is who you are when nobody is looking.

When Ruth said, "where you go, I will go", I'm sure that it didn't cross her mind that, for centuries, millions would read about her and learn about her character.

She far exceeded the expectations of a daughter-in-law. She honored her bitter and hurting mother-in-law and put in long and physically demanding days in the field to provide food for herself and Naomi. Ruth displayed strong character as a wife to Boaz, as well. Everything she did displayed Ruth as a woman of noble character and God blessed her and generations after for beautiful representation of character.

When you make a decision to do or say something, consider if you would do or say that same thing if someone, if God, himself, were watching.

7. Redemption is For Everyone

No matter what your background, address, marital status or sin-filled past says, redemption is a gift from God and available to all.

Ruth had less than most of us and had faced heart-wrenching events in her life, yet, she believed that God was able. She believed that He would take care of her and her life unfolded into a story that would affect generations to come. He took a hungry, destitute, homeless, hurting woman and healed her, provided for her needs and brought her a husband to love and cherish her. He redeemed her and He will redeem you, too!

Redemption is possible in your life. No matter where you come from or what you have been through, God has a plan for you that far surpasses anything you can imagine or dream.

8. Stay Loyal to Your Commitments

Ruth and Orpah were faced with a decision, an edict, really – Naomi told them to go back to their hometowns and hope to be blessed with another husband. Orpah decided that's what she would do. Ruth, however, decided to stay with Naomi and face the hard times that were sure to be for a couple of widows. She honored her commitment to Naomi, instead of thinking of her own needs and chances for marriage.

When you make a commitment, be it working in your church's nursery or a covenant of marriage, stay loyal to your commitment. God will honor you as you honor Him and those around you.

9. God Uses Little Things for Great Things

God orchestrates so many "little" things as part of His great plans. God's plan for Ruth was for her to be part of the lineage of Christ! In order to carry out that plan, He laid out a series of "little" things, which would unfold to one day, bring us a Savior!

Little things (ok, some not so little) in Ruth's life included famine, her in-laws moving to Moab, the death of her husband, her following Naomi back to her hometown of Bethlehem and more – all for one thing – for God to do great things in her life.

When you face hurdles in your own life, take a step back and thank God. He is moving in your life and your little things are part of His big plan!

10. God is Both a Redeemer and has Given us a Redeemer

As God redeemed the Israelites, He has given us a Redeemer who can rescue us from our sin and give us eternal life. Some biblical scholars consider Boaz a prophetic symbol of Jesus, a rescuer, a kinsmen-redeemer. We all needed rescuing and Jesus was born, lived and died to redeem us.

11. Just Do It

When Naomi and Ruth arrived in Bethlehem, Ruth was determined to find work to provide food and other necessities for them. In Ruth 2:2, we read 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."

She was willing to do anything to help their situation. It didn't take her long to find a nearby field and follow the harvesters, gleaning as she went. Ruth worked hard and her work ethic was noticed by the field manager or foreman. He went to Boaz, the owner of the fields and told him of how hard she worked and the long hours she put in.

Ruth didn't spend days making sure her resume was perfect or lollygagged around while others worked. She jumped in, found a job in the fields and worked harder and longer than anyone else. She just did it.

When Naomi suggested that Ruth put on her best clothes and fragrance and go to Boaz to let him know of his position as kinsmen-redeemer, she didn't hesitate.

And we all know, by now, how that story turned out!

12. Decisions Made Today, Can Impact Generations

Ruth decided to go with Naomi. She decided to glean in the fields. She decided to lay at Boaz's feet. She decided to marry him. They had a child, which is in the direct lineage of Christ Jesus.

Ruth's decisions many years' ago have influenced the lives of millions.

Consider your daily decisions. Prayerfully choose your direction. God may be using that small decision today to affect a generation!

What else can you take from the story of Ruth and Naomi?

Prayerfully review your commitments, decisions and relationships in light of the story of Ruth and Naomi?

What is God revealing to you?