

Ruth 3–4 Study Guide

Emphasis: Ruth 3:8–13; Ruth 4:13–17

Ruth 1–2 moved from loss toward provision. Naomi came home bitter and empty (Ruth 1:20–21), but Ruth’s loyal love brought her to Bethlehem, where she gleaned in the field of Boaz (Ruth 2:2–3). Boaz protected Ruth, provided for her, and blessed her as one who had come for refuge under the wings of the LORD (Ruth 2:12).

Ruth 3–4 moves from provision toward redemption. Naomi seeks “security” or “rest” for Ruth (Ruth 3:1). Ruth approaches Boaz at the threshing floor, and Boaz responds with honor, restraint, and covenant faithfulness. By the end, Ruth is married, Naomi is comforted, a child is born, and the story that began with death ends with life. But the book also shows something larger: God is quietly working through ordinary faithfulness to carry forward the family line that will lead to David and ultimately to Christ (Ruth 4:17; Matthew 1:5–6, 16).

1. Why does Naomi seek “security” or “rest” for Ruth? (Ruth 3:1–5)

Naomi says, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?” (Ruth 3:1). This connects back to Ruth 1, where Naomi prayed that the LORD would grant Ruth and Orpah “rest” in the house of a husband (Ruth 1:9). Naomi is not merely arranging romance. She is seeking long-term protection, provision, and covenant stability for Ruth.

Ruth and Naomi are widows, and Ruth is also a Moabite in Israel (Ruth 1:4, 22). Their future is vulnerable. Naomi sees that Boaz is a relative and that he has already acted with kindness and protection toward Ruth (Ruth 2:8–12, 20).

Everyday Application: Love looks beyond immediate needs. Ruth 2 gave food for the day, but Ruth 3 seeks long-term well-being. Faithful care asks, “What would truly help this person flourish?”

2. What is Ruth asking when she says, “Take your maidservant under your wing”? (Ruth 3:8–9)

When Boaz wakes at midnight and asks who she is, Ruth answers, “I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative” (Ruth 3:9). This is a bold but honorable request. Ruth is asking Boaz to act as a redeemer and bring her under his covenant protection.

Her words connect beautifully to Boaz’s earlier blessing. In Ruth 2:12, Boaz said Ruth had come for refuge under the wings of the LORD. Now Ruth asks Boaz to become the human means through which that refuge is expressed.

This is not manipulation. Ruth identifies herself humbly, appeals to Boaz’s role as a close relative, and seeks redemption within the covenant community.

Forward Connection to Christ: Jesus later grieves over Jerusalem and says He desired to gather her children “as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings” (Matthew 23:37). Ruth’s request points to the deeper longing for refuge under God’s care.

Everyday Application: God's care often comes through people who are willing to act faithfully. It is good to pray for God's refuge, but we should also be ready to become part of His provision for others.

3. Why does Boaz bless Ruth instead of rebuking her? (Ruth 3:10)

Boaz says, "Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter!" (Ruth 3:10). He recognizes Ruth's request as an act of loyal love, not selfish ambition. He says she has shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning because she did not go after young men, whether poor or rich (Ruth 3:10).

Ruth's first kindness was leaving Moab and clinging to Naomi (Ruth 1:16–17). Her later kindness is seeking a redeemer in a way that preserves Naomi's family line. Ruth is not merely seeking her own future; she is acting in loyalty toward Naomi's household.

Everyday Application: Mature love considers more than personal desire. Ruth's choices are shaped by loyalty, wisdom, and concern for others.

4. What does Boaz mean when he calls Ruth a "virtuous woman"? (Ruth 3:11)

Boaz tells Ruth, "All the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman" (Ruth 3:11). The phrase describes strength, worth, character, and noble conduct. It is related to the description of the "virtuous wife" in Proverbs 31:10.

This matters because Ruth is a foreign widow with little social standing. Yet her character has become known in Bethlehem. Her reputation was not built through status, wealth, or self-promotion, but through faithful love, humble work, and loyalty to Naomi (Ruth 2:6–7, 11).

Forward Connection to Christ: Jesus teaches that character is seen in fruit: "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit" (Matthew 7:17–18). Ruth's life bears visible fruit.

Everyday Application: Reputation is often formed in ordinary faithfulness. People may not see everything, but steady character speaks over time.

5. Why does Boaz pause instead of immediately taking action? (Ruth 3:12–13)

Boaz says that it is true he is a close relative, but there is a relative closer than he (Ruth 3:12). He is willing to redeem Ruth, but he will not bypass what is right. He tells Ruth to stay the night, and in the morning he will settle the matter properly (Ruth 3:13).

This shows Boaz's integrity. He has affection and willingness, but he is governed by righteousness. He does not use the privacy of the moment to take advantage of Ruth or avoid proper responsibility. His words and actions protect Ruth, Naomi, and the family line.

Forward Connection to Christ: Jesus fulfills righteousness completely. At His baptism He says, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Boaz gives us a smaller picture of honorable action under God's order.

Everyday Application: Desire does not excuse shortcuts. Faithfulness means doing the right thing in the right way, even when a shortcut would be easier.

6. What does Boaz's public action at the gate teach us about redemption? (Ruth 4:1–10)

Boaz goes to the city gate, gathers the nearer relative and ten elders, and handles the matter publicly (Ruth 4:1–2). The nearer relative is willing to redeem the land, but when he learns that redeeming the land also involves Ruth and preserving the name of the dead, he declines (Ruth 4:4–6).

Boaz then takes responsibility. He redeems the property and takes Ruth as wife “to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance” (Ruth 4:10). Redemption here is costly. Boaz does not merely feel kindly toward Ruth; he takes public, legal, personal responsibility.

Forward Connection to Christ: Christ's redemption is also costly and public. He gives His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45), and believers are redeemed not with silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18–19).

Everyday Application: Real love takes responsibility. Boaz shows that kindness is more than sentiment; it becomes action, commitment, and cost.

7. Why is the birth of Obed such a powerful reversal? (Ruth 4:13–15)

Ruth 4:13 says Boaz takes Ruth as his wife, and “the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.” That statement is important because Ruth had been married before in Moab for about ten years without mention of children (Ruth 1:4–5). Now the LORD gives life where there had been barrenness, grief, and loss.

The women tell Naomi that the child will be “a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age” (Ruth 4:15). Naomi, who once said she was empty, now holds a child connected to the future of her family (Ruth 1:21; 4:16).

Forward Connection to Christ: God often brings life from barrenness or impossibility. Sarah bore Isaac in old age (Genesis 21:1–3), Hannah received Samuel after grief and prayer (1 Samuel 1:10–20), and Elizabeth bore John the Baptist though she had been barren (Luke 1:7, 13). These stories prepare us to see that salvation is God's gift, not human achievement.

Everyday Application: God can bring life into places that feel closed, empty, or finished. His timing may not remove the pain of the past, but He can still create a future of mercy.

8. Why does the book end with Obed, Jesse, and David? (Ruth 4:16–17)

Naomi takes the child, lays him on her bosom, and becomes a nurse to him (Ruth 4:16). The women name him Obed, and the narrator tells us, “He is the father of Jesse, the father of David” (Ruth 4:17).

This ending lifts the story beyond one family. Ruth's loyalty, Boaz's righteousness, Naomi's restoration, and Obed's birth become part of God's larger plan for Israel. During the time of the

judges, when Israel had no king and everyone did what was right in his own eyes (Judges 21:25), God was quietly preparing the line of David.

Forward Connection to Christ: Matthew's genealogy includes Boaz, Ruth, Obed, Jesse, David, and finally Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5–6, 16). The child born at the end of Ruth is part of the line through which the true King and Redeemer would come.

Everyday Application: Ordinary faithfulness may have significance far beyond what we can see. Ruth and Boaz could not see the whole story, but their faithful choices mattered in God's redemptive plan.