

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

The Promised Land

RUTH

Ruth 1-4

Elementary Lesson

Year One, Quarter Three, Lesson Twelve

[0370]

AIM: to use the life of Ruth to teach my students the importance of **loyalty**

OBJECTS TO HAVE: A picture of a dog (your dog, if you have one)
The word “**loyal**” written on a piece of paper
A picture of a husband, wife and two boys
A map showing Bethlehem and Moab
A picture of Naomi and her sons, with the boys grown and married
A picture of just the three ladies
A picture of just Naomi and Ruth
An ear of corn, or a picture of an ear of corn
A picture of a man (Boaz), his wife, (Ruth), and their baby boy
Your Bible

POINT OF CONTACT: How many of you like dogs? Dogs are a lot of fun, aren't they? Dogs like to chase sticks and bring them back to you. Dogs will play tug-of-war with you. Dogs will also protect you from strangers. That's one reason why you should be very careful around dogs that you don't know—you don't know whether or not they will bite you. (If you have a dog, tell the class about him. Ask your class to tell you about a dog they have, or used to have.)

Of all of the good things that people say about dogs, probably the most famous thing is this: “A dog is man's best friend.” Do you know why people say that about dogs? Because dogs are **loyal**. Say that again (**loyal**). What does this word “**loyal**” mean? It means that they stick by you no matter what. They never turn against you. They are always there for you. They are always your friends.

Being **loyal** may come natural to a dog, but there sure are a lot of people who have a hard time being **loyal**. And yet, if there is one thing that you ought to learn to be in your lifetime, you ought to learn how to be **loyal**, and **loyal** to the right people.

Today I am going to tell you about a lady in the Bible who knew how to be **loyal**. I am going to tell you about her **loyalty**, and what happened to her because of her **loyalty**.

STORY: The Bible tells us about a family of four people who lived in the town of Bethlehem. There was a dad, a mom, and two boys. They were a very happy family who loved one another, and who loved God. The daddy's name was *Elimelech*; the mommy's name was *Naomi*; and the boys' names were *Mahlon* (May' lon); and *Chilion*. One day a terrible famine came to the land of Israel. A famine is when the ground just will not grow plants the way you want them to grow, and soon there is hardly any food in the land. When there is no food, everything slowly comes to a stop. Animals die, there is no milk, no eggs, no meat...nothing. Soon there are no jobs, and no money. A famine is very horrible and depressing, and it seems like it will never get better. Many people die in a famine, because they have nothing to eat.

Kids, remember that no matter how bad things are around you, God tells us that if we will pray, He will take care of us. But this family did not pray and trust God when the famine came. Instead, they left their home in Israel. Israel was the place where God wanted them to be; but this family moved to Moab. Moab was a nation where God did not want them to be. It was true, there was no famine in Moab. There was plenty of food there. There were jobs to be worked and money to be made. But Moab was not the place of God's blessing.

Soon after they moved to Moab, something terrible happened: Elimelech, the daddy, died. Naomi and her two boys were left all alone in this strange place. And without their daddy, the family had no way to get back home; so Naomi, Mahlon and Chilion stayed in Moab and did their best.

After Mahlon and Chilion were grown, they each married girls that they had met in Moab. Their wives were named *Orpah* and *Ruth*. For the next ten years everything seemed like it was going just fine. Then tragedy struck again, when

both of Naomi's sons died. They both were still very young when they died, and now it was just Naomi and her two daughters in law, Ruth and Orpah.

Naomi decided that she and her daughters in law had been through enough. It was time for Naomi to go back to Israel, where she knew God wanted her to be. She called Ruth and Orpah to her one day and said, "I am going home. Thank you for the time we have shared together. I wish you both the best. Goodbye."

Ruth and Orpah both said, "No, wait! You are family to us. We love you and we want to be sure that you are cared for. Let us go back to your home with you!"

Naomi said, "Girls, I certainly appreciate your kindness. But you are still young, and there is nothing I can do for you. Don't throw your life away on me. You stay in Moab where you were born, find some nice young men, and start over. God be with you."

Orpah cried and gave Naomi a hug and a kiss, as she said goodbye. Then she turned and walked away. But Ruth said, "I am staying with you. I will go wherever you go, I will live wherever you live, your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. I will die and be buried wherever you die and are buried. I will be your friend for the rest of my life." Naomi could see that Ruth's mind was made up. Naomi's heart was greatly touched by Ruth's **loyalty**. So Naomi and Ruth left and moved to the town of Bethlehem in the country of Israel.

Kids, that's what it means to be **loyal**. Ruth had decided to be **loyal** to her mother-in-law Naomi. She decided that she was going to stand by her no matter what. Do you know that you and I ought to be **loyal** to some people? There ought to be some people in your life that you decide to love with all of your heart, and you should give your undying **loyalty** to them.

There are certain people who have done so much for you that they deserve your **loyalty** as long as you live.

➔ First and foremost, we must be **loyal** to Jesus. Jesus came to this earth from heaven to die for our sins. He died so that we could be forgiven by God, and we could go to heaven when we die. Since Jesus has done that for you, you should always be **loyal** to Jesus.

➔ You ought to be **loyal** to your mom and dad. Your mom and dad have worked very hard for you, and they have made it possible for you to have the life that you have. You should be **loyal** to them as long as you live.

➔ You should be **loyal** to your family. That means your brother and sisters, your grandparents, your cousins, your aunts and uncles. They are your family, and you should be **loyal** to them.

➔ You should be **loyal** to the person who told you how to be saved. Someone cared enough about you to make sure that you know for sure that you are going to heaven when you die, and you should be **loyal** to that person.

➔ You should be **loyal** to your friends. When you have chosen to be someone's friend, that is a very important commitment. You should not take friendship lightly. You should choose your friends carefully, and then be **loyal** to them.

What are some of the things that you do when you are **loyal** to someone?

➔ You don't ever talk bad about them. Now, you shouldn't talk bad about anyone, but we should especially not talk bad about someone to whom we are **loyal**.

➔ You should not let other people talk bad about them in your presence.

➔ You should make sure that if they have a need, you do whatever you can to fill that need.

➔ You should always let them know that you are their friend.

That is what Ruth did for Naomi. She said, "I am going to be **loyal** to you for the rest of my life." God likes **loyalty**, and God blesses **loyalty**. God likes **loyalty** so much that He blessed Ruth for being **loyal** to Naomi. Because Ruth was **loyal** to Naomi, God helped her meet a great man named *Boaz*. Boaz and Ruth got married, and Boaz was **loyal** to Ruth the same way Ruth had been **loyal** to Naomi. He was a very wealthy man, and he gave Ruth everything that she could ever need or want. Ruth never had a need that Boaz did not fill for her. Boaz and Ruth had a baby boy, and that baby boy grew up to be the grandfather of King David, the greatest King that Israel ever had. And of course, God was so pleased with Ruth's **loyalty** that He wrote a whole book in the Bible, to make sure the whole world knew her story.

Why did all of these good things happen to Ruth? Because many years before she had decided to be **loyal** to her mother-in-law, Naomi. God blesses **loyalty**.

Let's learn our memory verse: **Ephesians 2:8** - *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*

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Teen and Adult Lesson

Year One, Quarter Three, Lesson Twelve

[0370]

Teacher, choose one of the following truths to expand upon in teaching this portion of Scripture to your teen/adult class. Teach and apply the truth that you choose using statements and illustrations that are most helpful and applicable to your students.

- I. **RUNNING AWAY FROM HARD TIMES IS NEVER A STEP OF FAITH.** There is not a single example in the Bible where God blessed someone for moving away because of a difficult economy. There are many examples of people who ran away for money's sake, who suffered greatly for it. There are also examples of people who were led of God to move by other means. But leading us to run because of pressure is not a method that God uses to lead His people.
- II. **WHEN WE MAKE POOR DECISIONS, IT HAS LONG TERM EFFECTS ON THE LIVES OF OTHERS.** Ruth 1:5, 13. Elimelech's decision affected the life of his wife, his sons, and the women that his sons married. When we make poor decisions, we affect many other people in ways that we cannot possibly foresee or calculate.
- III. **GOD HAS MERCY WHEN WE ARE WILLING TO ADMIT OUR SIN AND OUR FAILURE.** Ruth 1:19-22. Ruth was very humble about her sin, and she was willing to admit her sin to the people of her hometown. Usually our pride causes us to try cover our sins, and make excuses. This leaves the door open for others to repeat our mistakes. But when we are open and honest, it serves as a warning to others not to follow our example. God then has mercy on us, and blesses us for our humility.
- IV. **WHEN WE SUBMIT TO GOD, HE DIRECTS OUR FATE.** Ruth 2:1-3. It says her "hap" was to gather in the fields of Boaz. That means it happened by chance. That's how it seemed to happen; yet, God was in charge of the whole thing. God's hand was upon Ruth for her sacrificial loyalty to her husband's mother, and upon Naomi for being open and honest about her foolish mistakes. Nothing happens by accident with God, and when we submit to Him and obey Him, our "luck" is always perfectly planned by Him.
- V. **OBEDIENCE BRINGS YOU TO A DESTINY BETTER THAN ANYTHING YOU CAN PLAN.** Ruth 4:13-22. No matter what Ruth might have planned or imagined for herself back in Moab, it could not have compared to the eternal legacy God had for her in being the great-grandmother of King David, and being named in the lineage of Jesus Christ. Matthew 1:5. If you have the faith to obey God, and to faithfully follow and serve Him, He can do things through you that you could never have thought up on your own.

Ruth

Ruth 1-4

[0370]

God Gives a Moabite Woman an Eternal Legacy

I. RUTH 1 Ruth's Loyalty

Key verses: 16-17

→ *Ruth commits her life to her mother-in-law, though she had nothing to gain by it*

II. RUTH 2 Ruth's Labor

Key verses: 2-3

→ *As Ruth works in the field, a man named Boaz notices her*

III. RUTH 3 Ruth's Longing

Key verses: 7-10

→ *Ruth visits Boaz in the harvest and requests marriage*

IV. RUTH 4 Ruth's Legacy

Key verse: 13, 20-21

→ *God honors Ruth's faith by making her an ancestor of King David*

*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.
Ephesians 2:8*

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Circle the letter next to the correct answer to each question from the Scripture passage and from today's Bible story.

1. What caused this family of four to leave Bethlehem?
a. a career opportunity b. a famine c. they didn't like their neighbors
2. What are we supposed to do when life gets difficult?
a. run and hide b. break the law c. pray and trust God
3. What was the name of the mom in this family of four?
a. Naomi b. Nancy c. Nellie
4. What nation did this family move to?
a. Montana b. Moab c. Milford
5. What did both of the adult sons do when they got to Moab?
a. they started businesses b. they bought cars c. they married wives
6. What sad thing happened to the dad and both sons?
a. they broke their arms b. they died c. they lost their jobs
7. What did Naomi decide to do when her husband and sons had died?
a. move back to Bethlehem b. get married again c. plant apple trees
8. What was the name of the daughter-in-law who went with Naomi?
a. Rhonda b. Ruth c. Rachel
9. What was the name of the rich man in Bethlehem who married Ruth?
a. Brad b. Bob c. Boaz
10. Who was Boaz and Ruth's famous great-grandson?
a. Moses b. King David c. Jacob

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The answers to today's puzzle

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