

# Ruth

A LOVE STORY



## Chapter 2: Meeting, Not by Chance

Ruth 2:1-23

1. When Ruth's first husband, Mahlon, was alive, she had status and security, just as Naomi once had. What qualities of Ruth stand out in chapter 2?

Respectful (v.2 – Ruth to Naomi, “Let me go...”)

Honest / Integrity (v.7 – Ruth asked the foreman for permission.)

Hard-working (v.7 – Ruth worked steadily from morning till noon.)

Grateful (v.10 – Ruth bowed down to Boaz.)

Compassionate (v.11 – All that Ruth had done for Naomi.)

Thankful (v.13 – Ruth acknowledges Boaz' generosity.)

Sharing (v.18 – Ruth shared the roasted grain with Naomi.)

Open (v.21 – Ruth communicated clearly with Naomi.)

2. Notice that Naomi refers to Ruth as “my daughter” in verse 2. What factor makes such a relationship possible?

Ruth was Naomi's daughter-in-law. She was also her spiritual “daughter” in the faith (1:16 – “Your God my God”). Finally, Ruth made a promise (commitment) that she would be willing to serve Naomi in such a way.

3. What kind of relationship did Boaz have with his employees (verse 4)?

“The Lord be with you.” “The Lord bless you.”

4. What was it about Ruth that attracted Boaz to her soon after he noticed her?

Her faith in action, specifically the stories he had heard about how she treated Naomi.

5. Do you think that Ruth was immediately impressed with Boaz as well? Why or why not?

Ruth was obviously grateful for the reception that Boaz had given to her. There would seem to be no reason why she wasn't impressed with him. However, in chapter 3:10 Boaz indicates that he is not a contemporary of Ruth's (she didn't

run after the younger men – men who were more her age, perhaps.) Not to mention that Boaz himself calls Ruth “daughter” in verse 8.

6. Read Ruth 2:8-16. Ruth was a foreigner among the rest of the gleaners and harvesters in Boaz’s field, and yet Boaz made special arrangements for her. Do you think this may have caused rivalry in the field? How do you think that rivalry might have been expressed?

The potential was surely there for it to cause a rift. However, Ruth could have been the last one in line (she followed along behind the servant girls). The harvest time conditions (when food was plentiful) could have diminished the competition. However, there is room to suggest that Ruth was made fun of to the point of tears (*The People’s Bible: Ruth*, page 233)

How do you think Boaz might have handled it?

If there was rivalry, Boaz seemed to put a stop to it simply by giving the orders to cease and desist. Specific instructions to “knock it off.”

How do you think Ruth might have handled it?

Ruth could possibly have had her heart broken. She could have left the field in tears and stood on the sidelines not knowing what to do next. She had taken on the responsibility to provide for Naomi and struck out on her first attempt because she couldn’t handle the pressure.

7. Naomi was impressed with the fruit of Ruth’s labors for the day. What characteristics of Ruth were evident here?  
Ruth gleaned and threshed. She could have quit after the harvesting phase, but she went the next step to also process the grain. She also showed self restraint in holding back from eating or keeping the extra roasted grain for herself.
8. Naomi explained to Ruth that Boaz was a close relative of their family – a kinsman-redeemer. Of what significance was this to Naomi and to Ruth? (See “The Kinsman-Redeemer Laws,” page 29.)  
It could mean financial stability for the two widows. The relative was required to purchase the property in order to keep it in the family. (Leviticus 25:25 – If one of your countrymen becomes poor and sells some of his property, his nearest relative is to come and redeem what his countryman has sold.)
9. Would you call this turn of events in Naomi’s and Ruth’s lives “lucky”? Explain.

While these events may have the appearance of luck or chance, they also are an example of how God is at work to guide and direct the affairs of this world for his good pleasure. If God was at work here, then luck had nothing to do with it.

### Applications for Our Lives Today

1. It is obvious that Naomi and Ruth shared a deep love for each other, yet they were not at all alike. They came from different worlds and religions. Why do you think God placed this story in our Bibles? Don't be satisfied with one answer.
  - Friends caring and looking out for each other.
  - Different walks of life, but trusting in God as the Way for life.
  - God kept the promise of a Savior alive.
  - We can see God in this story, but also ourselves.
2. Some of us have struggled or may still be struggling with our relationships with our in-laws (children or parents). How can this story help us?
  - Through adversity comes unity – God spare us?
  - What really is important in life?
  - Ask yourself, “Does this failure come down to my unwillingness to forgive?”
3. What characteristics of the main characters of this story contributed to the love and respect that they had for one another?
  - It is “easy” to love and respect someone whose characteristics are noble and admirable. It is a different conversation when these characteristics are lacking. While this story highlights the positive aspects of the main characters, the unspoken truth is that they had to look past (forgive, really) every bit as much the shortcoming that they all had.

Naomi?

Boaz?

Ruth?

4. Notice that both Naomi and Boaz called Ruth daughter in this chapter. In the case of Boaz, it might have shown an attitude of protector or benefactor, since he was a relative. However, in the case of Naomi it clearly shows that she loved her daughter-in-law as if they were blood relatives. How do you address your in-laws, and why?
  - Do you use “Mom” or “Dad”? Do they call you their “son” or “daughter”?