

Book of Ruth

Life hardship often affects one's ability to remain noble, keep one's integrity and be considerate. He/she tends to become more self-center, covets other's achievement and less merciful towards people. Only remain strong in relationship with God can help one to go through the bottom of life without degrading one's good characters from God. Ruth in the Bible gives us a good example to follow.

Book of Ruth is mainly about Naomi, Ruth and Boaz and how God blessed them at the end. Book of Ruth took place in the time of Judges in the Old Testament (about 1400BC to 1051BC).

Ruth's husband passed away. She was free to go in her life apart from her husband's family. Instead, she followed her mother-in-law Naomi out of her love and care. Naomi, out of her love, also wanted Ruth to go her way so that Ruth would not need to stay in poverty with Naomi. Genuine love often requires uncompromising sacrifice. Regardless of our situations in life, we can live according to the precepts of God. Genuine love and kindness will be rewarded as shown in this book.

1) Loyalty

Ruth remained loyal to the man's side after her husband's death by following the mother-in-law. Ruth 1: 10 states "... We will go back with you to your people.". Ruth 1:16 states "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay, your people will be my people and your God my God." At that time and society, marriage for woman requires loyalty until death of the man. After death, the situation is different. In this case, the man's side (Naomi) asked her to go. Naomi urged her daughters-in-law to leave but she chose to stay. Will you remain loyal even if you don't need to?

Ruth was a Moab (non-Israelites). She has decided to go to a foreign land to follow Naomi (the place of origin on the man's side). She knew the challenges ahead to live in a foreign place, but she has decided to choose loyalty over self-comfort and better security. She was a very good daughter-in-law. She also remained loyal to God and not to go back to her Moab's belief.

2) Work Hard for oneself and for others

Ruth 2:2 states “... go to the field and pick up left-over grain.” Ruth 2:7 and 2:17 indicate Ruth has been working steadily for a whole day. She worked hard for herself but also very considerate and loving towards Naomi (Ruth 2:18). I remember my parents worked so hard for my family. When my family just immigrated to the US, my parents did not speak much English. The only job they could find are very hard labor jobs. They worked so hard in that environment for me and my siblings. Working hard not for themselves like Ruth but for others also. When my uncle’s family (my father’s brother) and my aunt’s family (my father’s sister) came to US, my parents worked for them and let them to stay at our home until they found a job and were able to be independent. It wasn’t easy. For us, willing to help others when you are also in need takes faith in God and willing to remain obedient to God’s teaching.

3) Kind speech and thankful heart

Ruth has wisdom to deal with people such that her speech and attitude revealed it like how she treated Naomi and Boaz. Ruth 2:10 states “She bowed down with her face to the ground. She exclaimed, “Why have I found such favor in your eyes that you notice me – a foreigner?”. Ruth 2:13 states “...- though I do not have the standing of one of your servant girls.” We shall be thankful of what we have. We shall be thankful of charity that others have given us; from material things, emotional support to forgiveness of faults.

4) Blessing

The sovereignty of our loving God is clearly shown in the story of Ruth. God guided Ruth in every step through her difficulties. Ruth’s love for Naomi, willing to work hard, having wisdom to deal with people and having a thankful heart led her to a blessed life. God in this case blessed her with a good marriage with Boaz and had a child (Ruth 4:13). Eventually God fulfilled His plan for her to become an ancestor of Jesus Christ (Matthew 1:5).

In summary, it is difficult for one to remain be considerate, loving, loyal, honorable, thankful and not to give up when he/she is in difficult life stages. However, if one stays close to God and obeys Him, God will guide and bless. Ruth’s story reminds us that we have assurance that God has a plan for each of us even when we are in a very difficult situation in life. Remain strong in faith and keep the precepts of God will lead us through (Rom. 8:28) and receive God’s blessing (Psalm 84:11).