

# DESERT VIEW BIBLE CHURCH

TRUST GOD, WORK HARD

(RUTH MEETS BOAZ)

RUTH 2:1-7

10/17/2021

BE SURE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE COMMENTARY AT THE END AS A HELPFUL REFERENCE FOR DISCUSSION.

## MAIN POINT

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God has a design for marriage that includes certain character qualities for each spouse.

## INTRODUCTION

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As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**What qualities do you think most single people today look for in a spouse?**

**What qualities make for a good spouse? How is this list of qualities different from what people look for?**

**For those of you who are married, are the qualities you appreciate about your spouse different now than when you first met? How so?**

Countless romantic movies present us with stories of people desperately searching for “The One,” that perfect person who will complete them. Such influences have skewed what we look for in a spouse. We live in a culture that often values temporal characteristics like physical beauty and “chemistry” over enduring qualities like humility and faith. As we begin the second chapter of Ruth, we will see how Ruth and Boaz were able to establish an enduring relationship because of their faith in God.

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# UNDERSTANDING

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Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**READ RUTH 2:1-7.**

**What sorts of trials might Ruth and Naomi have faced as widows living in Bethlehem?**

**What was Ruth hoping to accomplish by gleaning “among the reapers” (v. 2)? What does this tell us about her?**

When Naomi arrived at her hometown of Bethlehem, her spiritual and physical fatigue was evident. She complained that God had made her life bitter (see 1:20). Here were two impoverished women, and their immediate need was for food. Naomi may have been too tired or depressed to know what to do next.

The initiative to confront their problem came from Ruth (v. 2). We read in Leviticus 19:9-10 that landowners were required to leave the edges of their fields unharvested. Neither were they to go back and pick up excess heads of grain that had fallen to the ground or had been missed by the harvesters. This grain was to be left as food for the poor to gather. Not everyone obeyed the law, of course, and Ruth had to seek a field in which she would be allowed to glean. Yet she faced up the whatever embarrassment that entailed and found a field where she was allowed to work.

**What do we learn about Boaz from verse 4?**

**How did Boaz respond to Ruth’s request to glean in his field (v. 7)? What does that tell us about his character?**

**READ EPHESIANS 5:22-33.**

**What does this passage teach us of marriage's symbolism? In what ways?**

**What does true submission look like? What does it not look like?**

Submission doesn't mean losing your sense of worth or self. It's a voluntary and loving choice to follow in a way that displays how Christians follow Jesus and reflects the way that the members of the Trinity/Godhead submit to one another. Christians don't submit because someone forces them to do so; they submit voluntarily. Wives weren't forced to think of themselves as their husbands' property. They should see themselves as their husband's partner and receive from him sacrificial love.

**How is Jesus' work on the cross an example of submission for us?**

**What does the love husbands are called to model look like (vv. 25-30)?**

**How might a wife respond to a husband who loves her like Jesus? How does this type of love benefit her spiritually?**

**How does a relationship centered on sacrificial love and submission reflect the gospel? How can you and your spouse keep these ideas as a common part of your marriage?**

Though Ephesians 5 is often quoted to remind women of their struggle of submission, one might argue that it is the husband who receives the greater challenge from God. She must submit. He must love with the love of Jesus. It is clear though that each action serves the other. The wife, in submitting, encourages her husband to Christlikeness and the husband, in loving like Jesus, makes it easier for the wife to submit. Paul summarized the relationship between the husband and wife by calling them to love and respect each other. Mutual love and respect, qualities we see clearly modeled in the relationship between Ruth and Boaz, offers the best chance for a successful home.

## **APPLICATION**

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Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**In your own words, how would you explain the main goal of a Christian marriage?**

**What elements do you believe are vital to a godly marriage? Which of these needs the most attention in your marriage? What is something you can do to focus on it?**

**How does a proper view of marriage affect our relationship with God? How does it affect the lives of those of us who are single?**

**What could we as a group do to encourage mutual love and respect in our individual marriages? In our relationships with others?**

## **PRAYER**

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Lead your group in prayer, asking God to strengthen the relationships of our church based on the truths of His Word. Pray that marriages would reflect the submissiveness and sacrificial love God desires spouses to show each other.

## **COMMENTARY**

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### **RUTH 2:1-7**

2:1-3. The practice of gleaning allowed the poor to go through the fields after the harvesters, picking up the grain that was left behind, along with the grain that landowners were required to leave at the edges of their fields (Lev. 19:9-10). The phrase translated a worthy man could designate Boaz as possessing wealth and property, but it becomes clear as the story unfolds that Boaz is also a man of integrity. The family connection was unknown to Ruth. Humanly speaking, she just happened to end up gleaning in his field, but there are no coincidences in God's program, and this divine appointment proved that the Lord was not against Naomi, as she thought (1:20-21).

2:4-7. Boaz's noble character was displayed in his care for his workers. Even his greeting to them was in the name of the Lord, and he knew them well enough to recognize a stranger in their midst. His question did not seek Ruth's name but her relationships: Whose young woman is this? The servant's answer twice highlighted her foreignness. He also offered an unsolicited testimony to her diligent hard work in the hot sun.

#### EPHESIANS 5:22-33

5:22-24. The wife is to be subject to her husband as to the Lord. This does not mean that she submits to her husband in the same way and to the same degree as she does the Lord, since the husband might ask her to disobey God. Rather, she serves the Lord by having a submissive heart toward her husband and by obeying him as long as it does not require her to disobey the Lord. The reason she is called upon to be subject to her husband is that the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church.

As the church is to be subject to Christ, so the wife is to be subject to her husband. This subjection does not mean inferiority. It is clear that male and female are both created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27) and that in Christ, where personal worth is concerned, there is "neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). However, in the overall scheme of things, God has placed all of us in differing positions of authority and submission. The man may be in authority at home but submissive at work. The woman may be in submission at home and in authority at work. The point is, all social order depends on people's willingness to work together and ability to determine who is the head of certain endeavors. God's intention is that the husband be the head of the relationship with his wife.

5:25-27. After instructing wives to submit to their husbands, he instructs husbands to love their wives so completely and so righteously that the wife need never fear or suffer from her life of submission. Husbands are to love their wives just as Christ loved the church. How did Christ love the church? He gave Himself up for her. Jesus dedicated His life to the establishment and welfare of the church. He ultimately gave His life for the church. To that degree, and in that quality, the husband is to love his wife. He is to give himself up for her. He is to dedicate his life to the physical, emotional, and spiritual welfare of his wife. Following the example of Christ, he is to give his wife not only all that he has but also all that he is. When a husband loves his wife so completely, the wife need never fear submission. Paul goes on to extend the picture of Christ and the church. Christ loved the church that He might make her holy, or set her apart for Himself. He did this by the washing with water through the word. Some Bible teachers do not think Paul is referring to water (baptism) in this verse. They understand the water to be a figure of speech, referring to the cleansing that the Holy Spirit brings to the soul through repentance, after hearing the Word of God. It is as Jesus said in John 15:3, "You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you." Applying water to the outside of the physical body can have no

effect whatsoever to the spiritual cleansing that makes one holy. Through repentance, the water of the word reaches the innermost recesses of the soul, cleansing and making it holy.

However, believe that Paul is, indeed, alluding to baptism here, understanding that the early church would only have baptized someone who had truly repented. In this understanding, baptism would be an outward sign of repentance and of the spiritual cleansing resulting from the repentance, itself a result of hearing and obeying the Word. The New Testament does not suggest that baptism cleanses a person apart from repentance or that baptism apart from personal faith can save a person. We might amplify the meaning of this phrase by saying that the true church heard the Word of Christ preached and believed it. They were born again, regenerated, washed and cleansed spiritually by believing the Word. If Paul were alluding to baptism here, then the washing of the water in baptism would be symbolic of the inner cleansing that had already taken place through the Word. The result of this work of Christ is that the church is radiant ... without spot or wrinkle ... holy and without blemish. If a husband loves his wife as Christ loved the church, his love and care will have a sanctifying influence on the wife, who will experience personal benefit and progress as a result. The wife will never be perfect, but she becomes more than she would if the husband does not love her as Christ loved the church.

5:28-32. After having presented the work of Christ for the church, Paul now comes back to the reality of husband-wife relationships. He repeats the fact that husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. Even though the husband lives in an imperfect body, he loves it, nourishes it, and cherishes it. So he is to do the same for his wife, even though she is imperfect. Paul repeats Genesis 2:24, establishing that a husband and wife are to become one flesh, and closes by restating that the relationship between the wife and a husband is like the relationship between Christ and the church.

5:33. After discussing the role of the husband, Paul comes back in a summary statement in verse 33 to add that the wife is to respect her husband. In summary, she is to be subject to her husband and to respect him. Respect literally means "fear." It can refer, however, to the fear a person should have before God, a reverence and respect (see Luke 1:50; 18:2; Acts 10:35; 1 Pet. 2:17; Rev. 14:7; 19:5). This type of reverence should characterize the relationship of a wife and her husband.