

BOAZ IS LOYAL TO RUTH

Ruth 3

Naomi had bigger plans for Ruth and Boaz than just gleaning grain. In this chapter we see not only that Ruth was loyal to Naomi, Boaz was also loyal to Ruth.

RUTH AGREES TO ASK BOAZ FOR HELP (VV. 1–9).

Naomi asked Ruth to go meet Boaz and request that he redeem her property and revive Elimelech's line. While earlier Naomi had told Ruth to "find rest" on her own, now she desired to "seek rest" for Ruth. The customs involved may have seemed very foreign to Ruth. She may have been scared, wondering what was in it for her. Nevertheless, she agreed and did exactly as Naomi asked her. The important element of the ritual prescribed by Naomi was the formal request to be "covered" by Boaz: an appeal to him for protection and redemption of the family line and inheritance. Ruth was to go to Boaz's threshing floor where he would be spending the night (presumably for the safekeeping of the barley), and then uncover his feet.

Ruth faithfully obeyed her mother-in-law and did just as she had said. Boaz was quite surprised to find a woman sleeping at his feet in the middle of the night! She asked him to "spread his wings over her" (cf. 2:12), a sort of play on words about the covering of his garment. He may have been even more startled by her request—although it seems as though he had already thought through some of the possibilities.

BOAZ AGREES TO HELP (VV. 10–18).

Ruth requested Boaz's protection and help in redeeming the property of Elimelech, her father-in-law. Boaz realized that this action was not something that Ruth would have dreamed up; again, she was acting loyally on the behalf of Naomi. His statement to Ruth revealed something of what was behind Ruth's actions all the way back to chapter one. She would have been justified in abandoning Naomi (at her request!) when Naomi left Moab (cf. 1:9). The normal thing would have been for Ruth to find another young man to marry and start a family with him. But Ruth gave up her own future for Naomi: in following Naomi and pursuing Naomi's God, she abandoned all hope of a "normal" life, a husband, or someday, a family.

The husband that Ruth was pursuing was not a match based on romantic intentions or even financial considerations on Ruth's part. She was asking Boaz to marry her for Naomi's sake! To Boaz, this loyalty was a beautiful and gracious thing, and he quickly agreed to do all he could to demonstrate his loyalty to Naomi and to Ruth. As Ruth left the threshing floor, Boaz gave her barley to take back to Naomi. This was a sort of "down payment," to demonstrate that just as he was willing to offer his protection and aid to Naomi's family, he would care for their physical needs as well. When Ruth told Naomi what had happened and showed her the barley, Naomi was confident: Boaz was a man of character and loyalty. He was loyal to Ruth—and to her God.

Key verse: *“And he said, ‘May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich’” (Ruth 3:10).*

Are all my decisions made in my own best interest? How do I reveal my priorities in the choices I make?

Arrange the following responsibilities according to your priorities. Does this reflect a biblical arrangement?

Husband	Children	Extended family (grandchildren/parents)	
Church family	God	Hobbies/pleasure	Work

Why do Christians love each other? What is our example? In what areas does my love for others fall short of Jesus' love?

What do I do that demonstrates my devotion to the needs of others (Rom 12:9–13)?