

RUTH: GODLY COURTSHIP IN AN UNGODLY ERA

VI. Attaining Financial Ability

(Ruth 1-4)

I. Introduction

- A. We live in the latter days of Church History as seen in the exponential growth of sin in society. The concern can then arise as to how godly believers might obtain godly marital partners in our era.
- B. The courtship of godly Boaz and Ruth occurred in the apostate era of the Judges (Ruth 1:1), so we study the book of Ruth on godly courtship for our era, noting in this lesson the value of attaining financial ability.

II. Attaining Financial Ability, Ruth 1-4.

- A. “In one survey it was discovered that young husbands attributed forty-eight per cent of their most serious marital problems to financial difficulties. One court judge has reported: ‘Quarreling about money is a major cause for America’s unprecedented divorce rates.’” (Howard G. Hendricks, Christ. Couns. For Contemp. Prblms., 1968, p. 117) Thus, it is important to study how Boaz and Ruth attained financial ability for marriage.
- B. Boaz attained financial ability for his marriage to Ruth, Ruth 1:1-2; 2:1, 4-7, 14-23; 3:12-13; 4:1-13a:
 - 1. The Mosaic Covenant at Deuteronomy 28:1, 11-12 promised that if the people of Israel obeyed the Law, God would bless them with bounty in their agricultural production and monetary gain.
 - 2. Thus, when Israel faced a famine for her sins (Deuteronomy 28:15, 23-24), instead of faithlessly leaving Israel to sojourn in a Gentile land like Elimelech did (Ruth 1:1-2), Boaz stayed in Israel, relying on God.
 - 3. Boaz may have farmed Elimelech’s land during the famine, for 2 Kings 8:1-6 reveals that when Elisha had directed the Shunammite woman to sojourn in a Gentile land due to a famine in Israel that someone else had farmed her land, and the king later ordered the produce of her land during her absence from Israel be restored to her, 2 Kings 8:6. God may have given godly Boaz opportunity to do well even in the famine!
 - 4. After the famine, Boaz was known to be wealthy, Ruth 2:1. This wealth is evident in his use of young men to labor in his harvest and his use of maids to help as support for the harvesters, Ruth 2:4-7, 21, 23.
 - 5. Also, Boaz was financially able to have his harvesters leave large portions of grain for Ruth to glean for her and her mother-in-law’s financial livelihoods throughout the barley and wheat harvests, Ruth 2:14-23.
 - 6. Boaz was then financially able to promise in God’s name and to fulfill that promise to marry Ruth, to buy Elimelech’s land and to provide for the livelihood of Ruth’s mother-in-law, Ruth 3:12-13; 4:1-13a.
- C. Though Ruth would not be the chief breadwinner in marriage, she exhibited financial ability in her actions, what showed Boaz that she would be financially beneficial as a wife, Ruth 2:2-3, 5-7, 12-23; 3:1-11:
 - 1. Ruth exhibited a good work ethic by initiating the request to her mother-in-law Naomi on gleaning for food and grain to trade for their livelihood needs, Ruth 2:2-3 with 2 Thesalonians 3:10.
 - 2. When Ruth selected the field that she would glean, she chose one where there were several male harvesters and several maids working as a support team for the harvesters, Ruth 2:3, 21, 23. The presence of such a group indicated financial acumen in the farmer, for such a large operation meant that he likely raised a good crop for gleaning, and the presence of both men and women in the field provided a greater margin of safety for Ruth in a dangerous era than what she could get in a poorer farmer’s field with few workers.
 - 3. Ruth gained permission to glean from Boaz’s foreman, and she spent a large amount of time working in comparison to other women who gleaned there, indicating a superior work ethic, Ruth 2:6-7.
 - 4. Even when Boaz had invited Ruth to eat the noon meal with the reapers, and he had handed her parched grain for the meal, Ruth ate but left to return to her gleaning before the harvesters had returned to their work, Ruth 2:14. Such devotion to her work for a livelihood impressed Boaz, so he helped her by directing his reapers to give Ruth additional amounts of grain, Ruth 2:15-17.
 - 5. Even when Ruth approached Boaz in her night rendezvous with him to ask him to perform the role of her kinsman-redeemer, Ruth followed her mother-in-law’s advice about taking the initiative as politely as she could for the livelihood of her and her mother-in-law, Ruth 3:1-4, 5. Boaz was thus impressed by the fact that though Ruth was polite, she still took the initiative in seeking financial security, revealing her drive for financial success, so he promised her that she would obtain that financial security, Ruth 3:6-15.

Lesson: Boaz and Ruth each individually obeyed the Lord and were each individually industrious in obtaining God’s financial blessing and financial ability for marriage before they were married.

Application: May believers who desire to get married financially prepare before marriage to be able to get married.