

A STUDY OF JUDGES & RUTH

YOU DON'T KNOW BO

ESPN did a 30 for 30 called *You Don't Know Bo* about Bo Jackson. Jackson played pro baseball and pro football at the same time. He may be the greatest athlete of the 20th century. Rumors fly around the all-star athlete. His mythical prowess is legendary, but he's unknown to many.

Last Week, we heard Bo's name. This Week, we meet one of the best men in all of Scripture, Boaz. At the end of *Judges*, men weren't making great choices—especially as it relates to women. Jephthah killed his daughter, Samson used and abused, and the Levite FedEx'd his ex.

The mysterious Boaz stood out in his generation. If you don't know Bo, you should. He was wealthy, uncorrupted among his generation, and respected among his staff. He went above and beyond for Ruth and Naomi. He didn't just fulfill his obligation under the Law toward a widow, he lived the heart of God.

RUTH 2:8–12; 3:8–12

⁸Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. ⁹Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn.” ¹⁰Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?”

¹¹But Boaz answered her, “All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. ¹²The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!”

⁸At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! ⁹He said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer.” ¹⁰And 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. ¹¹And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. ¹²And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

It's rare to find someone stand out for the Lord in their culture. Although not a perfect role model, Chris Pratt is outspoken about his faith in one of the most difficult places to do so, Hollywood.

Scan the QR code to hear Pratt's *Generation Award* speech, about his "9 Rules." Some are silly. Some are serious. All of them are pretty good advice. Although he doesn't stand and deliver the gospel like a revivalist preacher, it's there. "You're imperfect... grace is a gift... bought through blood."



DISCUSSION

What are some of the qualities you look for in someone you'd like to date? Where does loyalty rank? What wrong things do people often look for?

ICEBREAKER

1. Why did Boaz show Ruth special favor? (2:8-11)

2. What did Boaz ask the Lord to do for Ruth? (2:12)

3. What did Ruth ask Boaz to do for her? (3:9)

OBSERVATION

4. Based on his treatment of Ruth, how would you characterize Boaz?

INTERPRETATION

5. What lesson(s) can we learn from Boaz's response to Ruth's need?

APPLICATION

6. Are you in a position to help meet the needs of others? If so, what would that look like?

"God helps those who help themselves." False! God honors faithful obedience and loyal love. However, it's often not in a way we might expect. Have questions, talk to your Coach.

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STUDY NOTES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

@IAMCoachMitch said, "If you play 30 minutes go all out. If you play 15 minutes go all out. If you play 5 minutes go all out. If you play 1 minute go all out. If you don't get in, go all out being the most vocal person cheering your teammates on. Coaches will take notice. Make a difference."

This is solid advice! You can't always control your circumstances, but you can control your attitude and effort. You're not defined by your circumstances. It's how you *respond* to them that defines you—and that is a choice you make. So, *go all out!*

Last Week, we read how Ruth "just happened" to end up in the field of Boaz. That "just so happened" isn't an intentional effort on Ruth's part, but the providential hand of the Lord. When Boaz showed up to the fields, he noticed Ruth immediately and asked his lead man who informed Boaz, "*she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest.*"

When the rest of the world around Boaz had descended into chaos and wickedness, Boaz was different. A vulnerable, attractive woman had come into his field. He could have used his wealth, power, or privilege to take advantage of the situation. Instead, he chose to make a difference. He used what he had to help someone in need.

GODLY LEADERS SACRIFICE FOR OTHERS

Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them.

Boaz knew how dangerous it was for Ruth as a widow in the fields. There's safety in numbers and he did everything in his power to protect her by surrounding her with people she could trust. In a time when rape and abuse were extremely common, he even **charged the young men not to touch** her. Going above and beyond he even said, "**When you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn.**"

Stunned, Ruth **fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"** This is a great question. Boaz owed Ruth nothing. **But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-**

in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before.

Boaz then offered a sort of prayer of benediction over Ruth, "**The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!**" Here's the amazing thing about Boaz's prayer—Boaz acted on what he prayed. If you read the rest of the chapter, he fed her. This is possibly the first full meal she's had in a while. He even ordered his young men to leave extra grain on the ground so that Ruth could collect even more. Boaz lived out God's heart toward Ruth.

SELF-SACRIFICE IS HONORED

At the end of Ruth 1 we read it's the beginning of barley harvest (late March/April). In verse 23, we read the Ruth gleaned in Boaz's field until the end of the barley and wheat harvest (May/early June). She worked hard every day for about 3 months.

In a very unorthodox scheme, Ruth found Boaz on the threshing floor **at midnight**, which was both dangerous and potentially perceived as inappropriate. She startled him awake. Boaz prayed for the Lord to cover her with his wing of refuge. Like a hen fiercely protecting her chicks. Ruth asked Boaz, "**Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer.**"

Boaz, who was likely a little older, overwhelmed by the request 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.**"

Boaz wasn't the closest family member, so there was work to do (which we'll see next Week). However, notice how he describes Ruth, "**all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman.**" It wasn't just Boaz, everybody began to recognize her as a "worthy woman." This description isn't used to describe any other woman in the Old Testament—only in Proverbs do we find this phrase to describe the kind of woman men should seek and the woman girls should aspire to become.

This scene is definitely descriptive. Ladies, do not sneak into a guy's house and curl up at the end of his bed while he's sleeping. Men, if you find a woman at the foot of your bed, run! However, aside from the specific actions, we should all strive to live out God's heart like Ruth and Boaz. Both are truly remarkable in their own way, standing out in their generation.