



**Ruth, Boaz, and the Conventions of Marriage
(Ruth 3:1-18)**

Ruth 3: 1-5

- **3** Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you?"
 - 2 Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.
 - 3 Wash therefore and anoint yourself and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.
 - 4 But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do."
 - 5 And she replied, "All that you say I will do."

Ruth 3: 6-9

- ⁶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her.
- ⁷ And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down.
- ⁸ At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet!
- ⁹ He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings^[a] over your servant, for you are a redeemer."
- Ruth 3:9 the word for *wings* can also mean *corners of a garment*

Ruth 3:10-13

- ¹⁰ 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.
- 11 And 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.
- 12 And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I.
- 13 Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the LORD lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning."

Ruth 3:14-15

- **14** So she lay at his feet until the morning but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."
- **15** And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city.

Ruth 3:16-18

- **16** And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her,
- **17** saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'"
- **18** She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

Why do people get married?

- Love (Emotional)
- Security (Financial)
- Build a Life Together (Relational)
- Assimilate into one's culture (Social)
- Perpetuate one's lineage (Generational)
- Because that's how God designed things (Spiritual)
- Lack the spiritual gift of remaining single (Spiritual)(I Cor. 7:6-9)



Love
(Emotional)

Valentine's
Day is this
Wednesday!

“The Parliament of Fowls” by Geoffrey Chaucer (1381)

- Birds meet in a conference to choose their mates on St. Valentine’s Day. This is the earliest reference to St. Valentine’s Day being a day to celebrate love. (That is, Chaucer invented a holiday!)
- It was written to honor the engagement of Richard II of England and Anne of Bohemia.

The Parliament of Fowls

by Geoffrey Chaucer

in a Modern English Verse Translation

by Simon Webb



Build a Life Together (Relational)

- Raise a family together
- Buy a house together
- Build a business together
- Share interests together
- Hang out together
- Encourage each other
- Take care of each other
- Grow spiritually together

Build a Life Together (Relational)

- My husband learned early how to nurture not only a sense of individuality but also **a sense of joint identity and of a shared future**. . . He understands in a deep way something I still sometimes struggle to grok: that to love someone for better or worse, for all of your days, involves a certain kind of surrendering of the “I” for the sake of the “we.” It involves allowing another person to play a role in defining who we are and what we value . . .”
- I think our “we” is more an accumulation of small moments. The table tilts, you slip into another frame, and the world looks the same but different. The language of sacrifice, for instance, doesn’t make sense. You can’t sacrifice for that which is you. His joy is not simply important to you because he’s important to you. It *is* your joy. The boundaries don’t dissolve, but they’re porous”

--Michal Leibowitz

Assimilate into one's culture (Social)

- Join an extended family
- Settle into a church family
- How a community identifies you
- Attend social and business events
- Inherit “Cultural Capital”

Wings of Refuge

Boaz to Ruth at the field: in chapter 2, regarding Ruth's loyalty to Naomi and her leaving Moab to live with a people she did not know:

- “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!” (Ruth 2:12 ESV)

Ruth to Boaz at the threshing floor:

- He said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth, your servant. **Spread your wings over your servant**, for you are a redeemer” (Ruth 3:9 ESV).
- [The NIV translates it: “**Spread the corner of your garment over me**”]
- Note: in Hebrew, the word for *wings* can also mean *corners of a garment*

Word Study: *Kanaf* (Hebrew)

- *Kanaf* can be translated “wings” or “corner.” [According to the Bible, tassels were attached to the corner of a garment as a reminder of the commandments (see Numbers 15:37-41)] Thus, *kanaf* has the double meaning of coming under the wings of God and/or the corner of God’s garment.
- In verse 3:9, Ruth asks to come under the *kanaf* of Boaz’s garment. [With the double meaning, Ruth’s words to Boaz mean both “spread your wings” and “spread the corner of your garment” over her.]
- As such, the very word that Boaz uses in verse 2:12 to ask the Lord to provide safety and protection for Ruth is now used by Ruth to ask Boaz [as God’s vehicle] to provide safety and protection for her.

Theme of Redemption and The Guardian-Redeemer

- “The guardian-redeemer was responsible for protecting the interests of needy members of the extended family—for example . . . To redeem land that a poor relative had sold outside the family

--NIV First-Century Study Bible

- ²⁵ “If your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, then his nearest redeemer shall come and redeem what his brother has sold.” (Leviticus 25:25)

Word Study: *goel* (Hebrew) “Guardian-Redeemer”

- The *goel* fulfilled the legal obligation of reacquiring property lost by family members because of difficult times (Leviticus 25:25).
- The application of a guardian-redeemer to a man’s widow, and thus her husband’s property is unique to the Book of Ruth.

--NIV First-Century Study Bible

Word Study: *Levir* (Hebrew)

- **Levirate**, custom or law decreeing that a widow should, or in rare cases must, marry her dead husband's brother. The term comes from the Latin *levir*, meaning "husband's brother." The "brother" may be a biological sibling of the deceased or a person who is socially classified as such.
- Often, the brother who marries his former sister-in-law is a proxy for the deceased, in which case all progeny of the new marriage are socially acknowledged as the children of the dead man. For instance, in ancient Hebrew society, the levirate served to perpetuate the line of a man who died without offspring.

--*Encyclopedia Britannica Online*

Takeaways

1. The role of the individual within the social/cultural
2. The transformational power of selfless love



Let Us Pray

