

Naomi begins to see the GENEROSITY of Ruth

Because of Ruth's desire to find solutions for her problems rather than excuses, she goes to work gathering grain in a field that, in God's sovereignty, belonged to Boaz. On her first day, her work was so exemplary Boaz invited her to continue as part of his team. At lunch time, Boaz gave her bread, wine and roasted grain to eat. At the day's end, Ruth beat out the barley Boaz allowed her to keep. She put it in a sack and brought home to Naomi 40 pounds of grain and the leftovers from the lunch. *Godly women put the needs of others ahead of themselves* (Prov. 31:17-20; 1 Pet. 3:3). Throughout history, God expected adult children or relatives to be the primary care for elderly family members. Neither the nation nor the church was expected to be a welfare agency but rather to come alongside only the truly destitute (2 Thess. 3:10). If no family was alive, the nation or church could help care for widows who had shown a life of godliness (1 Tim. 5:3-16). Ruth had the character of a godly woman by seeking to help her mother-in-law. *The heart of humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less* (Phil. 2:3)!

Naomi begins to see the GOODNESS of God

Hearing that Ruth met Boaz, Naomi informs her that he is one of their redeemers as a relative through Elimilech. The custom of the day was a levirate marriage, where a relative of the deceased would marry his childless widow in an effort to carry on his name, in order of: brother, uncle, cousin, or clan relative (Deut. 25:5-10). Naomi blesses God when she realizes Ruth 'happened' to end up in a relative's field. This care for a pagan widow is a foreshadowing of the kind of love God has for all people as He reaches out through His own people (Gen. 22:18; 2 Cor. 5:20). *The sovereignty of God may be mysterious but it is not merciless.* Family was such a priority for Naomi, that before they left Moab she had offered to have more sons for her daughters-in-laws to marry so they could stay together. God cares about female concerns—family relationships, providing as a single woman, dealing with difficulty and pain, future children, living with integrity and modesty at home and in public, and fearing for physical security. In every one of these issues, God has provided for women who love Him. *God blesses those who trust in Him and is a stronghold for those seek refuge in Him* (Ps. 18:2; 34:8)!