

GBs in The Bible: Ruth and Naomi

As I move further into this series of posts about **GBs in The Bible**, it's time to give an example of female counterparts since being a God Buddy is not just something for men.

There are plenty of women in Scripture who had Christ-like characteristics and were transformed for God's bigger purposes; none better than this week's example of Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi.

Relationship with an In-Law

The story of Ruth and Naomi is an unlikely friendship. We have all heard the all-too-common jokes made about in-laws—particularly a mother-in-law? And how many of us have ever found a best friend in our mother- or father-in-law? (Spoiler alert: There is a future post coming on Moses and his father-in-law Jethro).



This relationship shows that God Buddyesses (is that even such a word?!) can be devoted and protective of the legacy of their companion, regardless of their age difference and family of

origin.

Biblical Background

The relationship between Ruth and her mother-in-law Naomi is described in one of the history books in The Bible. It is named after its central figure, Ruth who is the great-grandmother of King David, from whose genealogy comes Jesus Christ.

The book of Ruth is placed between the books of Judges and 1 Samuel during a great famine in Israel “in the days when the judges judged” (Ruth 1:1). Many people relocated to foreign lands to find food for their families, including a man named Elimelech who took his wife Naomi and his two sons, Mahlon and Kilion from Bethlehem to Moab. Ruth and Orpah, two local women, later married the two sons, who were Judeans. Elimelech dies and Naomi continues to live with her sons and their Moabite wives.

About 10 years later, both sons also pass away, leaving Naomi with her two foreign daughters-in-law (Ruth 1:3-5) Naomi heard there was food back home “*where she heard the Lord had come to the aid of his people.*” (Ruth 1:6-7) in Bethlehem. She urges her daughters-in-law to return to their families of origin to find new husbands (Ruth 1:8-9) but “*Ruth clung to her.*” (Ruth 1:14) and refuses to leave Naomi. She famously says “*Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die— there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!*” (Ruth 1:16–17).

David" (Ruth 4:13–17), the grandfather who becomes King David from whose genealogy comes Jesus Christ.

The GB Lessons

This friendship shows us the devotion between two close relatives who helped protect each other's legacy. Ruth didn't hesitate to give when Naomi was in need. She refused to let her mother-in-law travel alone and went with her to Bethlehem to help her survive as a lone woman in a patriarchal society.



Naomi helped ensure Ruth's future with Boaz, which ultimately developed the tree of Jesse to our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the kind of action that creates the strongest of friendships, and gives us a sense of security—we know that when we're in trouble, someone will be there for us.

What defines the faithful attribute that God assigns to friendship is that they are to be joined together in abiding loyalty and devotion. In this case, Ruth became friends with her mother-in-law and they became family, looking out for one another throughout their lives. It is a great example that friendships can get forged between different ages and in any location.