



GOD'S VALENTINE TO US

Introduction:

Love is a very popular word. We hear a lot about it in our culture. Everybody needs love. Everybody wants to get that valentine that Charlie Brown is always waiting for at the mailbox.

Well, you and I are in luck. We do have a valentine waiting for us — a love letter from God just waiting for us to open and read it.

What is that love letter? It is our Bible. When we open it and read or hear it read to us, God tells us about His love for us. Sometimes He is very specific and to the point when He says:

...I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving kindness (Jeremiah 31:3).

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

...Christ loved us and gave himself up for us... (Ephesians 5:2).

At other times He tells us stories to show us He loves us. We may have to study and think about these to understand the love of God, but it is there for us. The Holy Spirit can help us see it.

One such story is in the Book of Ruth. It is short, only four chapters, and reads like a short story. Let's look for the love in this love story.

Naomi's Story

1. What was her situation? (Ruth 1:1–5) _____
2. What option does God provide her for dealing with it? (1:6–7) _____

3. Naomi realizes that her daughters-in-law could have a difficult time living in Canaan. They are Moabites, people the Israelites despised. What does Naomi tell them to do? (1:8–9)

4. How did the daughters-in-law react? (1:10) _____

5. What did they eventually do? (1:14) _____
(1:16–17,19) _____
6. How does Naomi describe her situation at the time she arrives back in Bethlehem? How is she feeling? (1:20–21) _____

7. In spite of how Naomi is feeling, how is God loving and providing for her?
(1:16–17) _____
(2:2, 17–18) _____

Ruth's Story

1. What was Ruth's situation? (2:11) _____
2. What option did God provide her for dealing with it? (2:2–3) _____

3. How did God show His loving care for her as she worked? (2:8–9) _____

4. What other possibility could there have been in that culture? (2:22) _____

Your Story

1. What is your situation? _____
2. What options has God provided for you for dealing with your situation?

3. How is God loving and caring for you today? _____

God's Plan for Naomi and Ruth

1. God had a plan to show His love and care for Ruth and Naomi by providing them with more than food. Who is Boaz? (2:19–20) _____

Redeemer is a key word here. The kinsman-redeemer was responsible for protecting the interests of needy members of the extended family. An example of something a kinsman-redeemer might do would be to redeem land that a poor relative had sold outside the family.

2. What did Boaz do? (4:13) _____

Note: The laws and customs governing marriage and relationships at that time were quite different from what we are used to in our society today. They may be hard for us to understand. They were also new to Ruth since she was a foreigner. Naomi understood them and instructed Ruth on how to proceed. Ruth, for her part, was willing to listen and act.

3. What blessings did Ruth receive as a result? (4:13) _____

4. What blessing did Naomi receive from this? (4:15–16) _____

5. The son of Ruth and Boaz was named Obed. Who were his son and grandson? (4:22, Matthew 1:5–6) _____

Salmon, the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab; Boaz, the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth; Obed, the father of Jesse; and Jesse the father of King David (Matthew 1:5–6a).

6. This David is the same person who killed the giant Goliath, was King of Israel, and wrote many of the Psalms we have in the Bible; but he is more important because of something else. Who was his descendant? (Matthew 1:1) _____

A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham... (Matthew 1:1).

How Does This Story Relate to Us?

1. Each woman's situation is different and quite different from those of Naomi and Ruth. What relationships has God blessed you with?

2. In spite of our differences, we all have something in common with Naomi and Ruth. What is it?

There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:22b).

3. Sin puts a barrier between us and God. It makes us feel like strangers and foreigners when we need to relate to God.

...A great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over... (Luke 16:26).

4. By ourselves we cannot do anything about this, but God planned for a kinsman-redeemer to step in and make us part of the family. Who is our kinsman-redeemer? _____

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons (Galatians 4:4–5).

What has He done for us? _____

5. Since our kinsman-redeemer has ransomed us, we can always talk to God about the sins that are bothering us and confess them. What will He do? (See Psalm 103) _____

6. How does He help us know what to do? (Psalm 119:105) _____

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path (Psalm 119:105).

He gives us His book of love letters, the Bible, and He will show us the way to go.

Conclusion — What Can You and I Do?

We can take time to maintain and enjoy the special relationship with which God has blessed us. How can we do this? By making it a top priority to maintain our most important relationship — our relationship with God. We can spend time with Him in prayer. We can read the Bible, God's special valentine of love to each of us. You and I are worth it!

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