



Family has always been important to me (P David). I have fond memories of gathering with my parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts and uncles, and lots of cousins growing up. Throughout my immediate and extended family, there was always a strong sense of unity, togetherness, and love. As a result of this strong family bond, I experienced a lot of peace and security. At the same time, I had friends who had suffered the hardship of sadness and brokenness in family relationships, whether parents who had been divorced or hostility between siblings or other close family members. Although a strong bond should exist between biological family (but not guaranteed), it's encouraging to know that **God created us to experience a bond that can be even stronger!**

The Old Testament story of Ruth is a powerful example of how **God can make a bond that is even stronger than the bond we share with our biological family!** Ruth was a Moabite who had married one of Naomi's sons who were from Judah. Ruth and Naomi's husbands both died and Naomi told her daughter-in-law that they should part ways and return back home, each to their own families and people. Ruth's shocking response to Naomi in Ruth 1:16-17 was, "where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." Although Ruth and Naomi no longer shared a family connection, Ruth remained faithful and committed herself to her mother-in-law Naomi the rest of her life. Ruth's unbreakable bond to her mother-in-law was based on her faith and trust in Naomi's God!

There is a story from the life of Jesus in Matthew 12:46-50 that explains how Ruth and Naomi were able to experience such a strong bond in spite of not being biological family, "While (Jesus) was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "here are my mother and my brothers! For **whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother** (Matthew 12:46-50)." For Jesus, the strongest relational bond that can exist is the bond we share with those who have a personal relationship with our Heavenly Father. Don't get me wrong, Jesus cared deeply about his mother and his brothers, but what made Jesus' relational bonds unbreakable were His deep commitment to God and doing His will. It is our commitment to God and our willingness to do HIS will no matter what that is the superglue that permanently bonds us to others, even biological family!

Family relationships, or any relationship for that matter, are only as strong as our fear of the Lord (Prov 14:26) and our willingness to obediently and selflessly do what is right and best for others. It is our personal relationship with God that creates an unbreakable bond with others because He gives us the supernatural ability to welcome, accept, forgive, and unconditionally love them!

For Discussion



What are some things we do together that encourage a strong bond in our family?
What are some things we do to one another that damage the bond that exists in our family?



READ: Proverbs 4:3-4 Fathers, what do we need to teach our children in order to be "doing God's will"?
(Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21)



READ: Proverbs 31:25-30 Mothers, how can you "do God's will" in how you relate with your children?



READ: Proverbs 1:8-9, 6:20, 10:1 Children, how can you "do God's will" in how you relate with you parents?
(Eph. 6:1-3; Col. 3:20)



READ: Proverbs 22:6 Parents, what do you need to be doing to train up your children in the way they should go?

TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO PRAY AND ASK GOD TO HELP STENGTHEN THE BOND IN YOUR FAMILY



So often Jesus taught with stories - He knew that we learn really well that way!

Are you playing along and learning these quiz questions? I hope so! The Book of Ruth is simply lovely, and it makes for a great study—what a picture of redemption! Read Pastor David’s devotional, listen to Pastor Niall’s sermon, and get ready for the Kahoot! which Dawn will send out on Wednesday. Thanks to Caleigh for writing questions for us; you can get a jump start with these 10 below. The rest come from the sermon.

On Sunday, Pastor Niall reminded us of Proverbs 15:17 which says, “Better a dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox and hatred with it.” Make this Proverb come alive with your family (not by serving fattened ox and hatred!) by serving a very simply meal in very joyful circumstances: have a picnic on the porch or living room floor; pack a sack lunch in a bandana for each person and take a walk; make a smiley face with carrots and raisins; tell jokes; listen to music; whatever will bring your family joy. Then talk about the way that love makes peanut butter and jelly more delicious than the most expensive steak dinner with people who are not kind. Have fun together! Miss Kelly

Memory Verse

Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! Ruth 4:14

Questions	Answers
How many deaths, and whose, did Naomi suffer while she was in Moab?	3, her husband, then two sons
Which daughter-in-law stayed with Naomi, which one went back home?	Ruth – stayed with her Orpah – went back home
Give 3 (or more) examples from the Bible of what Ruth was willing to give up to stay with Naomi.	Answer could include: her family, her sister-in-law, another husband, her house, her culture, her friends, her lifestyle, her religion
Naomi blames God for her hurts. What does she change to reflect this? What does it mean?	Her name From: Naomi – pleasant To: Mara – bitter
What stood out to Boaz and his workers about Ruth?	Her hard work and her dedication to Naomi
What was Boaz’s concern for the women?	That Ruth and Naomi would be safe and provided for
How does Boaz respond when Ruth asks him to redeem her (give her a new family).	He yes, but there is someone he has to talk to first.
God wrote the Bible. Why does Naomi’s name never change in the text?	God’s plan is not for her to stay bitter. He wants her to be pleasant again and have a family.
Name 3 well known Bible figures in Ruth’s new family.	Answer could include: Judah, Tamar, Rahab, Boaz, David, Solomon, Mary, Joseph, Jesus!
Why is it significant that a lot of the story happens in Bethlehem?	It’s a redemption of family story and our biggest redemption need – Salvation (returning to God’s family) – also started there.