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Qualities That Make For A Good Wife

By Bill Hall

What qualities should a young man look for in the girl that he would marry? What qualities should the girl look for in the young man? What qualities should we who are already married be demonstrating in our own lives? The book of Ruth provides some answers to these questions as it tells of the marriage of two wonderful people, Ruth and Boaz. The following qualities can be seen in Ruth, making her an ideal wife for Boaz.

1. She was loyal. The words, "Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God ..." were not originally the sentiment expressed by a bride to her husband, but were words of a loyal daughter-in-law (Ruth) to her mother-in-law (Naomi). But the loyalty expressed by Ruth in those beautiful words to her mother-in-law was the kind of loyalty that would later make her a wonderful wife to Boaz.

2. She was hard-working. Having arrived in a strange land with her mother-in-law, Ruth recognized that some provision had to be made for their physical sustenance. So she went out gleaning for corn; i.e., she picked up whatever grain was dropped along the way by the reapers. It just "happened" that the field in which she gleaned was that of Boaz.

3. She was unselfish. She not only gleaned for herself; she was also providing for her mother-in-law.

4. She was God-fearing. Ruth had been brought up in the land of Moab and had been taught to serve the gods of the Moabites. Through her first husband and in-laws, however, she had learned of the one true God and had come to serve Him. The death of her husband had not affected her loyalty to God, for true loyalty to God transcends death, life, parents, or whatever. This fear of God on the part of Ruth was particularly attractive to Boaz, who, on his first meeting with her, commended her: "The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge" (Ruth 2:12).

5. She was grateful. This beautiful quality, so rare in our own society, shone unmistakably in the life of Ruth, as she, in response to the kindness of Boaz, "fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, 'Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?'" (Ruth 2:10).

6. She was more concerned for quality than for physical attractiveness in a husband. Indications are that Boaz was considerably older than Ruth. But Boaz was a near kinsman to Ruth's first husband, which, along with his moral and spiritual qualities, made him far more suitable than one who might be closer to her own age. Ruth's recognition of this and her desire to have Boaz as her husband again evoked a response of praise from the lips of Boaz: "Blessed are you of the Lord, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich" (Ruth 3:10).

7. She was morally pure. It could be said of Ruth in a general way: "For all the city of my people know that you are a virtuous woman" (Ruth 4:11). But circumstances recorded in the book of Ruth itself, provided a specific occasion for her and Boaz to demonstrate just how morally pure they really were. The occasion we speak of resulted when Ruth, mistakenly believing that Boaz was the nearest relative to her husband, and consequently believing that she had every right to become his wife (read Deuteronomy 25:5-10), went in the dark of night to Boaz with full intentions of becoming his wife that night. There was just one problem: he was not the nearest relative, and they therefore had no right to become husband and wife until legal requirements

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Times of Services

Sundays - 2:00 pm Bible class, 3:00 pm Assembly Wednesdays - 6:30 pm Bible class

could be met. Although they were alone at night, possibly possessed with a mutual love, and having full intentions of becoming husband and wife as soon as possible, they maintained their moral purity, leaving a good example for all who would follow afterward. "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4).

We are quite sure that if there were more "Ruths" in this world there would be far fewer divorces. What about it, girls? Are you seeking to be a "Ruth"? And, boys, would a "Ruth" be attractive to you? Nothing is said of Ruth's physical appearance, but she was a beautiful woman, for she had a beautiful character.

The Bible teaches that such a woman is of great value, for: "Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies" (Proverbs 31:10). The young man who finds such a wife "finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord" (Proverbs 18:22).

— by Bill Hall, taken from *BIBLE VIEWPOINTS*, a church bulletin on the web by The Fry Road church of Christ, April 25, 1999 issue

Qualities That Make For A Good Husband

By Bill Hall

As Ruth provides a good example of the qualities that make for a good wife, Boaz demonstrates the qualities that a girl ought to seek in the young man who is to be her husband.

1. He was God-fearing. Especially impressive is the fact that his fear of God influenced every relationship in life. He greeted those who worked for him with the words, "The LORD be with you," and they replied, "The LORD bless you" (Ruth 2:4). His fear of God obviously influenced his relationship with Ruth. Such spiritual qualities are essential if one is to be a good husband and father.

2. He was a good provider. He owned land, and personally accepted the responsibility of overseeing the reaping and threshing of his crops.

3. He was kind to the needy. Not only did he allow Ruth to glean in his fields (the law demanded that he do this — Deuteronomy 24:19) but he encouraged her to do so, and provided food, water, and protection from harm for her throughout the time she worked there. And he even went beyond this to tell his laborers to purposely let some of the grain fall so Ruth could gather that which would be sufficient for her and her mother-in-law (Ruth 2:15-16).

4. He recognized quality in one who was poor. When we view Ruth, we see only those beautiful qualities that characterized her life. But Boaz could see more than that. He could see her poor clothing and lowly circumstances; he could see the menial work she was doing. Boaz could have easily been blinded to Ruth's inner beauty by the obvious poverty with which she was surrounded. But Boaz was a perceptive man who could judge character not on the basis of material wealth, but on the basis of inner purity and godliness. Because of this, he found and recognized a real jewel who later became his wife.

5. He was law-abiding. Knowing he was not the nearest relative to Ruth's former husband, and knowing that consequently he had no legal or God-given right to her, he refused to take her for his wife until legal and divinely-ordained requirements could be met.

People of our age need to learn that there are those who are ineligible for marriage, and that legal eligibility does not necessarily establish eligibility in God's sight. Only three classes of people have a right to marry: (a) those who have never been married; (b) those whose companions are dead; and (c) those who have put away their companions for the cause of fornication (Matthew 19:9). Marriage on the part of any other results in the formation of an adulterous union that does not have divine approval.

6. He was morally pure. He actually took the lead in seeing to it that he and Ruth maintained moral purity (see previous article).

There is nothing wrong with a young man's being handsome or physically strong. But such qualities have little bearing on the kind of husband he will be. Spiritual strength, a willingness to work, kindness, respect for authority, strength of character, truthfulness, self-respect, etc. are the virtues that make for a good husband. Boaz had these virtues. There are young men today who have them, and they are the young men that should be attractive to Christian girls.

Marriage can result in great happiness or great misery. For those who carefully choose their mates and work toward building their homes on the sure foundation of God's word, marriage brings happiness. But for those who look on marriage lightly and choose their mates solely on the basis of physical attraction, marriage frequently results in misery and disillusionment. We wish all our young readers the very best, and trust that with God's help they can find true happiness, both in this life and in the life to come.

— by Bill Hall, taken from *BIBLE VIEWPOINTS*, a church bulletin on the web by The Fry Road church of Christ, May 14, 1999 issue

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