"Whispers in the Dark"

Ruth 2:19-3:1

STRENGTH for the Journey with Joe Stowell
Part of the RBC family of Ministries

Individual Study Introduction

After listening to the audio segment, use the following questions as your time allows. You may want to record your answers or jot down thoughts and notes in a personal journal. You may also want to use your journal as a record of your prayer time with God. Write out your prayer or simply record your requests and the areas of your life you are releasing to God. This written record will help you watch God's movement in your life. You'll see more clearly the ways God is giving you "strength for the journey"!

Getting Started:

Joe Stowell observes that we don't have a lot of models like Boaz in our world today.

- When you were growing up, who did you look to as the ideal model of a man?
- Who do you look to as a model man now?

Strength through Scripture:

Read Ruth 3:1-12.

1. Do you agree with Joe that much of the responsibility for moral strength and purity rests on a guy's shoulders, because he is the one who can really navigate the boat of moral fidelity and character through a relationship?

2. Why does Joe challenge parents to block their kids from watching MTV in particular?

3. What does Joe mean when he says that our world treats us like animals? How are we different than animals?

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Notes:

"The LORD bless him!" Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. "He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead." She added, "That man is our close relative; he is one of our kinsman-redeemers."

Ruth 2:20

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4. How did Ruth demonstrate the real lure of a woman: character?

5. How did Boaz demonstrate a man's real strength: true love?

Digging Deeper:

If you have enough time, answer one or more of these optional questions. But be sure to save time for the final two sections.

1. In what ways does our culture tell women that it is the lure of their sensuality that will get a man?

2. Does this mean women should wear burlap bags? What do Naomi's instructions to Ruth in chapter 3 communicate in this regard?

3. Though the world says they are the same, what is the difference between lust and love?

Strength through Reflection:

1. If you are a woman, how close are you to being a woman of character who embraces moral integrity? If you are a man, how close are you to being a man of true love who protects, provides for, affirms, and honors the women in your life?

2. If you are married, how close are you to being a couple in which a woman of character and a man of true love wrap their hearts around the next generation?

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Strength through Prayer:

Spend a few moments in prayer. Thank God that Ruth and Boaz show us that moral integrity is not only a possibility but also a preference.

You may want to begin your prayer with these words:

"Thank You, Father, for the power of Your Spirit. Thank You that we can be the kind of people You are looking for, people of moral integrity—women of character and men of true love who stay in convergence with the wonderful unfolding of Your plan. I commit my life and my family to You, in Jesus' name."

Closing Call to Action:

If you're a woman, the challenge is that you would indeed embrace moral integrity in your life.

But I really want to talk to guys. We have Boaz as a model, a model of a man who knows how to truly love a woman. We don't have a lot of models like that in our world today—certainly not in our movies, music, sitcoms, or even among our friends.

We noticed four qualities in Boaz's life, and I want you to check your life for these qualities. When you're around women, do you instinctively seek to protect them, to provide for them, to affirm them, and to honor them?

The reason why this list is so important is because we normally do just the opposite as we relate to women. We want them to provide protection for our ego through our conquering of them. We want them to provide joy and satisfaction for us. We want them to affirm us. A sexual conquest can be very affirming to our male ego; if a woman responds to us sexually, we feel so honored. But that's all me-centered. That's the sludge of sinful self-centeredness that Satan uses to take us down the drain and to destroy the health and power of a relationship between a man and a woman.

Are you a man who shows true love by living to protect, provide for, affirm, and honor the women in your life? When you do that, God will use you in great ways—not only today, but in the generations to come.

Ephesians 5:25 says: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church." Jesus lives to protect us; He provides for us; He affirms us with His love; and He honors us by making us His children. So if you're looking for a model besides Boaz, just go to Jesus. How does He love you? Pour that kind of love onto the women in your life.

Notes:

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