

Kindness Focuses on Others

(Ruth 1:1-22)

Yearly Theme: *“Love Goes...”*

Series Title: *Random Acts of Kindness*

February 3rd, 2019

Something to think about:

There have been so many Bible studies and small group studies done on the book of Ruth. It's only 4 chapters long, it's near the beginning of the Bible, and is set during a time when Israel was in the early stages of development as a nation. There was no king but God to rule them, but there were Judges who functioned as “military leaders in times of crisis; they also served as local rulers, administering political and legal justice.”¹

This small book is packed with amazing content. There are themes of loyalty, of family, of overcoming grief; there are themes of compassion, and hope, and dreams of the future. However, over the next four weeks, we will be focusing on one of the most overlooked themes in Ruth, the theme of *kindness*.

Follow along...

Ruth 1:1-22 (NLT)

Before we jump in to the details of this passage, the main point that we can take away from these 22 verses is...

Key Point: *“True kindness takes no thought for self, but instead pours life into others.”*

Listen to how Alexander MacLaren describes kindness: “Kindness makes a person attractive. If you would win the world, melt it, do not hammer it.”

There are two acts of kindness in this passage that need to be pointed out:

1. The kindness of Naomi toward her daughters-in-law.

Ruth 1:8-9 (NLT),⁸ But on the way, Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back to your mothers’ homes. And may the LORD reward you for your

kindness to your husbands and to me.⁹ May the LORD bless you with the security of another marriage.” Then she kissed them good-bye, and they all broke down and wept.

2. The kindness of Ruth toward her mother-in-law.

Ruth 1:16-18 (NLT),¹⁶ But Ruth replied, “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.¹⁷ Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!”¹⁸ When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

Something to take home:

Why do we hold back kindness when opportunities present themselves for acts of benevolence? Is it selfishness? Is it for lack of time? Or, is it something else completely?

Naomi had every right to have her widowed daughters-in-law stay with her and help her during the most difficult season of her life, but she kindly insisted that they go back to their homes and try and make a life for themselves the best way they could. And, Naomi’s daughters-in-law had every right to insist that they be allowed to go back and remarry in their hometowns while they were still young enough to do so, but Ruth insisted on staying and sacrificing any opportunity for a normal future.

Kindness was the key to both decisions. These selfless acts of generosity gave full bloom to the love that goes beyond comfort. Both women made sacrifices, and both women were blessed for having done so.

Are you kind? Are you willing to give when no one else does? Are you willing to reach out and help when others are in need? Are you willing to give, even when no one else sees? What random act of kindness can you do this coming week?

Remember...

Key Point: *“True kindness takes no thought for self, but instead pours life into others.”*

¹ Frank E. Gæbelein, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Vol. 3*, (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1992), 518.

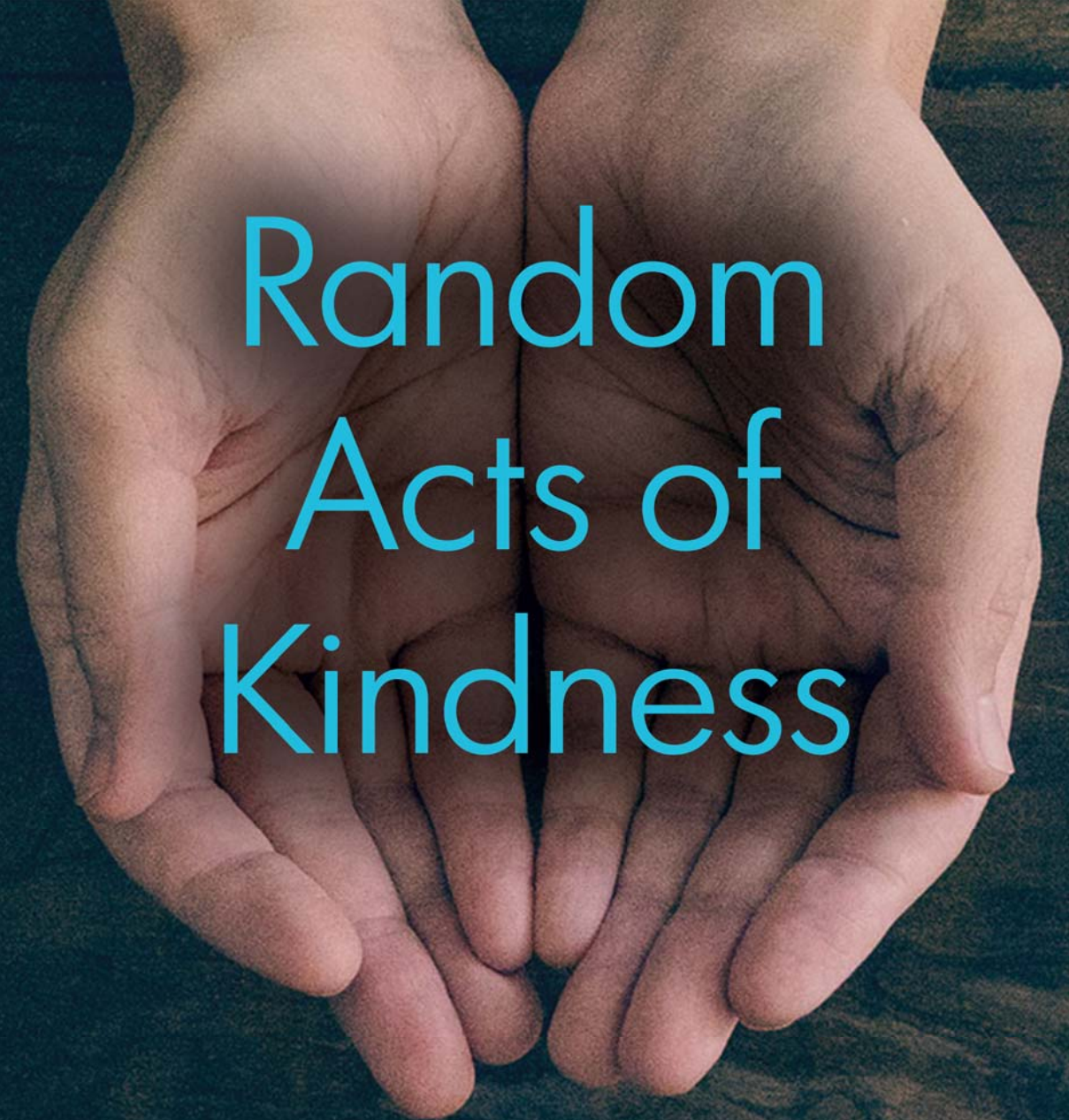
NOTES:



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*“Develop completely committed followers of Christ who:
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Grow in Christ continually, and,
Go for Christ daily;*

Through:
Core Families,
Community Partnerships, and
Global Connections.



Random Acts of Kindness

LESSON 1:
“KINDNESS FOCUES ON OTHERS”
(RUTH 1:1-22)

Kindness Focuses on Others

(Ruth 1:1-22)

Series: *Random Acts of Kindness*

KICK STARTERS:

- ⇒ Define “kindness.”
- ⇒ Describe a time when someone did a random act of kindness toward you? Have you ever done a random act of kindness?

SCRIPTURE: (Before studying this material, consider listening to the corresponding message online at: <http://www.northmaincog.org/media/sermon-media>)

Ruth 1:1-22 (NLT)

¹ In the days when the judges ruled in Israel, a severe famine came upon the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah left his home and went to live in the country of Moab, taking his wife and two sons with him. ² The man's name was Elimelech, and his wife was Naomi. Their two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in the land of Judah. And when they reached Moab, they settled there.

³ Then Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. ⁴ The two sons married Moabite women. One married a woman named Orpah, and the other a woman named Ruth. But about ten years later, ⁵ both Mahlon and Kilion died. This left Naomi alone, without her two sons or her husband.

⁶ Then Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had blessed his people in Judah by giving them good crops again. So Naomi and her daughters-in-law got ready to leave Moab to return to her homeland. ⁷ With her two daughters-in-law she set out from the place where she had been living, and they took the road that would lead them back to Judah.

⁸ But on the way, Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back to your mothers’ homes. And may the LORD reward you for your kindness to your husbands and to me.” ⁹ May the LORD bless you with the security of another marriage.” Then she kissed them good-bye, and they all broke down and wept.

¹⁰ “No,” they said. “We want to go with you to your people.”

¹¹ But Naomi replied, “Why should you go on with me? Can I still give birth to other sons who could grow up to be your husbands?” ¹² No, my daughters, return to your parents’ homes, for I am too old to marry again. And even if it were possible, and I were to get married tonight and bear sons, then what? ¹³ Would you wait for them to grow up and refuse to marry someone else? No, of course not, my daughters! Things are far more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD himself has raised his fist against me.”

¹⁴ And again they wept together, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye. But Ruth clung tightly to Naomi.

¹⁵ “Look,” Naomi said to her, “your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. You should do the same.”

¹⁶ But Ruth replied, “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. ¹⁷ Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!” ¹⁸ When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said nothing more.

¹⁹ So the two of them continued on their journey. When they came to Bethlehem, the entire town was excited by their arrival. “Is it really Naomi?” the women asked.

²⁰ “Don’t call me Naomi,” she responded. “Instead, call me Mara, for the Almighty has made life very bitter for me. ²¹ I went away full, but the LORD has brought me home empty. Why call me Naomi when the LORD has caused me to suffer and the Almighty has sent such tragedy upon me?”

²² So Naomi returned from Moab, accompanied by her daughter-in-law Ruth, the young Moabite woman. They arrived in Bethlehem in late spring, at the beginning of the barley harvest.

GROUP DISCUSSION:

1. Describe what is going on in this passage of Scripture.

2. What is the relationship between Naomi and Ruth? What has happened to both of them and how are they dealing with their current situations?

3. When Naomi heard of the abundance of food in her homeland she decided to travel back home from Moab. Her daughters-in-law went with her, but on their journey Naomi stopped and released them from having to go with her. What were Orpah and Ruth’s responses to Naomi (vv. 8-18)?

4. How was Naomi’s response one of kindness to her daughters-in-law by allowing them to go back to their families in Moab? How would this have been more difficult for Naomi in the long run? What was Naomi giving up or sacrificing by doing this?

5. Orpah left and went back to her family home, but Ruth did not. How was Ruth’s response one of kindness by staying with Naomi in her journey back to Bethlehem in Judah? What was Ruth giving up, or sacrificing by doing this?

6. Is kindness easy or hard? How is kindness an act of love (1 Corinthians 13:4)?

7. The believer in Christ is commanded to love their neighbor as themselves, and this includes their enemies (e.g., Mark 12:29-30 and Matthew 5:43-48). With this in mind, how is it possible to show kindness, even to our enemies? Give some practical examples...

8. There are some people who are only willing to be kind when they get recognition for it. Is this the type of kindness God desires for us to exhibit? Why, or why not?

9. When was the last time you did something for someone else without expectation of payback or favors? Why is this important?

SELF-EVALUATION/APPLICATION:

- ⇒ DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A “KIND” PERSON? WHY, OR WHY NOT?
- ⇒ SOMETIMES JESUS IS WILLING Why do we hold back kindness when opportunities present themselves for acts of benevolence? Is it selfishness? Is it for lack of time? Or, is it something else completely? Are you willing to give when no one else will? Are you willing to reach out and help when others are in need? Are you willing to give, even when no one else sees? What random act of kindness can you do this coming week?
- ⇒ MEMORY VERSE: Ruth 1:16-17 and 1 Corinthians 13:4.