

Honoring Obedience

By Steve Hiebert

"Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you."

(Exodus 20:12 NIV)

The story of Ruth reminds me a lot of the kind of loyalty and obedience that God wants to foster in each of us – especially in regards to our relationships with our parents. In Ruth 1:16 & 17, Ruth says to her mother-in-law, Naomi, *"Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me."* Ruth accompanied Naomi to Bethlehem. Ruth volunteered to go to the fields to glean food for both Naomi and herself. She worked hard throughout the day and impressed the workers with her diligence. Boaz, who later became her kinsman-redeemer, told Ruth, *"I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband – how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge"* (Ruth 2:11-12).

Even though Naomi was Ruth's mother-in-law, she treated her as though she was her own mother. We see from Ruth an example of how she honored Naomi. Ruth stayed with Naomi in her time of need, she spent time with Naomi when no one else was around, she became Naomi's friend when her husband died and no one else was left, she served God with Naomi, and she provided food for Naomi when she could not provide for herself.

We can see more of Ruth's character in her great-grandson King David and his obedience to the Lord. King David's heart was much like Ruth's heart. When we read David's Psalms, it seems that much of the love, honor, and obedience to God that defined Ruth's life was passed on to her great-grandson.