

# NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

## LESSON NINETEEN: RUTH 1:18

**"When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her."**

After Ruth's impassioned speech, during which she invoked the name of the Lord, Naomi ceased entreating her to return to her parents' home. Naomi recognized further argument would be fruitless. Ruth had made a firm decision, from which she could not be dissuaded.

The Hebrew word translated "steadfastly" holds a wealth of information about the state of Ruth's mind. The word itself means "make strong, harden, fortify, obstinate." To say she had her mind made up is an understatement. There was no wiggle room with this decision. Ruth dug in her heels and stood firm.

Interestingly, this Hebrew word has a physical and a mental aspect to it. Physically, it carries the idea of "on foot." It is an action word, then. Ruth is moving on her decision. Mentally, it indicates "in courage," as in "be of good courage." Her decision to accompany Naomi into a strange land and an unknown future was not easily made. The margin of my Bible says that she literally "made herself strong to go."

It reminds me of Joshua 1:9, "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of good courage: be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." Ruth had made herself strong in the Lord. She was putting feet to her faith in the God of Israel.

More than a thousand years later, one of Ruth's descendants will manifest the same kind of steadfast decision making: "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." (Luke 9:51). Jesus knew what was waiting for Him in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, He made Himself strong and put feet to His obedience to the Father. Courageously, Jesus set forth on a path that would lead to the cross.

Courage like Ruth showed here is not natural. She had to "make herself strong." She had to fight against her own human nature. She had to resist the desire to do things the easy way and just go home to her mother. She had to step out in faith, motivated by her love for Naomi and her desire to care for this homeless, childless widow.

It's human nature to stay on the floor when life has knocked you down. It's easier than fighting back. Getting up off the floor isn't easy. Facing your loss, pain, and sorrow takes courage. Moving on to healing requires a steadfast mindset.

"Make yourself strong" means you take the initiative. You do the work. Others can cheer you on and offer sage advice. God will give you the tools you need to accomplish your goal. But you must make the decision: where do I go from here?

*"I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." Philippians 4:13*