

# Handfuls On Purpose

## Studies in the Book of Ruth

### Chapter Four

#### **Six Resolutions of Spiritual Commitment to Sanctification**

“<sup>10</sup> And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. <sup>11</sup> And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? *are* there yet *any more* sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? <sup>12</sup> Turn again, my daughters, go *your way*; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, *if* I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons; <sup>13</sup> Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much {Heb.: I have much bitterness} for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me. <sup>14</sup> And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her. <sup>15</sup> And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. <sup>16</sup> And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God: <sup>17</sup> Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me” (Ruth 1:10-17).

#### **THE BAPTISM OF RUTH**

If I were to ask what was the greatest catastrophe of the twentieth century, I would get many different answers. Some would say the first or second world war. Others might say the Jewish holocaust of Nazi Germany. Some might remember some devastating natural disaster or even the Muslim terrorist attack on the Twin Towers. Political conservatives might say the rapid advancement of liberalism, secular humanism and socialism in our society.

Let me tell you (from a Bible perspective) what I think is the greatest tragedy of the Twentieth Century: millions of Christians living in the greatest country in the world, enjoying the freedom and prosperity to share their faith in Christ and His gospel with anyone and everyone, but who lack the commitment to do so.

There are too many people who profess to be Christians who are like Orpah in Ruth 1:14. They have affection for Christ, but no commitment to serve Him. They say they love Him, but at the first hint of difficulty they leave Him to live the according to the desires of their hearts.

This chapter will focus on these kinds of personal failures of individual Christians. We can view the confrontation of our commitment to Christ (or lack thereof) negatively or positively. It is always a positive action to evaluate our failures if we do so with the intent to change the way we live in order to become more effective as Christians. Therefore, the focus of this chapter will be on what we can do to change to become the kind of Christian that God can use and bless. In most cases this begins with a willingness to recognize certain things about our life and the willingness to commit to doing whatever is necessary to make the appropriate changes.

We can learn a great deal from Ruth’s decision as revealed in Ruth 1:14-17. The decision reveals an understanding of the difficulties that would become part of her life if she went with Naomi and a commitment to go regardless of what her decision would cost her personally. Ruth’s statement to Naomi reveals the character of a true disciple. This is the kind of commitment Christ expects of all true disciples.

“<sup>25</sup> And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, <sup>26</sup> If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup> And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:25-27).

## **“Ruth clave unto her” (Ruth 1:14).**

The word “clave” renders the idea of being joined together or stuck together. Ruth made herself inseparable from Naomi. That is what every Christian ought to do with Christ. Christians love to quote the verse where Christ says, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5). This is Christ’s promise of commitment to His relationship with us. Have we made a similar promise of commitment to our relationship with Him?

**Ruth makes six resolutions of commitment to her relationship with Naomi (Ruth 1:16-17). These parallel the kind of commitment that should accompany ritual water baptism for believers.**

**First: “Whither thou goest I will go.”** This is a commitment to follow. To most Christians that means a commitment to follow Christ anywhere . . . EXCEPT. . . anywhere where they might feel challenged or uncomfortable, anywhere where they might be asked to do something they might not want to do or anywhere it might cost them more than they are willing to pay. That is not the kind of commitment Christ expected of His followers.

<sup>19</sup> And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. <sup>20</sup> And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head. <sup>21</sup> And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. <sup>22</sup> But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead. <sup>23</sup> And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. <sup>24</sup> And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep. <sup>25</sup> And his disciples came to *him*, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. <sup>26</sup> And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm. <sup>27</sup> But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him” (Matthew 8:19-27)!

Discipleship (following Christ) is a commitment of faith that is given without any qualifications or restrictions upon it. When Ruth committed herself to follow Naomi to Bethlehemjudah, she knew it wasn’t going to be easy. A life of faith doesn’t necessarily know what tomorrow will bring, nor does it worry about it. A commitment to follow Christ is a willingness that is prepared to drink of His cup of death. Today, few Christians are willing to live for Christ, let alone die for Him.

**Second: “Where thou lodgest, I will lodge.”** This is a commitment to fellowship. The commitment to fellowship is a commitment to walk with Christ. The commitment to fellowship is a commitment to live in holiness and to walk in truth.

<sup>3</sup> That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. <sup>5</sup> This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: <sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:3-7).

Fellowship is an intimacy with Christ that involves a communion in “light” (truth). Fellowship is a partnership involving the mutual sharing of all the assets (personal abilities and material possessions) of the individuals involved.

<sup>32</sup> And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. <sup>33</sup> And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup> Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, <sup>35</sup> And laid *them* down at the apostles’ feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need” (Acts 4:32-35).

Central to the commitment to fellowship with Christ is the commitment to abandon a life of sin and to walk and live in the truth of God's Word.

**Third: Thy people shall be my people.**" This is the commitment to identify one's self with the children of God. Ruth had to forsake her country (Moab) and her people's religious practices and culture (idolatry). Many people reject the gospel of Jesus Christ because they know that doing so will require they change their religious practices and even the churches they attend. Others refuse to accept Christ because of what family members or friends will think of them.

Every Christian needs to remember that once he is "born again" of the Spirit of God, he is removed from the family of Adam and placed as an adult child in the family of God. That means we have a responsibility to treat other Christians as brothers and sisters in Christ. The commitment to family is the commitment to love one another.

"<sup>10</sup> In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. <sup>11</sup> For this is the message {lit, commandment} that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. <sup>12</sup> Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. <sup>13</sup> Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. <sup>14</sup> We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death. <sup>15</sup> Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. <sup>16</sup> Hereby perceive we the love *of God*, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. <sup>17</sup> But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? <sup>18</sup> My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. <sup>19</sup> And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him" (I John 3:10-19).

The commitment to family is the commitment to unity in truth.

"<sup>4</sup> I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. <sup>5</sup> And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. <sup>6</sup> And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it" (II John 1:4-6).

"<sup>3</sup> For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. <sup>4</sup> I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (III John 1:3-4).

**Fourth: "Thy God shall be my God."** This is a commitment to the Lordship of Christ. The commitment to the Lordship of Christ recognizes two things:

1. His absolute authority over our life
2. Our accountability to that authority

"<sup>2</sup> Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. <sup>3</sup> The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: *but* Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. <sup>4</sup> Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward" (Isaiah 1:2-4).

These verses describe many Christians today. To them, God is a heavenly, white haired, old *Santa Claus* type who they try to manipulate into getting what they want when they want it. (Did you know that shopping centers are getting letters for Santa with death threats from kids if he doesn't give them want

they want?) Commitment to the Lordship of Christ is a commitment to obey the Word of God.

<sup>43</sup> For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. <sup>44</sup> For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. <sup>45</sup> A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. <sup>46</sup> And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? <sup>47</sup> Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: <sup>48</sup> He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. <sup>49</sup> But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great” (Luke 6:43-49).

<sup>31</sup> Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; <sup>32</sup> And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. <sup>33</sup> They answered him, We be Abraham’s seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. <sup>35</sup> And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: *but* the Son abideth ever. <sup>36</sup> If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. <sup>37</sup> I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you” (John 8:31-37).

**Fifth: “Where thou diest, I will die.”** This is the commitment to the sacrifice of self. This commitment defines the degree of our love for God and reveals a true comprehension of eternal realities. This kind of commitment was the common, normal and expected level of commitment amongst early Christianity. Read Acts 7:51-60.

<sup>51</sup> Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye. <sup>52</sup> Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: <sup>53</sup> Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept *it*. <sup>54</sup> When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth. <sup>55</sup> But he {Stephen}, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, <sup>56</sup> And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. <sup>57</sup> Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, <sup>58</sup> And cast *him* out of the city, and stoned *him*: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul. <sup>59</sup> And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. <sup>60</sup> And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep” (Acts 7:51-60).

Stephen understood the danger he was in when he preached this message to the lost Jews. Yet he preached what needed to be said and willingly died for it. This kind of commitment would be considered fanaticism by most people today. It is a willingness to say, be or do whatever is required of the moment and circumstance regardless of the cost to us personally. In our present twentieth century society it is socially and culturally acceptable to be a fanatic about anything but religion. A person can be a fanatic about sports, work and even politics. You cross the line when you become an extremist about religion. There are people who could quote you the batting averages of every player on their favorite baseball team (and wouldn’t hesitate to do so if you let them). Yet, if you memorize a few verses of Scripture you are a religious nut.

**Sixth: “If ought but death part thee and me.”** This is the commitment to the long haul (service or work). Christian service is what the Bible calls “the work of the ministry.” Nothing in this life should be given priority over the “work of the ministry.” Faithfulness to Christ cannot be defined apart from being faithful in DOING the “work of the ministry.”

“<sup>11</sup> And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; <sup>12</sup> For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-12).

The “work of the ministry” involves soul winning, disciple making, encouraging, teaching Sunday School classes and hundreds of other *jobs*. A Christianity that doesn’t do the “work of the ministry” is not Christianity at all. When it comes to a choice between playing or praying, which do you usually choose?

What does it take to keep you from attending the services of your local church? Is Sunday a holy day or a holiday for you? Is your Christianity a vocation or a vacation?

One day I looked at myself,  
At the self that Christ can see;  
I saw the person I am today  
And the one I ought to be.

I saw how little I really pray,  
How little I really do;  
I saw the influence of my life,  
How little of it was true!

I saw the bundle of faults and fears  
I ought to lay on the shelf;  
I had given God a little bit,  
But I hadn’t given my self.

I came away from seeing myself,  
With my mind made up to be  
The sort of person that Christ can use  
With a heart He may always see!

Author Unknown

Try to raise the level of your commitment to Christ each day of your life. Where has your commitment to Christ failed or where is it lacking? No one should ever walk away from a study of the Word of God the same as they were when they started. Commitment is a determination to do what you know is right and to be what you ought to be.

# Handfuls On Purpose

## Studies in the Book of Ruth

### Chapter Four

#### **Six Resolutions of Spiritual Commitment to Sanctification**

1. List the six resolutions of commitment to Christ from Ruth 1:14-17 and explain what is practically involved in each one.

A. "Whither thou goest, I will go." \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

B. "Where thou lodgest, I will lodge." \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

C. "Thy people shall be my people." \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

D. "Thy God shall be my God." \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E. "Where thou diest, will I die." \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

F. "If ought but death part thee and me." \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

2. What do you think is the greatest tragedy of the 20th century? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why are so many people (who call themselves Christians) like Orpah? \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

4. What does the word "clave" mean in Ruth 1:14? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. A commitment to follow Christ is a willingness that is prepared to drink of the \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ of His death. Few Christians are willing to \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ for Christ, let alone die for Him.

6. Read I John 1:3-7. What does a commitment to fellowship with Christ involve? \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. What did Ruth forsake in order to commit herself to the family of Naomi? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Read I John 3:10-19. What does a commitment to family involve according to these verses of Scripture? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Read II John 1:4-6 and III John 1:3-4. What does a commitment to family involve according to these verses of Scripture? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What two things does a commitment to the Lordship of Christ involve recognizing?  
A. \_\_\_\_\_  
B. \_\_\_\_\_
11. How does Isaiah 1:2-3 describe many of today's professing Christians? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. Read Luke 6:43-49 and John 8:31-37. What is a central aspect of what it means to commit to the Lordship of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_
13. After reading Acts 7:51-60 and understanding that Stephen knew the hostility the Jews had toward what he was going to say, would you consider him to be a *fanatic* for saying it knowing they would probably kill him for doing so? \_\_\_\_\_  
A. Do you think that you would be willing to do the same thing in a similar circumstance?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- B. How would you measure your degree of fanaticism about your faith in Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
14. Philippians 3:8 defines the commitment of sacrifice of self. Do you think this verse describes your attitude and practice of life? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Read Ephesians 4:11-12. Describe some jobs meant by the "work of the ministry." \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. Read Romans 12:1-13. Discuss what these verses teach about the commitment to service (work)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
17. When it comes to a choice between PRAYING and PLAYING, which one do you choose? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. Is Sunday a HOLY DAY or a HOLIDAY for you? \_\_\_\_\_
19. Is your Christianity a VOCATION or a VACATION? \_\_\_\_\_
20. From an eternal perspective, what will be the cause and effect results of your lack of Biblical commitment on the eternal destinies (judgment, blessing and rewards) of all those whom God has put under your influence? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_