



January 14, 2019

January is a time when I typically set big spiritual goals—ones that inspire me to elevate my believing to a new level. By studying Biblical examples, I find principles to help me be strong in the Lord while I pursue these goals. Rahab and Ruth repeatedly inspire me because, like me, they were women who each came to a knowledge of the one true God later in life. Yet they became strong in the Lord and were even part of the royal ancestry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew 1:5:

And Salmon begat Booz [Boaz] of Rachab [Rahab]; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse [the father of King David].

What did Rahab and Ruth do to become strong in the Lord? Rahab and Ruth each recognized the presence and power of God in the lives of Israelite believers; each stepped outside the norm of her culture by making a bold, courageous, believing decision to care for God's people; and each received great blessings and deliverance as a result. Let's learn more about the principles these women operated to become and remain strong in the Lord.

Rahab was not an Israelite believer; she was a Gentile who lived in the walled city of Jericho and kept an inn. When Israel was preparing to claim Jericho as part of the Promised Land, Joshua sent in two spies to evaluate the city's situation and to seek information. They stayed at Rahab's inn (Joshua 2:1,2). When faced with these spies, who represented an invading army, Rahab made a bold decision: to protect and hide the spies from Jericho's king, who sought to capture them (Joshua 2:3,4). Rahab recognized the presence and power of God in the lives of the children of Israel from news she had heard of the mighty things God had been doing for them since their departure from Egypt.

Joshua 2:9-11:

And she said unto the men, I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you.

For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed.

And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

Rahab stepped outside of the norm of her culture by confessing the God of Israel as the true God in heaven and earth and by asking the spies to spare her life and the lives of her family in return for her care (Joshua 2:12,13). Rahab's confidence in God as the Power behind Israel's inevitable and impending victory is clear.

Let's consider the life of Ruth. In the Book of Ruth, we read of a family from Bethlehem-judah that relocated to Moab to escape famine. In Moab, the father died, and both sons married Moabite women. After about ten years, both sons died also, leaving their mother, Naomi, alone with her two daughters-in-law—Orpah and Ruth. Naomi decided to return to her homeland of Judah in Israel when she heard that the famine there had ended, and she encouraged her daughters-in-law to return to their own people. Orpah decided to do this, but Ruth made a believing decision to cleave to Naomi.

Ruth 1:16,17:

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:

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.

This was a courageous decision because the Judeans looked upon Moabites as enemies. Ruth certainly stepped outside the norm of her culture! Like Rahab, Ruth recognized the presence and power of God in the life of one of His people. Ruth must have observed how Naomi demonstrated great believing and love for her God, even in the tough times.

Rahab and Ruth received great blessings and deliverance as a result of recognizing God's power and presence in the lives of His people and choosing to courageously care for them. Rahab and her family were spared when Israel captured Jericho (Joshua 6:25), and God noted her believing in "The Believers' Hall of Fame" (Hebrews 11:31). She also married an Israelite believer and had a son, Boaz. And then there is Ruth—the only woman named in God's Word as a virtuous woman (Ruth 3:11). She found favor with her kinsman Boaz because of her trust in God and her devotion to Naomi (Ruth 2:11,12). She eventually married Rahab's son, Boaz, and they became the great-grandparents of King David, an ancestor of Jesus Christ.

No one's cultural upbringing need keep them from receiving the promises in God's Word. Let's be strong in the Lord with our goals and believing, being inspired by Rahab's and Ruth's examples to recognize the presence and power of God in the lives of His people; to make bold, courageous, believing decisions to care for His people—even when it means stepping outside the norm of our culture; and to expect great blessings and deliverance from our God as we do.

For more information, visit www.theway.org

© 2019 by The Way International™. All rights reserved.