

BOOK REVIEW:

MEN ARE FROM ISRAEL, WOMEN ARE FROM MOAB: INSIGHTS ABOUT THE SEXES FROM THE BOOK OF RUTH

By Dr. Norm Wakefield and Jody Brolsma
180 pages, InterVarsity Press, 2000.
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Reviewed by Shari Voigt

Unlike any other book I've read, the authors of this book seek the common ground between men and women instead of proclaiming their differences. How are we alike? What guiding principles does the Bible suggest for relationships between men and women?

Men are from Israel, Women are from Moab: Insights about the Sexes from the Book of Ruth, written by Dr. Norm Wakefield and Jody Brolsma, takes a quick look at our gender stereotypes and discards them. Instead, they focus on how we can build one another up and nurture healthy relationships.

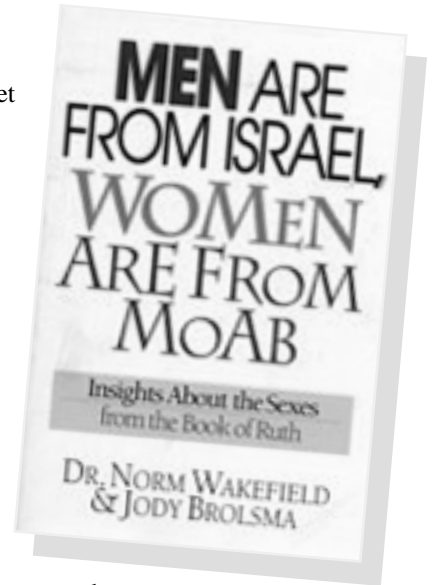
Dr. Norm Wakefield is a professor of pastoral theology at Phoenix Seminary. His co-author and daughter, Jody Brolsma, is the creative development editor of Group Publishing.

“The war between the sexes’ sells well,” the authors begin. But stressing our differences creates a convenient excuse to avoid facing what sin has done to us. They trace the roots of this relational tension back to the original sin in the Garden of Eden. But does it still have to be this way?

Using biblical and contemporary examples, the authors show that there is hope for men and women who are committed to building healthy relationships. They assert that healthy women are attracted to gentle men, while healthy men are attracted to emotionally and spiritually strong women. Grace is the glue that bonds us together.

“Grace is the defining attraction in any significant, meaningful relationship,” they write. “Grace is the bonding agent that allows vibrant life to flow from one individual to another.” Boaz is depicted as a man of grace because he looked beyond the prejudices of the Jewish culture of his day. He graciously cared about the physical and emotional well-being of a Gentile woman from the land of Moab, a widow who had no rights and no security. His words were kind, warm and affirming.

Ruth is shown to have been strong and determined, yet humble. She and Naomi submitted to one another, creating a balance of give and take. Ruth was also wise in making decisions and persistent in providing for Naomi and herself. She also demonstrated humble service, which nurtured mutual serving of one another.



The end result from the book of Ruth is victory and redemption. The foundation, godly character, is a biblical model for men and women that stands the test of time.

Men are from Israel, Women are from Moab paints vivid word pictures of grace, submission, godliness, wisdom, gentleness, persistence, generosity, humility and redemption — qualities important for both men and women. Every chapter concludes with thought-provoking questions, making this book suitable for individual or small group study. This book will appeal to anyone who seeks a better understanding of how men and women can live together in harmony.

Shari Voigt is a freelance writer who specializes in newsletters, press releases and promotional copy. As a wife, mother, youth leader and active participant in the local women's ministry, she cares about sharing the message of biblical equality.

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