

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON TWO COMMENTS

Dear Loved Ones,

I praise the Lord for each the opportunity to share our journeys and God's Word with you. Through these recent journeys, we especially came to recognize a deeper need for God's presence in our lives.

With lesson 1, I shared the following verse in talking about God's will for our lives: "Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is **God's will** for you who belong to Christ Jesus. Do not stifle the Holy Spirit."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-19 NLT

I would like to explain that there are many verses about God's will for our lives, but this verse surprised me when I was seeking God's will a long time ago. I had read it and dwelled on it many times before knowing that it is what God wants from us, but I never dwelled on praise and thankfulness being a starting point for God's will. It is where we start our connection through the Holy Spirit. I had never heard a teaching that emphasized God's will in this way. I always tried to live by this verse but hadn't been concentrating on it being such an important starting point for seeking God's will. When we are going through tough circumstances and asking God why and what next, it is hard to think about the importance God's will starts with praising Him in the middle of our circumstances.

As I told some of our story, I didn't go into detail but at one point we lost our ministry and consequently our home. We had 2 extra foster kids plus our 4 kids at the time so we camped until we could find an inexpensive place large enough for our family. The only place that we could find was an inner-city home that had a leaking rook, almost unusable bathroom and kitchen, broken floors, and cob webs that were hanging down several feet like a haunted house. I cried and my heart out and asked God why he gave us a place that seemed worse than a mission field after we spent our lives serving Him.

He clearly reminded me that I needed to praise Him. I really struggled with it knowing it was important but really hard to do, but when I began to sing praise songs I eventually felt His presence and comfort knowing that He still loved us and we at least had a roof and place that we could improve to provide a home for a family. I suddenly understood the meaning of a "sacrifice of praise." It did feel like a sacrifice at the time, but I finally determined to praise God in the midst of my circumstances, my spirit was lifted into God's presence. I knew He was holding me and carrying me but I had to dwell on that by praising Him for that. It was a small sacrifice compared to what Jesus did for me and would continue to do amid my circumstances.

It is so easy to dwell on what we feel or the circumstances we face, but sometimes that is when we can most easily recognize our weakness and see God's strength to get us to a deeper place with Him. There is no better place than to be in the center of His will and love. We can be filled with joy even when we don't feel victory or see our circumstances improve the way that we would like them to.

Naomi and Ruth became homeless too. They couldn't see hope at first, but what God did through them became of huge importance because it eventually was an important part of the history or our redeemer,

Jesus. Sometimes it takes a long time to see what God is doing, and sometimes we won't see it while we are here on earth but God is always up to a bigger plan that is far greater than ours.

He promises us all His resources to get to a better place in Him while we daily praise Him and let Him in control of our lives.

Thank you again for looking to God and allowing us to share His word with you.

Love and Prayers,
Sandy Yates