

## NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

### LESSON SEVENTY-THREE COMMENTS

Dear Loved Ones,

Bitter or better! Blessed or cursed! Grateful or Grudgeful! Every day we face frustrations of various magnitudes. What does it take to get you down? Job faced insurmountable challenges in spite of being a faithful man of God. Yes, he questioned what God was up to and expressed some frustrations. Yet he turned to God and determined to honor Him in spite of what He was going through. When we look at our circumstances, we can choose to follow our feelings and wallow in discouragement, or we can determine to go forward with honoring God. My husband always said we have to stand on what we know, not on what we feel. We were always taught to not only watch what we feel but also what we confess because of the verse in James 3:10 that says that blessing and cursing can come out of the same mouth. Feelings based on our circumstances lead us astray. God's Word is trustworthy. The more we know God and follow His Word, the more we can learn to stand in the face of adversity. We all face discouragement, but we don't have to stay there.

Naomi went from having a husband, two sons and their wives to losing her husband and sons. She recognized her change in attitude and suggested that she should be called "bitter". Yet she continued to move forward, returned to the land of God's people, and showed love and concern for her daughter-in-law Ruth. God turned her bitter circumstances to abundant blessings. Ruth, who was a Moabite woman, played an important role in this process. Her attitude, love and care for her mother-in-law, dedication, and obedience was rewarded. She may have even had a beautiful countenance because we know that our countenance can betray us as sad or cheerful. Proverbs 15:13 says, "*A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.*" God very frequently talks about our countenance. It even goes deeper than looking sad or happy. God pays attention to our hearts, our countenance, and our words. There is no such thing as being fake toward God.

We have a great responsibility to choose our attitude toward our circumstances every day. God gave Naomi and Ruth a very happy ending but before He changed their circumstances, He also helped them change their hearts.

Today we have the Holy Spirit and God's Son Jesus to help us change our attitudes, our gratefulness, and our countenance by putting our complete trust in Him daily. It's our choice. He doesn't promise to change our circumstances, but He does promise to give us all we need to face each day. He has good things in store for us. When we let God re-program our responses to gratitude, we become blessed with a peace that passes all our understanding and joy unspeakable. It is a deliberate daily effort to give our circumstances to God and praise Him no matter what we see around us. Let's keep our eyes on Jesus and trust that He sees far beyond what we are going through. Even better, He has a great plan. He understands. He cares. He loves us. He is waiting to show us a better way on earth and/or in Heaven. Choose daily blessings. Choose a cheery grateful heart and blessings to chase bitterness away.

Love and prayers,

Sandy Yates