

## NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

### LESSON FIFTEEN COMMENTS

Dear Loved Ones,

Have you ever felt like an Orphan? Hopefully not really, but even Paul called himself, as well as his co-workers, considered themselves orphaned when they were separated from those he loved and those who loved and cared for them. One of my recent devotionals included the following verse. It reminded me of how it relates to our lives as family and friends.

*"1 Thes.2:17-18-As for us, brothers and sisters, when for a short time, we were made orphans by being separated from you--in person, not in heart—we longed with great eagerness to see you face to face. For we wanted to come to you face to face. For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, wanted to again and again-but Satan blocked our way."*

Kids going away to school or college suddenly sometimes feel disconnected. Their parents may feel it even more. Families get separated by distance, loss of loved ones, divorce or other separations. Pastors can even feel abandoned by the church families to which they devoted much of their time caring for others. My husband and I experienced some of that after moving from a church into which we had poured our heart and soul. Churches members can feel abandoned by Pastors that they loved and respected. The love between family members is very deep, but loss of friends can also affect us greatly.

Paul says he was blocked by Satan when he longed to be with those he cared about, and those who he knew cared about him. In other verses he referred to a mother nursing her children (2:7) and a father encouraging his children to lead a life worthy of God (2:12). He related to others within a family setting to show the kind of love and care he felt toward them, so this time he had feelings of being separated like an orphan rather than being nurtured. The family structure is one of God's greatest blessings. Yet God also gave us brothers in sisters in Christ that can become as close because of our bond in Christ.

Naomi left her birth family to follow her husband and nurture her children. She may have felt extra abandoned and maybe even orphaned when she lost her husband and sons. Her daughters in law left their husbands to be with their husbands and now they may have felt abandoned by husbands also, yet God provided relationships with each other even though there was no actual blood tie. How are we supposed to feel when there is a disconnection? It is ok to have child-life feelings of needing and wanting those who have become very important to our lives. We cared about them, and they have cared for us.

Naomi, Ruth and Orpha had to make another major decision to get beyond their feelings of anger, blame, loneliness, bitterness, and lack of control over our circumstances. Who cares? Really, who cares? Ruth cared for Naomi. Naomi cared for Ruth. They chose to start with that. Orpah may have cared for them also but chose to go back to her homeland. God made a way for Naomi and Ruth to share a journey toward God's homeland and future blessings. We know that Satan can block us from doing what we think God wants us to do. We also know that God always has a greater plan. When we feel abandoned, orphaned, or at least confused about our feelings of loneliness and helplessness, God is there to walk with us to draw us closer to Him as well as to those he puts in our path to share our journey toward a closer relationship through Him and with others.

We praise God for those of you who share this journey with us. We may each have a variety of tough circumstances that plague us at times, but we also have a great God to whom we can turn, and we can turn to each other to help us through it.

If you ever felt alone, maybe even abandoned, what was your first reaction? How did you get through it? May we each feel God's presence more dearly as we look to Him as our primary source of love throughout our journey.

Love and Prayers,  
Sandy Yates