

NAOMI - RUTH CONNECTION

LESSON FOURTEEN: RUTH 1:9b-13a ,

" Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have a husband also tonight, and should also bear sons; would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands?"

Ruth and Orpah were at a crossroads. These two young Moabite women had been recently widowed. They had no children. What they had was a mother-in-law that they both loved very much. They loved Naomi so much that they decided to accompany her back to her homeland.

They had probably not progressed very far when Naomi called a halt to the journey. Apparently, she had reconsidered the wisdom of transplanting the two Moabite women to Israel.

Ruth and Orpah were probably surprised when Naomi told them it would be better for them to remain in Moab and return to their parents' homes. Her reason was sensible: The young women needed the security and protection of a husband. Ruth and Orpah could find husbands in their native country.

The chances that Ruth and Orpah would find Hebrew men willing to marry them was unlikely. This was due to the prohibition in the Mosaic Law against a Moabite participating in religious gatherings (Dt. 23:3).

The situation would be different if Naomi had any living sons. According to the law of the Levirate marriage (Dt. 25:5-10), if a married man died before producing an heir, his brother could marry the widow. The first son produced by this union would be considered the son of the deceased brother. Through this child the name and inheritance of the deceased brother would be perpetuated.

Naomi pointed out that she had no more sons for Ruth and Orpah to marry. Nor was there a chance in the future that this would change. First, Naomi was too old to have another child even if she married again. Second, even if she could have a child Ruth and Orpah could not wait around for the child to grow to marriageable age.

Three times Naomi entreated Ruth and Orpah to return to their parents' homes. Both ladies expressed their wish to continue the journey to Bethlehem. All three women were weeping. If Ruth and Orpah stayed in Moab, Naomi would continue on to Israel alone. They would never see her again. But if they accompanied her to Bethlehem, they would most likely be giving up any chance of finding another husband. They were at a crossroads, and they had to choose: Moab or Israel?

There are times when circumstances over which we have no control forces us to make life-changing decisions. Dealing with severe illness, injury, or death of a loved one comes to mind. Remember that God is in control. He allowed the situation (whatever it is) in your life for a reason. He is available to help you through it - just ask. He loves you and wants what's best for you. Look to Him for direction.

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105