



Women of the Bible

Naomi – Bitter or Better?

Lesson 5

Naomi is Ruth's mother-in-law. After losing her husband and two grown sons Naomi pleads to change her name to "Mara" which means bitter. After all, as a widow, she has no hope of more children or anyone to provide for her in her old age. She seemed destined to a sorrowful life of hopeless dependence upon others. Many would not fault her for this bitterness, yet God had a different plan for her. She and Ruth head to Bethlehem where everything changes! Ruth meets her future husband, Naomi gains both a son-in-law and a grandchild and God Himself turns her mourning into joy. Perhaps you have gone through difficult times, let Naomi's story encourage you to hold on to hope and wait for God to make you better!

Open your Bible and begin with a word of prayer

This Week's Scripture: Ruth 1:6-22

⁶Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had visited His people by giving them bread. ⁷Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. ⁸And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹The Lord grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband." So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. ¹⁰And they said to her, "Surely we will return with you to your people." ¹¹But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? ¹²Turn back, my daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, ¹³would you wait for them till

they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me!" ¹⁴Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." ¹⁶But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. ¹⁷Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me." ¹⁸When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her. ¹⁹Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, "Is this Naomi?" ²⁰But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. ²¹I went out full, and the Lord has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the Lord has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?" ²²So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

This Week's Memory Verse:

Looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled.

Hebrews 12:15(NKJV)

1. In looking at the above memory verse, what does this "root of bitterness" cause in the life of the believer? _____
2. With all this in mind what does Ephesians 4:31-32 tell us the remedy is to bitterness?

3. It is said that contentment, gladness, charity and unselfishness are the opposite of bitterness. Look up the following verses and note what they say about having godly attributes.
 - a. Philippians 2:3-4: _____

 - b. Philippians 4:11-13: _____

c. Which one of the two verses above speaks into your heart the most and why? _____

Reflect and Respond – Naomi blamed her misfortune on God; she said that God had “dealt very bitterly with me”. However, God’s Word tells us; “Don’t you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can’t you see that His kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?” Romans 2:4(NLT). In other words, God does this for our own good. Like a loving father that disciplines his daughter, so also, our heavenly Father will at times discipline us. Search your heart and ask yourself if you are willing to submit to the Lord’s gentle reprimand if it means you will be better and not bitter in return? Share your thoughts. _____

Result – Consider today’s bible study lecture. What one lesson will you take away from this study and apply to your walk with the Lord? _____
