

A MARA EXPERIENCE

Naomi (pleasant one) changed her name to Mara (bitter one) to reflect her opinion about the Lord's dealing with her life.

Mara is the nickname she chose to describe her view of the Lord's dealing with her life – “And she said to them, ‘do not call me Naomi but call me, Mara.’” (qara / kal / impv) (demand)

The name Mara reveals her frustration and misery and agony of soul regarding the Lord's dealing with her life “for the Almighty has dealt very (meod) bitterly (marar / hiphil / pf) with me.”

HOW MANY OF US HAVE ENTERED AN EXPERIENCE OF LIFE AS PLEASANT (Naomi) AND EXITED IT AS VERY BITTER (Mara)? How many of us have had A MARA EXPERIENCE?

<p>This lesson will study FIVE aspects of Naomi's MARA EXPERIENCE.</p>

1. Naomi doesn't mind telling anyone who will listen about how the Lord's recently left her Mara bitter.

“Do not call me Naomi; **call me Mara**, for the *Almighty* (shadday) has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out *full*, but the *Lord* (yahweh) has brought me back *empty*. Why do you call me Naomi, since the *Lord* has witnessed against (raa / hiphil / pf) me and the *Almighty* has afflicted (anah / kal / pf) me?” (Ruth 1:20-21)

Note that Naomi used two different names for God. She used Almighty (shadday) to emphasize the God of covenant promises. She also used Lord (yahweh) to emphasize the Lord of personal relationship.

This is important to her testimony against the plan of God because she feels that both of these essences of God have forsaken her recently. This belief has left her MARA BITTER. Does this sound like OMCD thinking?

2. Full and empty were words of extreme that she used related to her Mara bitter belief.

“I went out **full** (halak / kal / pf / male), but the Lord has brought me back **empty** (shub / hiphil / pf / reqam).”

- By full she meant, I had the good life (details of life). She lived in the time of Gideon the 5th Judge of Israel (Judges 6-8). They were oppressed by the Midianites for 7 years because of divine discipline of priest-nation.
- By empty she meant, I have nothing left but God. The hiphil of empty emphasizes cause and effect – The Lord is the cause of bringing me back empty and bitter.
- God has failed me - “For the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.” She made this point twice (1:20-21).

This is her belief but is it TRUE or part true and part false? Does this sound like OMCD thinking?

3. She left the geographical, mental, and operation will of God because of the hardships associated with the cycles of divine discipline upon the priest-nation because of idolatrous reversionism (Judges 6-8).

How is it that she left Pleasant One (Naomi) while living under national adversity which she called a famine (Ruth 1:1)? It was because she fled from it to keep the good life apart from the will of God for the nation.

She fled what Gideon fought. “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.” (2 Tim.4: 7)

How is it that she returned and demanded all those who remained in the will of God and fought the good fight of faith to call her the Bitter One? She wasn't the only one who suffered loss during this period of discipline.

How is it that she could leave full during the oppression of the Midianites that left everyone else empty?

How did she leave full while experiencing famine and oppression in the land and return empty while experiencing victory and prosperity in the land?

Does this sound like OMCD thinking?

4. The story of Naomi teaches that there are many departing in life and that the believer needs to cycle the word of God by faith to each of them.

Let me suggest 8 departings that effected Naomi's life.

- Departing from home and work and career.
- Departing from Bethlehem and neighbors and friends.
- Departing from kin and family name, tradition, and reputation.
- Departing from synagogue and pivot of believers.
- Departing from the geographical, operational, and mental will of God.
- Departing from husband.
- Departing from 2 sons.
- Departing from Moab, new friends, and daughter-in-law.

The road of reversionism is a bitter walk while the road of spiritual maturity is a pleasant walk.

Why did she react differently to different departings? For example, she said she left full and returned empty. That means that she reacted differently to the first 5 (which she called full/ positive) than the last 3 departings (which she called empty/ negative).

Does it sound like OMCD thinking?

5. She is disoriented to the will of God as it relates to her national and personal lives. She is disoriented to suffering as a believer in the devil's world (divine discipline, undeserved suffering, and self-induced misery).

She fled when Gideon fought. She took the attitude that the Lord had given more than she could bear - NOT TRUE. The Lord may give you more than you are WILLING to bear:

(1 Pet.5: 7). “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.” (1 Cor.10: 13)

WHO WAS THE TRUE HEROINE OF THIS STORY?