

**Transforming Daily**  
**“ . . . the Almighty has afflicted me . . . ”**  
*Ruth 1:21*

There is a subtle truth that underlies all of Naomi's bemoaning. While it is true that she suffered a great loss, what she had was given to her by God in the first place. In the second place, just as God's sovereign will allowed her to marry and bear children, so too His will now allows her this tragic loss. However, the pain has caused her to lose sight of who God is and whose she is. The subtle truth is hidden in Naomi's claims that she was once full, but now empty, and that the Lord had dealt bitterly with her, and that He testified against her, and yet she comes back with Ruth who is later claimed to be better to Naomi than seven sons (4:15).

Physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual pain can cause all of us to lose perspective of God's sovereignty. Focusing on the pain can divert our attention away from His purpose and plan for our lives. While it is natural to act this way, it is not supernatural. It takes spiritual discipline to stay the course and remain steadfast in the face of trials, tribulation and even persecution. No one knows what it is that God is ultimately working out through them for His name's sake. It is enough to know that He is faithful.

Not too long ago, I remember trying to minister to a family that lost four family members, one at a time, in the span of six months. This couple each lost their fathers, and then they lost her mother, and then they lost their only son. None of the losses were related in kind. Each suffered a different malady. I said that I tried to minister to them because there wasn't a whole lot to say in the face of such a tragic situation. However, because of their experience, I have had several opportunities to share their grief with others in order to minister encouragement to them as they experienced similar circumstances.

Ephesians says that we have every blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. The challenge is to discipline one's life to understand the difference between the two and live the physical life in the victory of the Spirit. Jacob was spiritually healed by a physical infirmity. Paul was afflicted with an infirmity for which God told him His grace was sufficient. So keep in mind that God's greatest use of you and me may be on the other side of the testimony that the Almighty has afflicted me.