

NAOMI

1. We are **BLESSED**--Big Time!!!
 “Biblically, one is pronounced blessed when God is present and involved in his life. The hand of God is at work directing all his affairs for divine purpose, and thus, in a sense, such a person lived in *coram Deo*, before the face of God.”
2. Pray!

Tonight I doubt I telling you anything you don't know but as we move daily toward “The End” (a title of one of Alicia Chole's messages) and I watch my mother-in-law physically and mentally disintegrate before my eyes there is an urgency in me to do even more to build the kingdom of God and make a difference in my world. After Ree and I talked about our families and this season in life during my last visit to her house I've thought of us here in this group. I realized that Naomi's story is a really good example of a woman who used her influence to make a difference for younger women following her.

3. READ: Naomi journal—until page 5
4. Thought by time I was done with first years of empty nest I had learned to be alone. Because of what I've learned I've begun to:
 - a. Tell young women in M2M's they need to help their kids deal with feeling lonely—everyone hates the feeling.
 - b. Pray blessing on children instead of worrying
 - c. But 4:00 in afternoon (when kids are home from school) I still miss my girls and the intensity of the emptiness often catches me by surprise. Like Ree said to me this isn't all that I expected.
 - i. Mac and I have a story about feeling alone while married.
 - ii. Hazel and Mom connecting as Hazel told her it was the hardest part of having her husband ill—she felt all alone.
 - iii. READ 1st Paragraph on Page 9. In a way I didn't realize how “normal” it could continue to be until I read this in Donna Otto's book: “Replace sense of loneliness that comes with the later . . .
 - iv. Show Erik Erickson chart
5. Ultimately when I'm depressed or down I find myself angry at God or me
 - a. Because I'd never seen very little actual confrontation in my life it took my two failed marriages and a lot of time journaling to the Lord before I figured out I could confront others and even God when I didn't like what was happening in my life. I learned to affirm (talk more about this a little later) the other person or God, but also speak the truth of all my feelings. When David talks to God after being confronted by Nathan about

sleeping with Uriah's wife Bathsheba he says to God: "Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place."

God can't teach us wisdom unless we speak the truth to Him about all and every level of our feelings.

- b. Know **forgiveness is the key**. But even knowing that I remember feeling a "burr was still under my saddle while going through my divorces."
 - i. A Bible study I was doing taught me to forgive for **what was done** to me,
 - ii. forgive for **what wasn't done for me**—but for me most importantly I learned to
 - iii. forgive for what was "**owed me**." I learned to forgive myself by looking at all three points, I even learned to look at the idea of forgiving God—that helped me get over thinking He "owed" me a good life because after all I'm one of His princesses.
6. Do we really think we **know** what is going on in **God's spiritual world**?
- a. It's hard but I'm convinced of this Fact of Life—in your most anguishing moments the world doesn't stop.
 - b. If time, tell **Duane's story** and my wondering if/when we'll ever laugh again.
 - c. **Points to consider at end of Naomi journal**
7. Erik Erikson's Life-Stages Timeline . . . So how do we **avoid the life stages** that end in Isolation, Self Absorption and Despair? What will help us **grow** Intimacy, Generativity and Ego Integrity? God encourages us through Paul's writing to—**MENTOR**—
- a. Donna Otto gives us the origin of the term mentor. It...comes from Homer's epic poem the *Odyssey*. When King Odysseus leaves to fight in the Trojan War, he charges his trusted friend Mentor with the care of his son Telemachus and the management of the home. Mentor trained Telemachus in all the ways a father would train a son, and today we use his name to refer to a trusted counselor, guide, tutor and coach. (Page 17)
 - b. From **Paul's** letters we learn that he **traveled with others** and others helped him write his correspondences. 2 Timothy 2.1-2 You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. And Titus 2.3-5 Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind,

and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

- c. **Dick Foth:** Light pulled together (like a laser) changes the world—“With God” — together on the journey.
 - i. Our world says individual, isolation, and alone,
 - ii. Our God says “With Him” connect and be together.
 - iii. Prayer says we believe Someone bigger than us, capable of fixing things is listening AND that we trust Him with our stuff!
- d. “**My house may be empty, but my heart is not.**” Master’s Commission Home Openers. I tell people I loved it—all the energy of teens and hardly any of the responsibility.
- e. This season of my life I’m in a Beth Moore study called Stepping Up (It’s about the Psalms of Ascent). The last couple of weeks I’ve read...

At my home church, we have often celebrated "**Mothers and Others**" Day with a special banquet. Attendees either bring their literal mothers or daughters or someone like a mother or daughter to them. I brought a woman who has been like a second mother to me for 20 years. Miss Mary Helen did not give birth to me, but she is undoubtedly a mother figure. She is my beloved “other.” As well, I have a couple of young women who are almost like blood daughters to me. Amanda and Melissa view them much like sisters. Further, my daughters have some women around my age that pour maternal love and advice into their lives. None of these “others” are meant to supplant actual mothers and daughters. They’re meant to enhance lives in ways we wouldn’t want to miss.

- f. **Affirmation** those we mentor: (When the Giant Lies Down)
 - i. **Words to God about you** [learning to stop and pray right now—I won’t remember later. People continually comment that they love my email prayers]
 - ii. **Words to you about you** [let those you like know it!]
 - iii. **Positive actions toward you** [how to help the best, Ralph’s well meaning helpful people. Help Heather with sewing project for her kids.]
 - iv. **Actions toward your world** [Help those behind you know you believe in them—Moms2Moms and Parenting workbook.]
- g. Lesson’s you’ve learned
 - i. Don’t be frightened, don’t be afraid, fear not, and **be not afraid** are messages to tell yourself when you are worried a younger woman might not like you. But it is actually going to be a message she probably needs to hear from you about things she’s facing in her life.
 - ii. **Truth, authenticity and vulnerability** are going to be issues you will need to wade through together. There are risks in sharing what makes you tick and how you’ve found the Lord so dependable. —

- iii. Remember Donna Otto saying to give it away before it's too late? She **goes on to say**: Don't miss seeing the glistening eyes of hurting young women. Don't miss the eager ears of women needing to know you survived, and not only survived but have joy in your heart. Share with them your acceptance of each age and stage of life as a gift from God. Help them know the source to seek. Acknowledge the disappointments and broken dreams that will never be replaced.

These are what will make the next generation strong, faithful, determined, persevering. The young women in my world, daughters of my heart, have changed me, rearranged me, and brought a quality of life that I never dreamed possible. They are the Energizer battery of life.

- iv. **I want to make a difference, I know you do too**—Let's head into this next season willing and ready to willing to serve God in ways that will allow Him to fill our loneliest places with meaning and love.

My **prayer** for you!

I want to use Paul's words in Ephesians 3 (in The Message) to bless you in prayer:

Dear Holy Father, Thank You for the precious gift of Your love through these dear friends of Ree's and sinner of Your heart. Our relationship is precious and blesses me so much. Thank You too, for Paul's words as they say exactly what I pray for their family and them as a blessing. I love and feel privileged to be the recipient of their willingness to share and talk about our mutual desire to follow hard after You.

I ask You Lord to strengthen them by Your Spirit—not a brute strength but a glorious inner strength—that Christ will live in them as they continue to open the door and invite You in to their lives and ministries--especially to their hubby and their kids. And I ask You Lord to help them be able to take in with all Christians the extravagant dimensions of Christ's love. I pray that my dear ones along with their children will reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! While they live full lives, full in the fullness of God.

We know God that You can do anything — far more than we could ever imagine or guess or request in our wildest dreams! You do it Jesus not by pushing us around but by working within us, Your Spirit deeply and gently within us.

Lord, we praise You for Your gift of Your precious Spirit within us--it makes all of life precious, good, and special! Thank You for the lovely woman You've given me because Ree's willingly shared her friends--thank You for blessing Ree, her friends and their families for me--In Jesus' holy name I pray--AMEN!!!