

FIRST CORINTHIANS
Lesson 45–August 30, 2020

Welcome To
BARAH MINISTRIES
a Christian Church

Rory Clark
Pastor-Teacher

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...an intimate, local Christian Church with worldwide impact. My name is Pastor Rory Clark. Why do we study the Bible? Philippians, Chapter 1, Verse 6...

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

For I (Paul) keep on being confident of this very thing...that God the Father who began a good work in you will keep on perfecting it (to completion) until the day of Christ Jesus (the Rapture of the church).

We study the Bible to be inculcated by God with the spiritual wealth that comes to believers in Christ who hear the Word of God and regard it as a foundational part of their lives. Do you? Welcome to the lesson!

At Barah Ministries we know this truth...that Jesus Christ is God. As the Lord He is 100% Deity...He is God the Son, a member of the Triune Godhead. He is also 100% human just like you and me, and His name is Jesus Christ. The Lord...God the Son...became flesh...Jesus Christ...and lived among us. He is the uniquely born One...100% God and 100% man in one Person forever. He is the Sovereign God of the Universe. He is the Jewish Messiah. The Lord was not sent by God the Father to judge the world, but that the world would be saved through Him. He died on a Cross to make the ONLY perfect payment for sin in the eyes of God the Father through the shedding of His blood. As a result of His strategic victory at the Cross, we are fully and forever forgiven of our sins.

At Barah Ministries, we make a difference by teaching the Word of God from God's perspective and not from man's perspective. As those who make Barah Ministries our spiritual home, we are Christians. Being a Christian means we believe in the DEITY of the Lord Jesus Christ, and we

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have a deep, intimate, and personal relationship with Him. You heard it right...Christianity is a relationship, not a religion. The Lord Jesus Christ is a Person ... He is not a “thing” ... and He is not a concept. Just as we do with anyone whom we love, we spend time getting to know the Lord. Since the Bible is His exact thinking, we come together to learn about Him through the study of His mind, the Word of God.

God has an enemy, Satan, “the ruler of this world.” He is a liar who deceives the whole world, including you. He doesn’t want you to get to know God, and he interferes with your chance to know God.

The Word of God is the truth...and it keeps us aware of Satan’s insidious deceptions. As believers in Christ, we are in union with Christ, and we have the victory over Satan through our Lord, who has overcome the world.

TODAY’S BIBLE LESSON

Spiritual Maturity Requires the Mastery of Self-Restraint

LESSON INTRODUCTION

If we are to win the individual race that is our spiritual life, we must exercise self-control. Galatians, Chapter 5, Verses 22 and 23 remind us that our amazing God manifests virtues in believers in union with Christ...

GALATIANS 5:22

...the fruit produced by God the Holy Spirit is unconditional love, joy, and peace (toward self)...patience , kindness, and goodness (toward others)...faithfulness...

GALATIANS 5:23

...gentleness and SELF-CONTROL (toward God). Against such virtues, there is no law.

This fruit produced by God is a series of unifying qualities that are apparent in believers in Christ who are controlled by the indwelling God the Holy Spirit. Self-control is a restraint exercised to suppress appetites and longings in our contest against sin. In the final part of First Corinthians, Chapter 9...Paul makes an interesting comparison as part of his second point in his argument against eating meat sacrificed to idols. His advice is just as

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applicable to believers today as it was to the believers in the church in first-century Corinth who allowed outside influences to turn them to idolatry. Idolatry distracts us and them from our relationship with God and from important human relationships. In today's lesson, we'll learn how the discipline and self-restraint displayed by an athlete is the same self-control that powers our spiritual growth.

SONG INTRODUCTION

Let's hear some music! First Samuel, Chapter 16, Verse 7 says...

FIRST SAMUEL 16:7b

"...God sees not as man sees...for man looks at the outward appearance...but the Lord looks at the heart."

God created you and He knows you better than you know yourself. Here's the group King and Country to tell you what GOD ONLY KNOWS.

MUSIC AND REFLECTION

Be Occupied with the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ
Enjoy the Singing of His Praises

GOD ONLY KNOWS
For King and Country

OPENING PRAYER

Let us pray...

We're grateful, Heavenly Father, for the privilege of studying Your absolute truth...the Word of God...

Father, thank you for overwhelming us with Your patience which gives us a chance to grow by means of Your grace, in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...thank you that you have forgiven us in the past...forgiveness that lasts forever...a forgiveness for constantly putting the urgent things in our lives...our idols...ahead of our worship of you...thank you for providing us with the spiritual eyes to see the fruitlessness of these pursuits and for loving us unconditionally as we learn...

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Father, plant the truth deep in our souls today as we listen to the lesson You have prepared for us, and let the lesson fuel our desire to know You and to obey You and to have faith in You... let the lesson fuel our desire to love others unconditionally just as we love ourselves...unconditionally...and let the spirit inspired by Your Word remind us that we have the absolute confidence of a glorious future...hope...for choosing to be a part of Your divine plan through our relationship with Jesus Christ...

...we ask this through the power of God the Holy Spirit...in Christ's name...Amen.

TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON

Spiritual Maturity Requires the Mastery of Self-Restraint

Satan, the enemy of God and the ruler of this world, contends that the only reason believers in Christ worship God is because He blesses us. He further contends that when any pressure is put on us in this life, we will turn on God. To be sure, many believers in Christ are fair-weather fans...who expect God to only offer prosperity without any adversity. That's not really how God works.

God gives us things we can't handle. You'll remember last week we began the lesson with an encouraging story...a story from the life of Job, a believer in Christ, in Job, Chapter 1. The Lord allowed Satan to take all of Job's possessions and to kill all of Job's children... adversity that most of us will never experience. What was Job's reaction to this calamity in his life? Job, Chapter 1, Verses 21 and 22...

JOB 1:21

Job said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall be when I die (man...you are dust and to dust you shall return). The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

JOB 1:22

Through all this Job did not sin nor did he blame God.

Would we have reacted the same way?

When there is calamity in your life, like the calamity you are experiencing right now...you're wearing a mask and breathing your own carbon dioxide

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in fear of an allegedly deadly, and invisible virus...a calamity you did not incite...a calamity the likes of which you have never known...maybe you can't work...maybe you have to work from home...you're being encouraged to "socially distance" yourself from others...you are "sheltered in place" ... your freedoms are systematically being stolen from you with your permission...you're being warned that you are unsafe and unhealthy ...during this calamity...this adversity...and others in your life... do you trust the Lord? Do you have faith in the Lord? Job did.

After learning that his accusation against Job was false, did Satan learn his lesson? Did Satan admit that he was wrong? Hardly. He did what all creatures do when their mind is made up. They are not going to be confused with the facts. We see that every day in the accusations against the President of the United States, don't we? According to most, no matter what he does, he is wrong. This Satan-inspired attack against our President is reminiscent of Satan's approach to the destruction of everything he touches.

Let's listen to the next part of Job's story in Job, Chapter 2, Verses 1 to 10, and let's be encouraged by his faith in the Lord...

JOB 2:1

Again, there was a day when the sons of God (the be-ne-ha Elohim) came to present themselves before the Lord (God the Son...their Creator), and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord.

JOB 2:2

The Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it."

JOB 2:3

The Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man respecting God and turning away from evil. And Job still holds fast his integrity, although you incited Me against him, without any reason, to ruin him without cause."

Job did not deserve the suffering he was experiencing.

JOB 2:4

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Satan answered the Lord and said, “Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life.”

Satan is saying that Job gladly gave his children’s lives (skin) to save his own life (skin)...thus “skin for skin.”

JOB 2:5

“However, put forth Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh (his health)...and Job will curse You to Your face.”

Satan is incorrigible...he can’t be corrected or reformed. His arrogance is on lock. No matter what the evidence, he will not acknowledge the error of his ways. Satan is the personification of arrogance. You know this, because you have friends and family members who are inspired by this pattern of thought and conduct.

JOB 2:6

So the Lord said to Satan, “Behold...Job is in your power...only spare his life.”

JOB 2:7

Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Job’s disease had these symptoms...inflamed, ulcerous sores...itching...degenerative changes in facial skin...loss of appetite...depression...loss of strength...boils...worms in the boils...oozing sores...difficulty in breathing...darkness under the eyes...foul breath...loss of weight...continual pain...restlessness...blackened skin...peeling skin...and fever.

JOB 2:8

And Job took a potsherd (a broken pottery fragment) to scrape himself while he was sitting among the ashes (which were soothing to the skin).

POTSHERD SLIDE

JOB 2:9

Then Job’s wife said to him, “Do you still hold fast your integrity? (Forget your integrity!) Curse God and then die!”

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JOB 2:10

But Job said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women speaks (as if you are a spiritually ignorant woman). Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?” In all this adversity Job did not sin with his lips.

Once again, Satan was proved wrong. God’s prediction was true and accurate just as it always is. No matter what you are experiencing in the world right now, just know that God is on your side believers in Christ...and that His promises to you will be fulfilled. As Christians, we accept the blessings God has for us. More importantly, we accept the adversity God has for us because we know this adversity is the spiritual gymnasium and adversity prepares us to fight the good fight of faith...Romans, Chapter 5, Verses 3 to 5...

ROMANS 5:3

...we (believers in Christ) exult in our tribulations...knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance...

ROMANS 5:4

...and perseverance brings about proven character...and proven character brings about hope (absolute confidence that our faith in Christ is justified)...

ROMANS 5:5

...and hope does not disappoint...because the unconditional love of God the Father has been poured out within our hearts through God the Holy Spirit who was given to us (as a pledge of our divine inheritance).

We thank Job for an amazing two-chapter lesson on faith. There are many more lessons in Job’s forty-two-chapter story. Read them when you get a chance. Prosperity is not the only indicator of God’s blessing. Adversity is equally instructive and equally edifying. We do well to trust God when the evidence and brilliance of His plan is not immediately evident. God works all things together for our good. The present calamity will work out for our good. Wait for Him. When we return from our five-minute break, we’ll take your offering, and then we’ll finish up our study of First Corinthians, Chapter 9.

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FIVE MINUTE BREAK

NOBODY

Casting Crowns

TODAY’S BIBLE LESSON

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Legendary basketball coach John Wooden once said, “You can’t have a perfect day without doing something for someone who’ll never be able to repay you.” When you give to Barah Ministries you make it possible for people who can’t afford the tools of the spiritual life to have them free of charge. Thanks in advance for your generosity. Let’s welcome up Deacon Denny Goodall with today’s offering message.

THE OFFERING

Deacon Denny Goodall

OFFERING VERSE

PROVERBS 3:5

Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding...

OFFERING VERSE

PROVERBS 28:26

He who trusts in his own heart is a fool...but he who walks wisely will be delivered.

OFFERING SONG

THERE IS NONE LIKE YOU

David Bauer, Instrumental

TODAY’S BIBLE LESSON

Spiritual Maturity Requires the Mastery of Self-Restraint

Welcome back!

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The passage under study extends from First Corinthians, Chapter 8, Verse 1 to First Corinthians, Chapter 11, Verse 1. In First Corinthians, Chapter 8, the apostle Paul introduces the idea that the spiritually mature must forgo certain freedoms for the benefit of the immature. First Corinthians, Chapter 8, Verse 13 says...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 8:13

Therefore, if food (eating idol meat) causes MY BROTHER (a fellow believer in Christ) to stumble, I (Paul) will never eat (idol) meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

In First Corinthians, Chapter 9, Paul gives a personal example of his own foregoing of freedom...First Corinthians, Chapter 9, Verses 14 and 15...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 9:14

So also, the Lord directed those who proclaim the gospel to get their living from the gospel.

FIRST CORINTHIANS 9:15

But I (Paul) have not taken advantage of any of my rights to receive financial support. Nor do I write to receive financial support now...for it would be better for me to die than to take anything from you! No man will make my boast of doing this gospel spreading ministry willingly an empty one.

As we close this chapter with a tiny passage, there are some lessons in the passage that will benefit us greatly in this stage of our spiritual journey... First Corinthians, Chapter 9, Verses 24 to 27...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 9:24

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.

FIRST CORINTHIANS 9:25

Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control (restraint...abstinence) in all things. They do it (only) to receive a perishable wreath (a reward of the games), but we do it to receive an imperishable eternal wreath (a reward from God).

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FIRST CORINTHIANS 9:26

Therefore, I (Paul) run in such a way, as not without aim (I run with a purpose instead of being blown about by every wind)...I box in such a way, as not beating the air (I don't shadowbox...I box to knock out my opponent)...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 9:27

...and I discipline my body and make it my slave (through strict training) so that after I have preached to others...I will not be disqualified.

As believers in Christ in this stage of divine history...the Church Age... collectively we have the victory. We are going to heaven when we die...we will live with the Lord forever...we are eternally secure. However, each of us has our very own spiritual life...Paul compares it to running a race... how well are you running your individual race?

Let's face it...most believers in Christ have abandoned their spiritual lives. They pay more attention to television than they do to God or His Word or the spiritual life. Yet television doesn't help us when we face life's calamities...television doesn't help us when we face adversity. God and His Word do help. Hebrews, Chapter 12, Verses 1 to 3 provide a great deal of encouragement in our race...

HEBREWS 12:1

Therefore, since we believers in Christ have so great a cloud of Old Testament witnesses surrounding us...let us also lay aside every encumbrance buffeting us from all sides...and let us lay aside the sin which so easily entangles us...and let us keep on running with endurance the race of our lives that is set before us...

How?

HEBREWS 12:2

...by fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith...who for the joy set before Him endured the Cross...despising the Cross's shame...and has sat down in victory at the right hand of the throne of God the Father.

HEBREWS 12:3

For keep on thinking of such a Person...Jesus Christ...who has endured

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such hostility by sinners (unbelievers) against Himself...so that you will not grow weary fainting in your souls.

There is a whole lot of fainting going on today among believers in Christ. What is the problem you're experiencing right now? Do you expect God to work it together for your good? Or do you think it only matters what YOU do to orchestrate the victory? I see a lot of believers displaying the mental checklist in their heads, as if they know the best way to work out the unique circumstances of their problems. Well you don't know yourself nearly as well as the One who created you knows you...how about stepping aside to let Him work things out for you?

The flesh in us demands pleasures and privileges...a malady some call "me time." The flesh in us demands immediacy. We want it now. Spiritual maturity requires the mastery of self-restraint and self-control. Self-control involves delaying gratification. What is restraint?

RESTRAINT

Voluntarily holding back from action...being in check...being under control...a deprivation of liberties

In other words, for those who want to win their individual races, everything is not permitted. We love watching athletes compete. Yet we seldom see the rigor they go through to PREPARE to compete. It's not fair, but their preparation involves self-denial...not the ascetic kind that is done for man's approval...the kind chosen voluntarily to keep ourselves away from the traps of sin and self-indulgence.

In the matter of idol meat...the mature avoid it...the immature indulge in it. Isn't that just the way it is in life? The Christian Way of Living is very much like an athletic contest. The athlete does workouts (resistance, aerobics, stretching)...the athlete cares for nutrition...the athlete braves the elements...the athlete avoids certain pleasurable things (wine, women and song)...the athlete engages in voluntary self-restraint to win the prize.

The mature do the work to get the prize...the immature want the prize without the work.

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When we become Christians, we join the collective race. As Christians, we run an individual race. Will you finish your race? Paul says of his own individual race in Second Timothy, Chapter 4, Verses 7 and 8...

SECOND TIMOTHY 4:7

I have fought the good fight...I have finished the course...I have kept the faith...

SECOND TIMOTHY 4:8

...in the future, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day...and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Unlike the Olympic Games where there is only one prize for the single victor, in God's game every individual who finishes the race gets a prize. Yet a lot of Christians abandon the race long before it is finished.

<RUNNING ANALOGY>

Paul pauses in this section of the passage to remind us that as it relates to our individual races as Christians, there are no participation trophies. We run our races, and God expects us to finish. Finishing means that as we mature, our restraint elevates. We run the race with faith in God, and hope in ourselves, and unconditional love for others...and just as importantly we avoid the trap of the sins that so easily entangles us. Ephesians, Chapter 6, Verses 10 to 13...

EPHESIANS 6:10

Finally, believers in Christ, be strong in union with the Lord and in the strength of His might.

EPHESIANS 6:11

Pick up and put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.

EPHESIANS 6:12

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood (human beings)...but our struggle is against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness...our struggle is against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

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EPHESIANS 6:13

Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

As a body we Christians have won...as individuals, let us also win by finishing the race of our spiritual lives that is set before us rather than abandoning it for the shiny distractions of Satan's kingdom that have no value.

GOD WANTS YOU!

Make the Most Important Decision of Your Life

The closing message of this study is the most important message of this study. We want you to know that GOD WANTS YOU.

First and foremost, this message is for the benefit of believers in Christ. First Peter, Chapter 3, Verse 15 says...

FIRST PETER 3:15

...believers...sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts...always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that is in you (the absolute confidence provided by your faith in Christ)... and give the defense with gentleness and respect...

Second, this message is for unbelievers, so you can be saved. Whether you know it or not, you were born a sinner. That's bad news for you. Sinners need a Savior. The good news is that this gospel message offers you the chance to make the most important decision of your life, the one outlined in Acts, Chapter 16, Verse 31...

ACTS 16:31

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and everyone in your household who also believes."

We want you to know that GOD WANTS YOU.

Is religion the way to be saved?

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Many people believe religion and its rituals is their ticket into heaven. They embrace religious beliefs that tell them how to live a spiritual life. The religion claims either that there is a god...or there are many gods...but the religion does not discuss how to have a personal relationship with god. In fact, religions propose that if you don't do everything their god expects, he will be quite disappointed with you. And regardless of your best efforts to follow the religious rituals (which you CAN'T do) the religion does not GUARANTEE that following the rituals will get you into heaven.

Christianity is NOT a religion...it is a relationship with The Lord Jesus Christ. In John, Chapter 4, Verses 13 and 14, the Lord Jesus Christ is talking to a woman at a well...a Samaritan woman whom the Jews wanted nothing to do with. After a brief introduction, the Lord says to the woman...

JOHN 4:13

“Everyone who drinks of the water in this well will thirst again...”

JOHN 4:14

“...but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him (the water of the Word...the gospel message) shall never thirst...but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to the resurrection life.”

It is the Lord's will for those with whom He has a relationship to live with Him in heaven forever when they close their eyes in this life. First Timothy, Chapter 2, Verses 3 and 4 say...

FIRST TIMOTHY 2:3

This is good and acceptable in the sight of the God who is our Savior...the Lord Jesus Christ...

FIRST TIMOTHY 2:4

...who desires all men to be saved and who desires for all men to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The truth the Lord wants us to know about how to be saved...about how to get to heaven...is as simple as a nine-word conversation with God the Father...Luke, Chapter 23, Verses 42 and 43...

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LUKE 23:42

And a thief being crucified next to Jesus was saying, “Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom!”

LUKE 23:43

And Jesus said to him, “Truly I say to you...today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”

Just a nine-word conversation with God can get you to heaven...*Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.* Or if you prefer...it’s a five-word conversation with God the Father... “Father...I believe in Christ.” Simply believe...merely take God’s word for it regarding what it takes to be saved... and that is the moment of eternal life for you.

Who is this God who saves you? The apostle Paul describes the Lord Jesus Christ in First Corinthians, Chapter 15, Verses 3 and 4...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:3

For I (Paul) delivered to you as of first importance what the gospel message I also received ... that it was Jesus Christ who died for our sins according to the Scriptures...

FIRST CORINTHIANS 15:4

...and that He was buried...and that He was raised from the dead on the third day...according to the Scriptures...

Now once the Lord saves you, no matter how hard you try, you cannot lose your salvation...John, Chapter 10, Verse 28 says...

JOHN 10:28

“...I (the Lord Jesus Christ) give eternal life to believers in Christ, and they will never perish...and no one will snatch them out of My hand.”

Anyone who tells you that you can lose your salvation is lying to you. On the other hand, if you reject the relationship offer of this God who does not want you to perish, He will honor your rejection...Matthew, Chapter 13, Verses 49 and 50...

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MATTHEW 13:49

So it will be at the end of the age...the elect angels will come forth and take out the wicked (a description of unbelievers) from among the righteous (believers in Christ) ...

MATTHEW 13:50

...and will throw the wicked into the furnace of fire...and in that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

So, follow the advice of Acts, Chapter 16, Verse 31...

ACTS 16:31

“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and everyone in your household who also believes.”

It's not religion that gets you to heaven...it's relationship...relationship with the one and only Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

SONG INTRODUCTION

We have parents who, at times, are disappointed with us. Quite often we are disappointed with ourselves, a clear indication that we don't know how depraved we really are. But an omniscient God, who knows all the knowable, is NEVER disappointed with us. His love for us is UNconditional. Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 1...

ROMANS 8:1

Therefore (all these things at the end of Romans 7 being the case, we need to remember that...) there is now NO CONDEMNATION for those who are IN UNION WITH CHRIST JESUS.

Here's June Murphy celebrating our God's love with her song...I CAN'T DISAPPOINT YOU!

CLOSING SONG

I CAN'T DISAPPOINT YOU

June Murphy

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CLOSING VERSES

A Doxology of Praise to Our God

PROVERBS 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. // In all your ways acknowledge Jesus, and He will make your paths straight.

DEUTERONOMY 31:8

“For the Lord is the one who goes ahead of you...He will be with you...He will not fail you or forsake you...so do not fear or be dismayed.”

ISAIAH 30:18

The Lord longs to be gracious to you...He waits on high to have compassion on you...for the Lord is a God of justice...blessed are those who wait for Him.

FIRST PETER 5:6-7

Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may promote you at the proper time...//...slamming all your cares on His back, because He cares for you.

CLOSING PRAYER

Let us pray...

Thanks for coming!

Thanks for watching!

Thanks for listening!

www.barahministries.com