

**ROMANS**  
**Lesson 295–July 10, 2016**

**Welcome To**  
**BARAH MINISTRIES**  
*a Christian Church*  
**Rory Clark**  
**Pastor-Teacher**

Good Morning!

Welcome to Barah Ministries...a Christian Church based in Mesa, AZ...my name is Pastor Rory Clark. At Barah Ministries we are “pursuing the truth through the study of the Word of God.” Because of the gracious provision of the internet, from our omnipotent God, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Barah Ministries has a worldwide reach and an intimate impact on lives. Thank you Lord for providing a way for anyone, anywhere to be reached with Your Word.

**TODAY’S BIBLE LESSON**  
**Do You Love Your Relationships?**

The Lord has placed an unwanted burden on my heart. I’ve been experiencing relationship distresses with those closest to me, at an intensity level I’ve never really experienced before, and God evidently thinks it has earned me the right to share a few insights about relationships from the divine point of view. Until now I have been unwilling to write about it...and in a sense I am still a bit uninterested in doing it. Unfortunately there is no way to ignore the Sovereign God of the Universe, the Lord Jesus Christ, for long. If He has to, and often He does, He will allow the pain of relationships (of which pain He is NOT the sponsor) to become so acute...to become so severe...that you have no choice but to address the issues. Such is the case in this situation. And since He’s the One who wants the hearers of this lesson to get insights into relationships so much, I’m counting on Him to write this lesson, just as I count on Him to write every lesson, since He is the all knowing One with perfect timing. I probably could have gone forever without writing about this.

There can be little doubt that Christianity is all about relationships. In fact, what is Christianity? In a simplistic definition...

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## CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ...the One and Only Sovereign God of the Universe...which begins at the moment of salvation when God the Holy Spirit places the Lord Jesus Christ and one of His believers into an unbreakable union which lasts for all eternity.

The Lord Jesus Christ makes the importance of relationships clear in Matthew, Chapter 22, Verses 34 to 40...

Matthew 22:34

*But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees (those Pharisees who say there is no resurrection), they gathered themselves together.*

Matthew 22:35

*One of them, a lawyer, asked the Lord a question, testing Him...*

Matthew 22:36

*“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Mosaic Law?”*

Matthew 22:37

*And Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God unconditionally, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’”*

Matthew 22:38

*“This is the great and foremost commandment (in the Mosaic Law).”*

Matthew 22:39

*“The second greatest commandment is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor unconditionally just as you love yourself unconditionally.’”*

Matthew 22:40

*“On these two commandments depend the whole Mosaic Law and the teaching of the Prophets.”*

The first commandment summarizes the first table of the Mosaic Law. The second commandment summarizes the second table of the Mosaic Law.

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Relationships are primary to God. Are relationships primary to you? Is how you treat relationships primary to you?

Did you notice the sequence of importance the Lord noted for relationships? It is relationship with God, relationship with others, relationship with self. As you are making an assessment of whether you love your relationships, the assessment begins with your relationship with God...it continues with your relationship with others...and it ends with consideration of your relationship with self. Yes...how you treat yourself is critical.

The Lord mentions that at the core of divine relationships is unconditional love. But I see a very different set of thoughts in operation in relationships, especially when relationships break down, especially with Christians, and this is deeply concerning to me. Evidently it is concerning to God as well, otherwise we wouldn't be approaching the subject. Welcome to a place where through the Word of God you can make an assessment of how much you love your relationships.

**MUSIC AND REFLECTION**

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

*HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD*  
*Chris Tomlin*

The opening song for this lesson HOW GREAT IS OUR GOD sung by Chris Tomlin.

**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 giving us insights into our relationships...thank you for giving us boldness when issues need to be addressed...thank you for helping us be patient when patience is called for...

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Help us to see ourselves honestly...just as you see us, not only now but also all the time...help us to own the things we do to destroy our relationships... when we point fingers, let the pointing be at ourselves...keep our mouths speaking things that will build up...help us avoid saying things that tear down...teach us to be gentle in the way we address conflict...help us to see others and ourselves differently...as valuable...as needed...as a provision you have given us for growth...change our hearts where it is necessary, Almighty Father, as only You can...

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

Let's begin this lesson with a few announcements....

**BARAH MINISTRIES ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

Coeur d'Alene Bible Conference  
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho  
August 5-6, 2016

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

New York – Pennsylvania Conference  
Traditions at the Glen  
Johnson City, New York  
September 16-17, 2016

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

Evening Lesson Only  
6:00P-7:30P  
August 7, August 21, September 18

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

Next Deacon's Meeting  
September 3, 2016  
7:30A-10:00A

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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

Homecoming for the Non-Resident Congregation  
April 21-23, 2017

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

Kevin Collins  
July 8

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

Collin Cramer  
July 15

**TODAY’S BIBLE LESSON**  
**Do You Love Your Relationships?**

What is a relationship?

**RELATIONSHIP** (The Dictionary)

A connection between people...sometimes emotional...sometimes sexual... sometimes a blood relationship between family members...which often involves dependence on each other...or an alliance...or an affinity... an entity designed to be mutual.

That definition gets some good coverage of the idea of a relationship. I have some other thoughts about relationships. I’d call a relationship...

**RELATIONSHIP**

A connection that you choose which becomes a possession of yours to be treasured and cared for and nurtured

Do you love your relationships? Very seldom are relationships just forced on us. Whether involuntarily, or voluntarily, we select relationships.

My mother is one of at least eighteen kids...I have so many relatives it’s not even funny...I don’t know most of them...I suppose because of the blood nature of things...we are related...yet this blood relationship to me is quite involuntary, and frankly, quite superficial. I did not choose these relationships, nor do I consider them an obligation. I know some feel that

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being relatives automatically enters you into a meaningful relationship. I don't share that view. The relationships we're talking about here are the ones we involve ourselves in voluntarily.

For example, when you study with Barah Ministries, you have a voluntary relationship with a ministry and a Pastor. Your choice to be here is a relationship...it becomes a sacred bond...ordained by God...and the best thing about it is that it is voluntary. You don't HAVE TO be here...you CHOOSE TO be here. Your relationship with this ministry and its Pastor is a choice. Salvation is the same. We choose to be in a relationship with God. We don't have to.

When you get married it is a choice. When you date, it is a choice. Friendships are a choice. And all three of these are relationships. A friend of mine who is a life coach recently asked one of her protégés, who is a text messaging fiend, to write down the names of the last ten people to whom the protégé had sent text messages. To make a long story short, she asked her protégé to evaluate whether or not he had a relationship with these people. The conclusion was that he didn't have relationships with eight of the ten yet he was giving away an inordinate amount of his time to all ten of the people. Often, we use the term relationship a bit too loosely, and perhaps we don't distinguish relationships by value. Perhaps the line between friends and mere acquaintances is so blurred that the two look the same. They are not, and we're not talking about the blurred line relationships here. We're talking about the clear choice relationships.

What is a relationship?

**RELATIONSHIP**

A connection that you choose which becomes a possession of yours to be treasured and cared for and nurtured

Do you love your relationships? Do you treasure and care for and nurture your relationships? Are relationships serious to you? Or are they casual?

When chosen relationships begin, there is the period of time when they are wonderful. Here is the Lord describing the relationship He had with angelic creatures in the beginning, as He uses sarcasm to chastise Job. Job, Chapter 38, Verses 4 to 7...

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Job 38:4

*“(Job) Where were you when I (the Lord Jesus Christ) laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding...”*

Job 38:5

*“Who set the earth’s measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it?”*

Job 38:6

*“On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone...”*

Job 38:7

*“...when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God (the beneha Elohim...the angels) shouted for joy (as they witnessed the creation of the earth and the universe)?”*

The Lord and the angels were in unity in the beginning, as most of us are when relationships start. Yet there is always a time when relationships are put to the test. Here’s the Lord’s description of the breach between He and Satan that initiated the Creator-creature conflict...Ezekiel, Chapter 28, Verse 15...

Ezekiel 28:15

*“You (Satan...the anointed cherub who covers) were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you.”*

Every relationship experiences a breach at a point.

So it seems that one challenge in the relationships we choose is seeing at them as they are. There will be good times and there will be bad times. The good times are easy...almost effortless...the tough times require quite a bit of effort. So what are you like in relationships when things get tough? Do you love your relationships when they get tough?

It seems to me that the real illuminator of relationships is how you handle the tough times...and it also seems that navigating the tough times effectively is what gives us the confidence that we have a real relationship. The thing that distinguishes one relationship from another is how we handle the breaches.

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Here's an illustration of a relationship breach...John, Chapter 8, Verses 3 to 11...

John 8:3

*The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court...*

John 8:4

*...they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act."*

John 8:5

*"Now in the Mosaic Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women to death; what then do You say?"*

John 8:6

*They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground.*

John 8:7

*But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."*

John 8:8

*Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.*

John 8:9

*When they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court.*

John 8:10

*Straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?"*

John 8:11

*She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you, either.*



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*Go. From now on sin no more.”]*

The woman and the Lord have a relationship. She is one of His believers. Her sin breached the relationship with Him. As it says in Psalm 51, Verse 4...

Psalm 51:4

*Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge.*

She was guilty...of this there is no doubt. Well how did the Lord handle the breach of the relationship? How do you handle breaches in your relationship? When there is a breach, do you love your relationships?

Let's take a music break and then we'll continue.

**MUSIC BREAK**

*EAST TO WEST*

*Casting Crowns*

**TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON**

**Do You Love Your Relationships?**

Welcome back. When there is a breach, do you love your relationships?

If you're being honest, I think you'd have to say, "No!" If that's true, what kind of person are you if you only like relationships in the good times, and you shrink away from treasuring, caring for, and nurturing your relationship in the tough times?

It's one of the reason I hate doing wedding ceremonies. The illusion of fairy tale romance swirls so much at weddings it's almost disgusting. And as a Pastor, you know the wedding is not the marriage. You know that there will be the times Pastors mention in the ceremony...for better AND for worse... for richer AND for poorer...in sickness AND in health...yet no one hears the tough part at a wedding...and when the tough part of a relationship comes, it always seems to catch people by surprise. God is not surprised. He allows regular "shaking" in relationships to illuminate their status... Hebrews, Chapter 12, Verses 26 and 27...

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Hebrews 12:26

*And the Lord's voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heaven."*

Hebrews 12:27

*This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*

The shaking that occurs in relationships always reveals the status of the relationship so there can be no mistaking what is true about the relationship. In the Hebrews verses, what is in view is the final shaking which separates the wheat from chaff...believers from unbelievers. The shaking that happens in relationships lets you know who is on your side and who isn't...and it's one or the other...black or white...there is no gray.

In relationships, I give my trust as a gift. I look forward to the conflicts. I look forward to the illumination of things. My approach to relationships has always been "all in." I don't really care what your demons are...I don't really care what your skeletons are...I KNOW you have them. And when they come out, I'm going to be on your side. In fact, even if your demons hurt me, I'm going to be on your side. I may be mad as hell at you, but I'm going to stay on your side. After all, I voluntarily signed up for your abuse.

I don't see the same thing going on in Christian circles and it's really appalling. I see Christians guilty of breaching a relationship, and then immediately calling for the other person to give unconditional love, and grace and forgiveness.

Well here's the insight...Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 9a...

Romans 8:9a

*However, you believers in Christ are not "in the flesh" but you are "in the Spirit," if indeed the Spirit of God indwells you (and of course it does)."*

As believers in Christ we are "en pneumati" ... we are "in the Spirit" ... God the Holy Spirit, our Mentor and our teacher is indwelling us to produce in us the fruit of the Spirit. Galatians, Chapter 5, Verses 22 and 23...

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Galatians 5:22

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness...*

Galatians 5:23

*...gentleness, self-control; against such virtues there is no law.*

So I ask you this...when two Christians are dealing with a relationship breach, and one of those Christians, who has committed the breach or who has witnessed the breach asks, “Where’s the unconditional love, and grace and forgiveness?” ... do you think that question comes from the fruit of the Spirit? Or is that request a deed of the flesh? You see...I understand when an unbeliever asks that question. Unbelievers are always trying to prove to Christians a fact we already know if we are wise...we are hypocrites. But for a believer to ask that question is naïve at best.

If someone you love does the emotional equivalent of running you over with a tank, and then asks, “Where’s the unconditional love, and grace and forgiveness?” ... that’s an insensitivity that is almost mind boggling. And it would be more baffling if we didn’t know exactly where the thought comes from. It is a thought inspired by the kingdom of death. It is a thought that seeks to bring division into the House of the Lord and into relationships.

Our Christianity is meaningless...it is just a “going through the motions” ... if our faith doesn’t comprehend that reality. When someone has been hurt deeply, expect him not to respond well. And I contend it is not where they are at any moment in time in the recovery from the breach, but where they end up after the breach that will illuminate the character of the person.

The person without character runs. It’s the easy thing to do. The person with character works things out, if they value the relationship in the first place. And if they don’t value the relationship, at least the period of “false positives” is over. You know what a false positive is...it’s a circumstance where a condition appears to exist but does not really exist. Often it appears we have a relationship with someone when we don’t, and a shaking lets us know what is true because it illuminates reality.

So here’s the thing...what relationships are meaningful to you? And why? How are you treating those relationships? Do you love your relationships?

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Matthew, Chapter 22, Verses 37 to 39...

Matthew 22:37

*And Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God unconditionally, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’”*

Matthew 22:38

*“This is the great and foremost commandment (in the Mosaic Law).”*

Matthew 22:39

*“The second greatest commandment is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor unconditionally just as you love yourself unconditionally.’”*

Do you love the relationships you choose? A relationship is...

### RELATIONSHIP

A connection that you choose which becomes a possession of yours to be treasured and cared for and nurtured

Are you treasuring, caring for, and nurturing your relationship with God?  
Are you treasuring, caring for, and nurturing your relationship with others?  
Are you treasuring, caring for, and nurturing your relationship with self?  
Can you hold those three thoughts in your head simultaneously?

I guess the deeper lesson about relationships is this...if we, as Christians, say we value unity and relationships...it has to show up in the way we act toward one another. In relationships...that is two-sided action. Our adversary, the devil is always using his insidious cunning and his downright hatred for us, to ruin everything that is in a state of unify. Look at your relationships. Look at your marriages. Look at your church. Notice how he tried to seduce you into disunity. Don't be fooled. Philippians, Chapter 3, Verse 5...

Philippians 3:5

*Let us believers in Christ therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, and you do, God will reveal that also to you...*

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When God reveals to you that your attitude is off kilter, remember to place your confidence in the Spirit...Philippians, Chapter 3, Verses 2 and 3...

Philippians 3:2

*Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision...*

Philippians 3:3

*...for we believers in Christ are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and who glory in union with Christ Jesus and who put no confidence “in the flesh” ...*

Don't listen to the flesh to make your decisions about relationships, Christians! Listen to the Spirit. Yet I warn you about this as you do open your ears to the Spirit. Don't forget about your responsibility to these relationships you have chosen. Certainly God the Father works all things together for our good. But don't forget that His agency of work in Satan's kingdom is YOU. You have a responsibility to repair breaches in relationships, and two things don't get better with age...bills and problems. Sitting on our hands, as Christians, when there is a breach in a relationship, is not the thing to do. And don't worry about what others are doing. Do what you control. Do you.

**GOD WANTS YOU!**

Make the Most Important Decision of Your Life

Matthew 22:42

*“What do you think about the Christ (the Messiah)...?”*

Acts 16:31

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

Acts 4:12

*“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given to mankind by which we must be saved (except the name of the Lord Jesus Christ).”*

Romans 1:16

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*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

Acts 2:21

*‘And it shall be that everyone who calls on the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation will be saved.’*

**CLOSING SONG**

*BORN AGAIN*

*June Murphy*

**CLOSING PRAYER**

*Let us pray...*

Thanks for coming!  
Thanks for watching!  
Thanks for listening!

**[www.barahministries.com](http://www.barahministries.com)**