



Articles and Sermons :: What Does “coram Deo” Mean? by R.C. Sproul

What Does “coram Deo” Mean? by R.C. Sproul - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2012/5/10 15:06

I remember Mama standing in front of me, her hands poised on her hips, her eyes glaring with hot coals of fire and saying in stentorian tones, “Just what is the big idea, young man?”

Instinctively I knew my mother was not asking me an abstract question about theory. Her question was not a question at all—it was a thinly veiled accusation. Her words were easily translated to mean, “Why are you doing what you are doing?” She was challenging me to justify my behavior with a valid idea. I had none.

Recently a friend asked me in all earnestness the same question. He asked, “What’s the big idea of the Christian life?” He was interested in the overarching, ultimate goal of the Christian life.

To answer his question, I fell back on the theologian’s prerogative and gave him a Latin term. I said, “The big idea of the Christian life is coram Deo. Coram Deo captures the essence of the Christian life.”

This phrase literally refers to something that takes place in the presence of, or before the face of, God. To live coram Deo is to live one’s entire life in the presence of God, under the authority of God, to the glory of God.

To live in the presence of God is to understand that whatever we are doing and wherever we are doing it, we are acting under the gaze of God. God is omnipresent. There is no place so remote that we can escape His penetrating gaze.

To be aware of the presence of God is also to be acutely aware of His sovereignty. The uniform experience of the saints is to recognize that if God is God, then He is indeed sovereign. When Saul was confronted by the refulgent glory of the risen Christ on the road to Damascus, his immediate question was, “Who is it, Lord?” He wasn’t sure who was speaking to him, but he knew that whomever it was, was certainly sovereign over him.

Living under divine sovereignty involves more than a reluctant submission to sheer sovereignty that is motivated out of a fear of punishment. It involves recognizing that there is no higher goal than offering honor to God. Our lives are to be living sacrifices, oblations offered in a spirit of adoration and gratitude.

To live all of life coram Deo is to live a life of integrity. It is a life of wholeness that finds its unity and coherency in the majesty of God. A fragmented life is a life of disintegration. It is marked by inconsistency, disharmony, confusion, conflict, contradiction, and chaos.

The Christian who compartmentalizes his or her life into two sections of the religious and the nonreligious has failed to grasp the big idea. The big idea is that all of life is religious or none of life is religious. To divide life between the religious and the nonreligious is itself a sacrilege.

This means that if a person fulfills his or her vocation as a steelmaker, attorney, or homemaker coram Deo, then that person is acting every bit as religiously as a soul-winning evangelist who fulfills his vocation. It means that David was as religious when he obeyed God’s call to be a shepherd as he was when he was anointed with the special grace of kingship. It means that Jesus was every bit as religious when He worked in His father’s carpenter shop as He was in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Integrity is found where men and women live their lives in a pattern of consistency. It is a pattern that functions the same basic way in church and out of church. It is a life that is open before God. It is a life in which all that is done is done as to the Lord. It is a life lived by principle, not expediency; by humility before God, not defiance. It is a life lived under the tutelage of conscience that is held captive by the Word of God.

Coram Deo “before the face of God. That’s the big idea. Next to this idea our other goals and ambitions become mere trifles.

from: <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/what-does-coram-deo-mean/>

Re: What Does “coram Deo” Mean? by R.C. Sproul, on: 2012/5/10 16:06

Love it... there is a wealth of Biblical wisdom in Dr. Sproul's writings that have gone largely untapped on this forum.

I was reading an article this morning in Table Talk magazine that Dr Sproul wrote about unity among the Body. I will post it as soon as they put it online. Usually takes a few weeks from publication to make it online.

Krispy

Re: What Does “coram Deo” Mean? by R.C. Sproul, on: 2012/5/11 2:47

Dear friends, there is a great many of us that would sincerely appreciate if when posting articles by R.C. Sproul that you specify, in the Title, Sr. or Jr..

Thank you much!

Re: , on: 2012/5/11 6:55

Why? It's good to know which one... but whats the big deal? A "a great many of us"?

Just curious.

Krispy

PS: Sproul Sr never puts "Sr" on things he authors, so unless it says Jr... it's the elder.

Re: , on: 2012/5/11 11:56

Quote:

-----Sproul Sr never puts "Sr" on things he authors, so unless it says Jr... it's the elder.

That works. Thanks!

Quote:

----- but whats the big deal?

Ethics. Neither David Ravenhill nor Gary Wilkerson, just for two, would ever allow the reading public to think that their father's articles were written by themselves and the readers appreciate that integrity and that "Jr" does add that to his name.

Quote:

-----A "a great many of us"?

The number that read-only is much greater than those that post here and of those, many are discussing these topics in their churches and on other forums or blogs.

Appreciate your last line.

Re: What Does “coram Deo” Mean? by R.C. Sproul, on: 2012/5/11 12:02

"To live all of life coram Deo is to live a life of integrity."

Integrity is a beautiful word. I see it as honesty and transparency - 'realness', whether at home, out with co-workers or with The Church. Amen.

Re: , on: 2012/5/11 12:03

Fair enough.

Like I said... RC Jr puts 'Jr' on his stuff. Dad doesn't.

Krispy

Re: , on: 2012/5/11 16:30

But I'd also like to say to both of you dear Brothers that I don't follow either father nor son and for differing reasons for both.

RC Sr. is quoted as saying that Arminians are "barely saved".

He's flip-flopped on eschatology until he became a partial-preterist and he's certainly a cessationist.

I can bare some calvinism, but there are some things that I can't bare ... or is it "bear"? Never could get those two words right.

reformationtheology.com/2006/09/questions_for_r_c_sproul.php

I won't get in "Jr's" reputation but I do have at least 20 links regarding his life story and why I was a bit upset with the last post written by him.

We can agree to disagree but there should be more discretion as to whom we post on here, because being tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine is not helping the Church be less "soulish" - which false doctrine is.

The Church down south that I'm a member of, does not say such things, that I've quoted in my 2nd paragraph and the Community Revival that they're a part of next week includes a Methodist Church and I don't know how many pentecostal churches and Baptist - though I'm not Reformed, they are.

With all of His Love, Barely Saved me :)

Re: , on: 2012/5/11 17:01

Bear in mind that a) you can't rely on things found on the internet, b) many allegations in regards to JR were found to be fraudulent, c) he did confess publicly to foolishness on his behalf in his younger adult life... and submitted himself to church discipline and was forgiven.

He has repented of his foolishness, and I've not heard of one person who is not convinced that he has matured in the Lord and has changed dramatically over the past decade.

So it's not really something that should be brought up on a public forum like this... especially since I doubt anyone here was personally involved or knew any details.

Even alluding to it without giving any details is wrong. Actually, it's worse.

We already have one accuser who constantly reminds us and accuses us of our sins. We don't need more.

Krispy

Re: , on: 2012/5/11 17:52

Are Arminians "barely saved" in your understanding? which came from RC Sr..

And the "allegations" as you call them about Jr were facts.

If he's repented, that would be wonderful, but repented of which part?

I am not an accuser of the brethren, but saying that Arminians are barely saved would be. As well as saying that miracle s have ceased puts many of us in a bad light. I also don't believe that the PCA is partial preterist.

This reminds me of the Sola Scriptura thread, in that, either our doctrine is formed by Scripture Only or the teachings of men. We need to be Bereans with all of the teachers out there - and now more than ever and not follow anyone blindly, regardless of how big their name is.

I am all for unity, as I am all for my former town having a 5 day Community Wide Revival with the town's Reformed Church with them all as well, but here - the contentions are always over which teachers people follow and it's quite upsetting. They won't be quoting "teachers" at that Revival - of that I'm sure.

I've been in every Christian denomination over the last 36 yrs and have held to the same doctrine for all of these yrs and do not throw out "allegations". I gave no "details" though they are on the official records that are online and no one's history is a secret when you are in the ministry. It's been 'less' than a decade since these things came to light and I pray he has straightened out his beliefs and all, but does he also believe that Arminians are barely saved, now that he's under the Ligonier logo?

Reading about "integrity" from the OP - that should be a part of what we express with our lives as well. Our lives should be an open book, post salvation.

And Integrity in doctrine has become something that is sorely lacking in this last days church and that's what scares many of us away. When the fear of man or the following of man, pushes that Scriptural-doctrinal integrity aside, then we are on dangerous ground and if you want to bring up Satan - it is he that would separate us all - not 'truth', nor our histories and that's what grieves my heart, more than you'll ever know, this side of Heaven. This apostasy that we're seeing is caused by a falling away from Truth and Ephesians 4 sets the responsibility of keeping us from being tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine on the pastors and teachers, of who the highest form of integrity is required. They need to see that they get His Sheep 'through' these last days and not say that we're not in the last days.

GOD Bless you and yours - with my prayers!

Re: , on: 2012/5/11 20:20

Coram Deo—before the face of God..

“In Him we live and move and have our being.” Acts 17:28