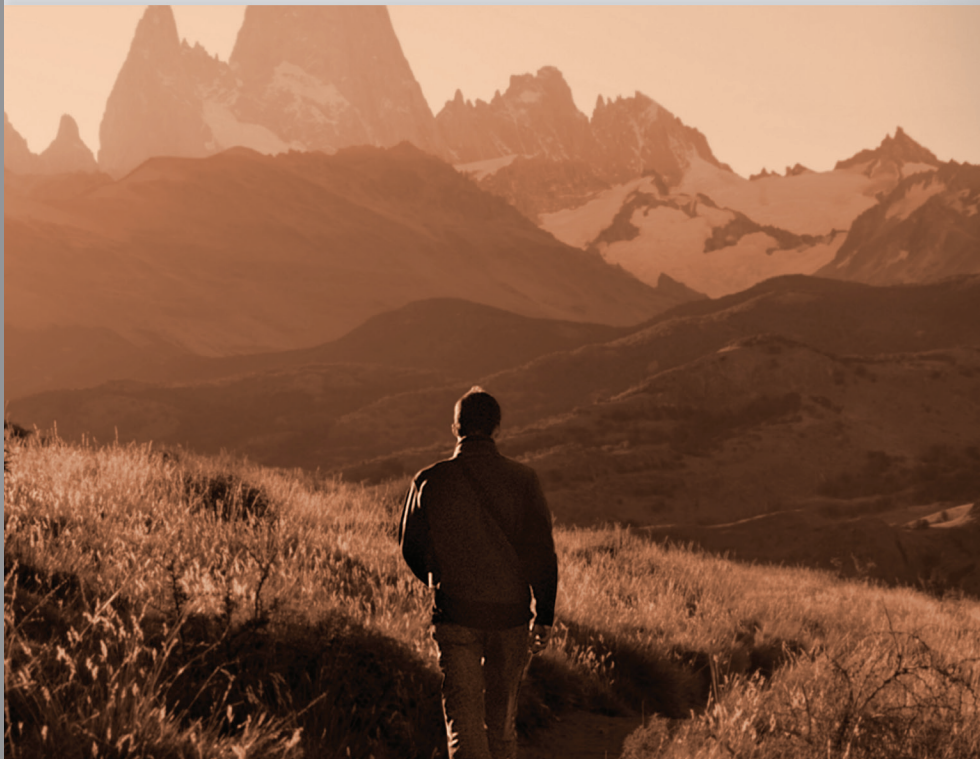


S T U D Y   G U I D E



# Pleasing God

by R.C. Sproul



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R.C. Sproul



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421 Ligonier Court, Sanford, FL 32771

E-mail: [info@ligonier.org](mailto:info@ligonier.org)

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# The Goal of Christian Living

## MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

What is the “big idea” of Christianity? When the Reformers answered that question, they said that the essence of the Christian life is to live *coram Deo*—“before the face of God.” That is, the essence of the Christian life is to live all one’s life in the presence of God. In this lesson, Dr. Sproul examines what it means to live in the presence of God, to be a seeker of the kingdom of God every day of one’s life.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To begin to understand what it means to live life *coram Deo*—“before the face of God”
2. To be able to explain the importance of pressing on toward the goal of the Christian life

## QUOTATIONS

*Let us not cease to do the utmost, that we may incessantly go forward in the way of the Lord; and let us not despair because of the smallness of our accomplishments.*

—John Calvin

*Resolved, never to do anything which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.*

—Jonathan Edwards

## LECTURE OUTLINE

- A. What is the “big idea” of the Christian life?
  1. According to Luther, the essence of the Christian life is to live one’s life *coram Deo*.
    - a. *Coram Deo* literally means “before the face of God.”

- b. One must live all of life openly in the presence of God, under the authority of God, and to the honor and glory of God.
  2. Jesus says, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).
    - a. We sin nevertheless.
    - b. We live in the absence of God, in defiance of God, and to our own glory.
  3. We must press forward through those times of frustration and paralyzation in our spiritual growth.
    - a. Often when we reach a difficult plateau, we quit.
    - b. The only way to advance, though, is to persevere through that level of paralysis.
- B. All of us are called to please God.
1. “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness” (Matt. 6:33).
  2. The violent take the kingdom by force. (Matt. 11:12).
  3. The Parables of the Lost Coin (Luke 15:8ff.), the Pearl of Great Price (Matt. 13:45–46), and the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11ff.) illustrate the importance of pressing into the kingdom of God.
  4. So many times we start something without ever finishing it.
  5. What pleases God is someone who signs up for the duration.
  6. According to Jonathan Edwards, “The seeking of the kingdom of God is the chief business of the Christian.”

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What Latin phrase did Martin Luther use to express the “big idea” of the Christian life?
  - a. *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*
  - b. *Coram Deo*
  - c. *Contra mundum*
  - d. *Simul iustus et peccator*
2. How many Christians live all of life in the constant sense of the presence of God and do everything in submission to the authority of God?
  - a. All Christians
  - b. Only those Christians who have been baptized by the Holy Spirit
  - c. Only a minuscule number of perfect saints
  - d. No Christians
3. When Jesus says that “the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force,” what does He mean, according to Dr. Sproul?
  - a. The enemies of the kingdom of God use violence to try to oppose God’s reign.
  - b. The kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God are locked in an eternal and violent struggle for the souls of men.

- c. Those who mean business about pleasing God are not casual in their pursuit of the kingdom.
  - d. The kingdom of God is to be advanced on earth through the use of violent means.
- 4. What is the main point of emphasis in the parables of the Prodigal Son, the Lost Coin, and the Pearl of Great Price?
  - a. The growth of the kingdom of God
  - b. The gracious character of the kingdom of God
  - c. The importance of pressing into the kingdom of God.
  - d. The law of the kingdom of God

## BIBLE STUDY

1. What do the following parables teach us about seeking God's kingdom?
  - a. Matthew 13:45–46
  - b. Luke 15:8–10
  - c. Luke 15:20–24
2. What do the following passages of Scripture teach us about the Christian's relation or approach to the kingdom?
  - a. Matthew 6:33
  - b. Luke 11:2
  - c. John 2:17
3. What is righteousness? Before you read the following verses, write out a brief definition in your own words. Then read and briefly summarize the biblical understanding of righteousness.
  - a. Proverbs 21:21
  - b. Isaiah 1:17
  - c. Micah 6:8
  - d. Matthew 25:34–40
  - e. Luke 6:27–31
4. Some of the following verses speak of the kingdom of God as coming. Others speak of it as already a present reality and still others as something for which we ought to strive. Do these verses relate in a consistent way? If so, how?
  - a. Matthew 3:2
  - b. Matthew 6:33
  - c. Romans 14:17
  - d. Hebrews 12:28
  - e. 2 Peter 1:10–11

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

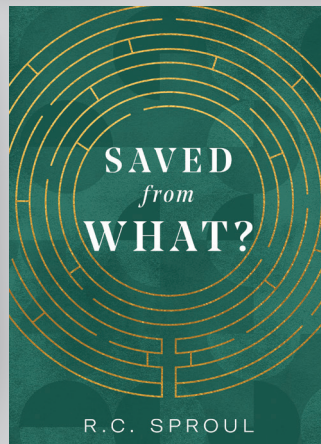
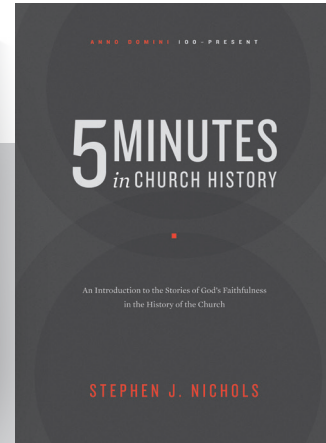
1. Why do we so often strive for spirituality and piety but not righteousness?
2. Must we feel God's presence in order to live *coram Deo*? How can we foster an awareness of God's presence?
3. What motivates you to live a life pleasing to God? What should motivate you?
4. Why does our enthusiasm and zeal for God's kingdom sometimes cool off? What specific things have dampened your enthusiasm for seeking God's kingdom?

## APPLICATION

1. Read Galatians 5:19–23 and study the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. Limiting yourself to one choice from each list, choose those that you believe God would have you pay particular attention to in the coming week. During the week, devote an extra amount of time in prayer specifically directed toward those two areas.
2. What things in your life do you find yourself doing for your own glory, rather than for the glory of God? How can you change this so that you are doing these things for God's glory?



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