

# Coram Deo-Before the Face of God

**Coram Deo** is a Latin phrase that means “**before the face of God**” or “**in the presence of God**.” It conveys the idea of living one's entire life in the conscious awareness of God's presence, authority, and glory. Coram Deo is often associated with the **Reformation**, emphasizing the idea that life is sacred in all aspects, not just in religious or spiritual settings. Reformers like John Calvin and Martin Luther highlighted the importance of living a God-centered life, not compartmentalized into "sacred" and "secular" categories.

*Living Coram Deo means seeing the imminent in terms of the transcendent,  
he transient in terms of the eternal. It means remembering that right now counts forever.*

-- R C Sproul

Coram Deo means Living Under God's Sovereignty, acknowledging that God is in full control of all of life, and we are accountable to Him for our every word, our every thought and our every action. Coram Deo reminds us that they are always in God's presence, whether in worship, work, or daily life. Coram Deo calls for a life that aims to walk always in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects.

*Living Coram Deo often means "Moderation in some things."  
Other times it means living on the edge.*

- R C Sproul

To live **Coram Deo** means to live ever mindful that God is present and sees all things, ever praying Psalm 139:7-8. To know that God sees ALL THINGS, ALL THE TIME brings both conviction and comfort. It calls for living in submission to God's Word and will (Deuteronomy 10:12-13+). Coram Deo living calls for us to live with integrity in public and private, knowing that we are accountable to God today and one day in the future at either the Bema Seat or the Great White Throne (Colossians 3:23-24+). Coram Deo living seeks to live like with a attitude worship, not just on Sundays but whether we are in life (1 Corinthians 10:31+).

To summarize, **Coram Deo** describes the Christian life as one in which we seek enabled by His Spirit to live entirely as in the presence of God, under His authority, and for His glory. Coram Deo encourages believers to approach every aspect of life—work, worship, and relationships—with reverence, integrity, and joy in God's presence.

There is an Eye that never sleeps  
Beneath the wings of night;  
Soul, guard thy ways and words today,  
For thou art in His sight!

## SCRIPTURES THAT SPEAK OF LIVING CORAM DEO

**Genesis 5:22+** Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters." The Septuagint renders it "And Enoch **was well-pleasing to** ([euairesteo](#)) God after his begetting Mathusala, two hundred years, and he begot sons and daughters." Notice the Septuagint replaces "walked" with "**was well pleasing to**." The writer of Hebrews adds "By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; **for** ([gar](#) - WHY?) he obtained the witness that before his being taken up **he was pleasing** ([euairesteo](#) - perfect tense) to God (**CORAM DEO REAL-TIME!**)." (Hebrews 11:5+)

**Genesis 17:1+:** Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless." The picture is living in God's presence with integrity. See [Daniel-Man of Integrity](#)

**Psalms 16:8+:** "I have set the LORD continually before me; Because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

**1 Corinthians 10:31+:** "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

**Colossians 1:9-12+** (A PRAYER FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS TO PRACTICE CORAM DEO) For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to **please** ([areskeia](#)) Him **in all respects**, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the

attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

**Hebrews 4:13+** And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

**Psalms 139:7-8** "Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there."

**2 Chronicles 16:9** "For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth, that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His."

**Romans 14:12** "So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God." (Living Coram Deo means recognizes we are accountable for every action.)

**Psalms 33:13-14** The LORD looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men; 14 From His dwelling place He looks out On all the inhabitants of the earth,

**Ecclesiastes 12:14** "For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil."

**Proverbs 5:21** "For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the Lord, and He watches all his paths."

**Proverbs 15:3** The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.

**Proverbs 22:12** The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge, But He overthrows the words of the treacherous man.

**Matthew 28:20** "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

**Colossians 3:23-24** "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ."

**Jeremiah 23:23-24** "Am I a God who is near," declares the LORD, "And not a God far off? 24 "Can a man hide himself in hiding places So I do not see him?" declares the LORD. "Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?" declares the LORD.

**Zechariah 4:10** "For who has despised the day of small things? But these seven will be glad when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel—these are the eyes of the LORD which range to and fro throughout the earth."

"You are a God of seeing." O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. . . . Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.—For a man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord, and he ponders all his paths.—"But God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."—"For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him." But Jesus . . . knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.—"Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Gen. 16:13; Ps. 139:1–4, 6; Prov. 15:3; Prov. 5:21; Luke 16:15; 2 Chron. 16:9; John 2:24–25; John 21:17 (Daily Light on the Daily Path)

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## **CORAM DEO**

Steve Curtis

Here I am in a light before Your face,  
Lord I'm standing here amazed  
As I marvel at Your Grace  
For there I was standing helpless on my own  
Wretched, lost and all alone.  
Til with eyes of faith I saw You.  
On Your throne.

Here I am surrounded by the glory of the King  
Who died for me, Whose mercy set me free.  
Here I am, a beggar dressed in righteousness that I could not attain.

It was only by Your grace.

Here I am, **LIVING LIFE BEFORE YOUR FACE.**

Lord, I standing here amazed.

As I marvel at Your Grace

Here I am...

As I fall to my knees where I stand

For where You are is holy

I will praise You, I will praise You

**BEFORE YOUR FACE I WILL BOW.**

You are holy, most holy. I will lift Your Name on high.

Lord, I will praise You, I will praise You

**BEFORE YOUR FACE I WILL BOW.**

## QUOTES AND ARTICLES RELATED TO CORAM DEO

[The Practice of the Presence of God](#) by Brother Lawrence issues a timeless call to bring God into every moment, to transform the ordinary into the extraordinary through love and devotion, and to live a life marked by peace, joy, and closeness to God (all possible as we practice continually walking in the Spirit - Gal 5:16+). Here are some well known quotes from this book...

- "We ought not to be weary of doing little things for the love of God, who regards not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed."
- "The most excellent method of going to God is that of doing our common business without any view of pleasing men, and purely for the love of God."
- "There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God."

### Thoughts from The Practice of the Presence of God

#### 1. Living in Constant Awareness of God:

- Brother Lawrence emphasizes that God is always present (see [omnipresence](#)) and that one can communicate with Him continually, not just during formal times of prayer or worship. God's [omnipresence](#) should also serve to motivate us to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against our souls (1Pe 2:11+) and instead make holy choices that please and glorify our Father Who art in Heaven! Peter says it this way "if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, **conduct** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth;" (1Pe 1:17+)

#### 2. Spirituality in Ordinary Tasks:

- He demonstrates how mundane, everyday tasks, like washing dishes or cooking, can become acts of worship when done with Spirit energized love and devotion to God.

#### 3. Simplicity in Faith:

- Seek God in everything, talk to Him throughout the day, and trust Him fully or to quote the Apostle Paul "Pray without ceasing." (1Th 5:17+)
- Avoid complex rituals and focus on a personal, intimate relationship with God. But avoid legalism for as Paul says "These are matters Col 2:21-22) which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence." (Col 2:23+)

#### 4. Joy and Peace in God's Presence:

- By practicing God's presence, with a desire toward always walking in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects (Col 1:10+), one can experience the fruit of the Spirit joy and peace regardless of external circumstances, as one's soul is anchored in God. David says it this way in Ps 16:11+ "Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right

hand there are pleasures forever."

#### 5. Selflessness and Humility:

- Brother Lawrence encourages humility, surrendering one's will to God, and finding contentment in His will. As Paul describes the secret of contentment writing "Not that I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do (MY RESPONSIBILITY) all things through Him (GOD'S PART) Who ([endunamoo](#) - present tense - continually) strengthens me.." (Phil 4:11-13+) (See "[Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)")

#### 6. Prayer Without Ceasing:

- He advocates for a life of continual prayer, where one's thoughts, actions, and words are directed toward God throughout the day. (See the incredible supernatural impact of ceaselessly praying for our brethren the prayer in Colossians 1:9-12+)

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The unbeliever is like a fish swimming within the confines of a large net. The net is the sovereignty of God. The fish thinks he is free to swim wherever he wills, but, in reality, he can only move from one side of the net to the other. Just so, when the sinner tries to run away from God, he runs toward him. And after a few short years he will meet him face to face. All of life is lived CORAM DEO. - P G Matthew

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*Don't do anything you wouldn't want God to see,  
because He'll see it anyway!*

The omnipresence of God should also motivate us to holiness. Most of us prefer to sin with no one else watching. But when we sin—whether in thought, word, or action—we sin in the presence of God. - John MacArthur

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**God in the Commonplace** - If God does not enter your kitchen, there is something wrong with your kitchen. If you can't take God into your recreation, there is something wrong with your play. We all believe in the God of the heroic. What we need most these days is the God of the humdrum, the commonplace, the everyday. —Peter Marshall, Sr. Leadership, Vol. 17, no. 2.

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**Adoniram Judson** lived his life CORAM DEO.

Judson once wrote

A life once spent is irrevocable. It will remain to be contemplated through eternity... If it has been a useless life, it can never be improved. Such will stand forever and ever. The same may be said of each day. When it is once past, it is gone forever. All the marks which we put upon it, it will exhibit forever... Each day will not only be a witness of our conduct, but will affect our everlasting destiny (**Note:** Not in loss of salvation but of rewards - cp 1Co 3:11-15<sup>+</sup>, Jn 15:5<sup>+</sup>, 2Co 5:10<sup>+</sup>, cp 1Ti 4:7, 8<sup>+</sup>). No day will lose its share of influence in determining where shall be our seat in heaven. How shall we then wish to see each day marked with usefulness! It will then be too late to mend its appearance. It is too late to mend the days that are past. The future is in our power. Let us, then, each morning, resolve to send the day into eternity in such a garb as we shall wish it to wear forever. And at night let us reflect that one more day is irrevocably gone, indelibly marked. (See page 33-34 of [A memoir of the life and labors of the Rev. Adoniram Judson](#))

This is "**Coram Deo**" living before the face of God, "**Carpe Diem**" seizing the day, because "**Tempus Fugit**", time flies and so our daily prayer should be "So teach us to number our days, that we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom." (Ps 90:12- [see note](#))

Adoniram Judson, the famed missionary to Burma, spent long, tiresome years translating the Bible for that people group. He was eventually put into prison because of his work, and while there his wife died. After being released, he contracted a serious disease that sapped what little energy he had left. Nevertheless he prayed,

"Lord, let me finish my work. Spare me long enough to put the saving Word into the hands of the people....The motto of every missionary, whether preacher, printer, or schoolmaster, ought to be "Devoted for life." Amen and Amen!

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Psalm 34:15 - **Spurgeon** - He observes them with approval and tender consideration; they are so dear to Him that He cannot take

His eyes off them; He watches each one of them as carefully and intently as if there were only that one creature in the universe. His ears are open unto their cry. His eyes and ears are thus both turned by the Lord towards His saints; His whole mind is occupied about them (**Ed**: That is a bit of the picture of the Hebrew and Greek words for "watching" in Pr 15:3): if slighted by all others they are not neglected by Him. Their cry He hears at once, even as a mother is sure to hear her sick babe; the cry may be broken, plaintive, unhappy, feeble, unbelieving, yet the Father's quick ear catches each note of lament or appeal, and He is not slow to answer His children's voice.

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Ps 33:18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, On those who hope for His lovingkindness

Spurgeon - Behold. For this is a greater wonder than hosts and horses, a surer confidence than chariots or shields. The eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him. That eye of peculiar care is their glory and defense. None can take them at unawares, for the celestial watcher foresees the designs of their enemies, and provides against them. They who fear God need not fear anything else; let them fix their eye of faith on him, and his eye of love will always rest upon them. Upon them that hope in his mercy. This one would think to be a small evidence of grace, and yet it is a valid one. Humble hope shall have its share as well as courageous faith. Say, my soul, is not this an encouragement to thee? Dost thou not hope in the mercy of God in Christ Jesus? Then the Father's eye is as much upon thee as upon the elder born of the family. These gentle words, like soft bread, are meant for babes in grace, who need infant's food. —

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**Matthew Henry** - The great truths of divinity are of great use to enforce the precepts of morality, and none more than this - That the eye of God is always upon the children of men. 1. An eye to discern all, not only from which nothing can be concealed, but by which every thing is actually inspected, and nothing overlooked or looked slightly upon: The eyes of the Lord are in every place; for he not only sees all from on high (Psalm 33:13), but he is every where present. Angels are full of eyes (Revelation 4:8), but God is all eye. It denotes not only his omniscience, that he sees all, but his universal providence, that he upholds and governs all. Secret sins, services, and sorrows, are under his eye. 2. An eye to distinguish both persons and actions. He beholds the evil and the good, is displeased with the evil and approves of the good, and will judge men according to the sight of his eyes, Psalm 1:6; Psalm 11:4. The wicked shall not go unpunished, nor the righteous unrewarded, for God has his eye upon both and knows their true character; this speaks as much comfort to saints as terror to sinners.

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**Charles Bridges on Proverbs 15:3** - Adored be this All-seeing God! (Psalm 139:1–6.) His inspection of the universe, so minute, exact, unwearied! (Jer. 23:23, 24, Ps. 11:4, 5.) The first mark of the apostasy was a dread of his presence (Gen. 3:8, 4:16). The ungodly try to forget it, (Ps. 10:11; 73:11, 94:5–7, Ez. 8:12, Hos. 7:2.) and often succeed in banishing him out of their thoughts (Ps. 10:4). Yet in despite of all their efforts to hide, he does see them. His eyes are in every place. Heaven, hell—the secret places of the earth—are all open before him (Pr 15:11, Ps. 139:7–10, Amos 9:2, 3). He beholds the evil—whether the King on his throne (Acts 12:21–23), or in his palace; (Dan. 4:29, 5:5) or the servant indulging his secret sin (Pr 5:20, 21, 2 Kings 5:20). Yes—he may shut out the sun from his retreat, but he cannot shut out the eye of God, “from whom the darkness hideth not.” (Job 24:15, 16; 34:21, 22, Psalm 139:11, 12, Jer. 16:17) Reckless indeed is he to do or think what he would hide from God; and then—such is the secret root of atheism! (Ps. 14:1)—thinking he can do so. (Isa. 29:15) But his eyes also behold the good. He sees them in outward destitution (Gen. 16:7, 13, Ps. 27:10), in secret retirement, (John 1:48, Acts 10:9–13) in deep affliction (Ex. 3:7, Psalm 91:1). He pierces the prison walls. (Gen. 39:21, 2 Chron. 33:12, 13, Acts 12:7, 16:25) He “covers their heads in the day of battle.” (Ps. 140:7) He is with them in the furnace, (Dan. 3:25, Isa. 43:2) and in the tempest. His eye guides them as their journeying God (Psalm 32:8, Gen. 28:15), and will guide them safe home; (Psalm 23:4, 48:14, Isa. 42:16) full of blessing (Gen. 26:3), protection, (2Chr 16:9, Ps. 33:18, 19; 34:15, 1 Pet. 3:12) and support. (Isa. 41:10, 14) ‘He fills hell with his severity, heaven with his glory, his people with his grace.’ (Charnock) But how shall I meet these eyes! As a rebel or as a child? Do they inspire me with terror, or with love? Do I walk carefully under their lively impression? (Ge 17:1) Conscious corruption leads me to shrink from the eyes of man. But Oh! my God! I would lay myself naked and open to thee (Heb 4:13). Search me; try me; show me to myself. Bring out my hidden iniquities, and slay them before me. (Psalm 139:23, 24, Ps 19:12–13) How is the overwhelming thought of this piercing eye more than counterbalanced by the view of the great High Priest, who covers and cleanses all infirmities and defilements, and pleads and maintains my acceptance notwithstanding all discouragement! (Heb. 4:13, 14)

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**Lawson on Proverbs 15:3** - The eyes of men can be but in one place, because themselves are circumscribed in one place. But the eyes of that God who fills heaven and earth are every where. Angels are full of eyes before and behind, but God is all eye, and darkness and the shadow of death hideth not from him. He is in heaven by his glorious presence; and that high and holy place is like a watch-tower, from whence he spies the evil and the good. Evil men flatter themselves that none sees or knows their wickedness, as if God could not see through the dark clouds; but he is a witness of what they speak and do in their bed-chambers, nor does a single thought of their heart escape his notice. “Beware, Cato looks on,” was a proverb among the Romans; but a greater than any

man on earth is still looking on us, and shall we do that before the eye of God, which we durst not be guilty of in the presence of a child? Alas! how is the God who sees all things despised and insulted by the sons of men! But he will not be mocked; he beholds and judges, and will punish the evil-doer\*.

His eyes behold the good also; and this is their great consolation, when they are overlooked or ungratefully used by men. God knows their integrity, and beholds with a pleasant countenance their humble and sincere endeavors to please him, and to do good to men. Every thought of his name, and every good word that they speak, is written before him in a book of remembrance†. He beholds with an eye of pity all their secret sorrows, and puts their tears in his bottle; and not a moment does he withdraw his eyes from the righteous‡.

Good men need not fear that God will forget any of his gracious promises. They will be all accomplished to them in due season; for his eyes run to and fro through the whole earth, to shew himself strong in their behalf; and his providence is constantly employed to glorify his faithfulness, in fulfilling that word which he hath magnified above or upon all his name.

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**Ridley Pearson Devotional** - "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good."—15:3.

**Interpretation.**—In adaptation to human understanding, the omniscience of the Deity is here and elsewhere compared to eyes—"seven eyes," indicating perfectness (2 Chron. 16:9; Zech. 4:10). They are said to observe, to examine, to behold (as from a watch-tower) the evil and the good everywhere. The doctrine has both its alarming and its comfortable side, but as it is intended first to warn, "the evil" are first spoken of.

**Illustrations.**—The omniscient eye of God observed our first parents in the garden, Joseph and Manasseh in prison, Achan within his tent, Hezekiah on his sick-bed, Nebuchadnezzar in his palace, the three youths in the furnace, Jonah in the whale, Nathanael under the fig-tree, St. Peter on the housetop, Herod on his throne, Lydia by the river-side, St. Paul in the tempest and before Nero, St. John in exile.

**Application.**—It is evident from Holy Scripture that nothing escapes the penetrating eye of God. He sees not only every man, but all his doings and all his thoughts. As our Governor, above all as our Judge, it is essential all should be "naked and open" to His Eyes. He must know all, that He may "rule in righteousness" and "judge righteous judgment." Man in his sinfulness would prefer an impersonal God, would make of the machinery of Nature a God which he might observe without being himself observed. But the proofs of God's all-seeing Eye are too irrefutable, and conscience bears witness to It too feelingly, to allow of there being as much atheism spoken as is acted. Yet the inner spirit of the guilty, until reconciled, is atheistic, and he saith with Job's adulterer, "No eye shall see me" (Job 24:15). The same man would call upon God in time of danger. So easy is it to own omniscience and yet live "without God." But, indeed, the thought of the all-seeing Eye is too terrible, when realized, to be endured unless we recognize in It the beamings of compassionate love. Am I, in the spirit of adoption, able to look up to God and cry, "Abba, Father"? Then, while the certainty that at every moment "Thou, God, seest me," will make me watchful not to offend, in private as well as in public, in the church, in the counting-house, in the shop, in the street, wherever I am, it will not fill me with dismay. For I shall remember that He sees "the good" as well as "the evil," and will reward the honest effort of His child to be good. He sees my faults. He sees my repentance also. He sees me "in the Beloved," and accepts me for His sake.

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**Allen Ross - Proverbs 15:3 "Divine Omniscience"**

The eyes of the LORD are everywhere,  
keeping watch on the ungodly and the good.

The proverb is reminding us of the biblical truth that the LORD knows everyone completely. The thought is continuous through the two parallel lines, and uses anthropomorphic language to stress God's exacting knowledge.

Similar language is used in Psalm 11:4, which says "His eyes behold, His eyelids examine, the sons of men." The imagery is of God's squinting (and thereby involving His eyelids) in a close examination of people's lives. And Psalm 121 reminds us in similar human terms that God never slumbers or sleeps. A bolder anthropomorphic expression is found in Genesis 19:21 where the Lord tells Abraham that he will go down to Sodom and see if it is as bad as he has heard. This is designed to say that God does not judge people on a whim. These expressions are the ways that humans would act. But God is omniscient; He knows everything equally well (Ps. 139:1-6; see also Heb. 4:13). He does not have to take a closer look, or study the matter, to see what it is like. And so in this proverb when it says that his eyes are everywhere, it is a way of saying that he knows everything--nothing escapes his vision, as it were.

For the righteous, the truly good people on the earth, this is comforting. But for the ungodly this should be a warning that God knows everything they do. The verse is not merely making a theological statement; it is designed to prompt people to right conduct. The righteous will always be conscious of the LORD's keeping watch over them, and this will both bring them comfort and

security and also motivate them to greater righteousness.

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#### Charles Stanley - LIFE FROM GOD'S VIEWPOINT PROVERBS 15:3

Wisdom is the capacity to see things from God's viewpoint....God knows what we feel, what we think, who we are, and how we function. He knows our likes, dislikes, dreams, desires, fears, and hurts. He knows what brings us joy, peace, and feelings of fulfillment. As our "Maker" He knows every detail of our "makeup"! God also knows about every circumstance we encounter. He sees the beginning from the ending, and every step between.

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**PLACE** "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?" (Ps. 24:3). "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3). "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28:6). "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:26b-27). "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts" (II Pet. 1:19).

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#### "GOD LOOKED AT THAT!"

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. Proverbs 15:3

The fact of God's omnipresence is not only a real comfort but also an arresting thought. It is wonderful to say with Hagar in times of distress, "Thou God seest me." No matter where we might go, we are never lost to the loving eye of our Heavenly Father. This truth should also cause us to govern carefully the things we say and do. Some time ago I came across a story which underscores this. It seems that a little boy of low mentality was treated most unkindly by other lads and often ridiculed by adults. They would laugh at his comments and mimic his odd behavior. Although tending to be imbecilic, he did at times sense their derision. Lacking the ability to properly defend himself, he would simply say to his offenders, "Ah! God looked at that." He would then repeat it with added emphasis, "Ah, God looked at that!" This made a deep impression on a young lady who saw the unkind deeds and heard the helpless child's simple retort. She mentioned that later whenever she witnessed any injustice, there would come to her mind this lad and his graphic sermon: "God looked at that!" Although mentally deficient, that small boy knew how to preach! He got the point across. The Scripture agrees with his observations; for we read, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight" (Heb. 4:13). The writer of Proverbs exclaims, "Sheol and destruction are before the Lord; how much more, then, the hearts of . . . men" (Prov. 15:11).

What a difference it would make if before acting we would always stop to consider that the Lord is observing us. Whenever a thing is done, we too must face the fact—"God looked at that!"

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Prayer is more than speaking or communicating with God. Pagans speak to their gods and we do not consider that prayer. True prayer is true communion with the true God according to His true Word. It is *Coram Deo* prayer: speaking in the presence of God. - Neal Hegeman is executive director of Ligonier Ministries, Canada.

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To live life *Coram Deo* is to entertain so great a desire to live in heaven in the presence of God, under His sovereign authority and for His glory, that one is willing to begin living that way here on earth. Not to live *Coram Deo* is to practice the absence of God. -- Robert Ingram

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#### [What is the meaning of coram Deo? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**ANSWER** - *Coram Deo* is a Latin phrase found in the [Vulgate](#); it means "before the face of God" or "in the presence of God." In the Latin Vulgate, the phrase *coram Deo* appears in [Psalm 55:13](#) (Psalm 56:13 in modern translations). Translated into English, the verse says, "For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk *before God* [*coram Deo*] in the light of life" (emphasis added).

*Coram Deo* is used mostly in [Reformed](#) circles, but other Christian denominations and Catholics have adopted the phrase as well. Various schools and churches include the phrase *coram Deo* in their name.

*Coram Deo* is used by many Christians as a reminder that all life is about God and that we must live our whole lives to glorify and honor God. According to R. C. Sproul, the essence of *coram Deo* is to "live one's entire life in the presence of God, under the authority of God, to the glory of God" ("What does 'coram Deo' Mean?" [ligonier.org/blog/what-does-coram-deo-mean](http://ligonier.org/blog/what-does-coram-deo-mean), accessed 6/3/20). In Christian theology, the phrase has gained a deeper meaning as a philosophy for living the Christian life.

To live one's life "before God" (*coram Deo*) is a scriptural concept, as the Lord is omnipresent and perceives our every action and thought (Psalm 139:1–4, 7–10). Since God created us for His glory (Isaiah 43:7), our lives should be lived for Him and His glory. As Psalm 115:1 says, "Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness." Living *coram Deo* is to recognize that God is ultimately whom we live for; we do not live for others' approval, recognition, or admiration (see Galatians 1:10). Since God alone is the One who redeemed us from our sin, He alone deserves all the glory and praise (Acts 4:12; Titus 3:5).

*Coram Deo* counters what is taught in the world today. Entertainment media constantly presents a version of life in which God is totally absent. The predominate view of society is that we should focus on ourselves and do what we think is right for us. Popularity, fame, and fortune are the acceptable pursuits. In contrast, *coram Deo* reminds us that we live for an audience of one: the Lord God. Walking before God and living to glorify Him

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### **Coram Deo: Before the Face of God**

The eyes of the Lord roam far and near,  
Beholding all with vision clear.  
No deed escapes His watchful gaze,  
He sees our hearts, our hidden ways.

His gaze is not to bring despair,  
But lead us to His loving care.  
A Father's eyes, both firm and kind,  
Seeking to heal, restore, and bind.

Live each moment beneath His gaze,  
Let each breath be a hymn of praise.  
Before the face of God we stand,  
Our lives entrusted to His hand.

In kindness, He observes the just,  
Rewarding those who humbly trust.  
Yet warns the soul that walks astray,  
To turn from sin, to seek His way.

No corner hidden, no thought concealed,  
In His great light, all is revealed.  
So walk with wisdom, pure and true,  
For God sees all that we pursue.

Coram Deo, the call is clear,  
To live for Him, in holy fear.  
Before His face, our lives are poured,  
As testament to Christ Jesus our glorious Lord.

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**EFFECT OF LIVING CORAM DEO ON EVERYDAY LIFE** - The godly are dissuaded from wickedness, upon the consideration of God's eye and omniscience. - Thomas Brooks

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**ILLUSTRATION OF CORAM DEO** - A young man once studied violin under a world-renowned master. When his first big recital came, the crowd cheered after each number, but the young performer seemed dissatisfied. Even after the final number, despite the applause, the musician seemed unhappy. As he took his bows, he was watching an elderly man in the balcony. Finally, the elderly one smiled and nodded in approval. Immediately, the young man beamed with joy. He was not looking for the approval of the crowd. He was waiting for the approval of his master. Christians should be living for God's approval. We will be approved unto Him as we use the Bible to grow in godliness. Are you growing as a craftsman who uses God's Word of truth accurately and skillfully to grow in godliness? The misuse of the Bible will lead you to ruin. The proper use will lead you to godliness.

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### **Guy King on a CORAM DEO atmosphere**

**A right atmosphere is to be created. "before the Lord," that is, as in His sight, as in His presence.**

**Speaking as in His sight.** What a difference that makes - there will be a loving care for our hearers, a straight faithfulness with them. Dr. Plummer says, "One is inclined to think that if ministers always remembered that they were speaking in the sight of GOD, they would sometimes find other things to say, and other ways of saying them." You may, on an occasion, have been speaking about some man, his words and views and actions, talking in a somewhat free and unrestrained fashion, when all of a sudden the man himself entered the room. That completely changed the whole atmosphere, he now could hear all you said - you were more careful to measure and moderate your words. Oh, that we preachers, when speaking of Him, and of His things, would recollect that He has come into the room, the church, indeed that He was there first (cf. "There am I . . .", Matthew 18:20), and that we were speaking "**before the Lord**".

**Listening as in His sight.** What a difference this makes in the manner of our reception of the message. Personal preferences will not operate so forcefully, and we shall find His word coming from even the preacher whom we dislike or despise. We shall listen the more attentively, with something of the purpose of the old prophet, "**I will . . . see what He will say unto me, and what I shall answer**," Habakkuk 2:1. We shall be alert to catch, through the human voice, the tones of the Divine voice (Ed: Beloved, this is a good word!). Yes, if instruction is to be given, it is well, to begin with, to get the atmosphere right - that GOD may grant **Utterance** to the speaker, and **Understanding** to the hearer. ([2 Timothy 2:14-19 Three Words](#))

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Beloved bondservant of the Most High God, do you conduct your life (really His life - 1Cor 6:20+) and ministry (all believers are priests [1Pe 2:9+] and all have divine works that have been prepared for them [Ep 2:10+]) with a realization that it is ever in the presence of the Lord, **CORAM DEO**? If not, what needs to change? We will all one day stand before those piercing perfectly discerning eyes (Re 1:14+, 1Co 3:13!!!) to be recompensed for every deed in this life, whether it was good or useless. And then even the motives of our heart (1Co 4:5, Pr 16:2) will be judged. Dare we pray Ps 139:23-24+ (or better yet, dare we not pray that pray!)?

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**In the presence of** (1799) ([enopion](#) from **en** = in + **ops** = face, eye, countenance) means in the face of (God), in the presence (sight) of (God), before or in front of. It means to be opposite any one (God in this case) and towards which another turns his eyes.

**Presence of God** (9x in 8v in **NAS**) - Ps 68:8-[note](#) Eccl 5:2 Lk 1:19 1Ti 5:21 1Ti 6:13 2Ti 2:14-[note](#) 2Ti 4:1-[note](#) Heb 9:24-[note](#)

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**Godliness** pictures a man or woman who is empowered by grace (sanctifying grace) and the indwelling Holy Spirit to conduct themselves in reverence and awe of God, maintaining such a consciousness of God's presence (cp "**Coram Deo**" - before the face of God) that they live as if He were ever watching (which He is!) and strive by His power to live as Christ lived when He walk this earth as the God-Man.

The OT would say that godly living is living with a proper "fear of the Lord", where fear conveys a sense of reverential awe, of living **Coram Deo** (before the face of God), recognizing that all evil is a direct affront ("in His face") to His holy character. Such a God focused person will not sin presumptively, taking no thought of the insult such sin is against God's holiness. Thus we see "godly men" in the OT like Job "fearing God and turning away from evil" (Job 1:1). Evil will be constantly "in our face" until glory but we are to constantly make the conscious decision to turn from evil, motivated by a heart desire to be pleasing (2Cor 5:9) to our Lord Who has loved us.

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### **Job 31:1 A COVENANT WITH MY EYES**

Our friend is a computer "techie." One night when our family was at his house, I noticed a verse taped to his monitor: "I have made a covenant with my eyes" (Job 31:1). Evidently, he understood the potential danger of spending hours alone in front of a computer with easy access to indecent images.

Our friend's "reminder verse" is a quote from Job, and it continues, "Why then should I look upon a young woman?" Like many of us, Job had promised himself to stay free of lust. Reflecting on that oath, he said, "Does [God] not see my ways, and count all my steps?" (Job 31:4, cp Pr 15:3-note, 1Pe 1:17-note). The Bible assures us that God does (Heb 4:13-note), and that we are accountable to Him. This is why believers must "abstain from sexual immorality" (1Th. 4:3-note). While some want to debate the boundaries of morality, the Bible says, "Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt 5:28-note).

If you have made a covenant with your eyes, consider how Scripture might help you keep this pledge. Post a verse on your computer screen, television, or the dashboard of your car, and remember, "God did not call us to uncleanness" but to holiness (1Th.

When lustful thoughts assail your mind  
To play with immorality,  
Remember that God's will for you  
Is holiness and purity.  
-Sper

A look that lingers can lead to lust.

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### Where Is God?

He was just a little lad, and on a Sabbath day was wandering home from Sunday school, and was dawdling on his way. He scuffed his shoes into the grass; he found a caterpillar; he found a fluffy milkweed pod and blew out all the "filler." A bird's nest in the tree overhead, so wisely placed and high, was just another wonder that caught his eager eye.

A neighbor watched his zig-zag course and hailed him from the lawn, asked him where he had been that day and what was going on.

"Oh, I've been to Sunday school"—he carefully turned the sod and found a snail beneath it—"I've learned a lot of God."

"M'm, a very fine way," the neighbor said, "for a boy to spend his time. If you'll tell me where God is, I'll give you a brand new dime."

Quick as a flash his answer came, nor were his accents faint. "I'll give you a dollar, Mister, if you'll tell me where God ain't." (6000 PLUS Illustrations)

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### He's Watching

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. —Proverbs 15:3

In this age of electronics, we have all become aware of bugging devices. A person's office, hotel room, or telephone can be monitored so that every sound is picked up. This is accomplished through highly sensitive microphones that are so small they can easily be hidden. Heads of state, government officials, and business people in strategic positions must be exceedingly careful of what they say, especially when entering a strange setting. The awareness that they might be overheard is sure to make them think twice before they speak.

Did you ever stop to think that God sees everything we do and hears everything we say every moment of the day? Hebrews 4:13 says that "all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

This truth is both comforting and sobering—comforting because God stands ready to deliver us when we are in trouble (Ps. 33:18-19), and sobering because "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good" (Prov. 15:3). What a profound effect this should have on the way we live!

The next time you are tempted or in trouble, remember that God is watching and listening.

There is no time of day or night,  
No place on land or sea  
That God, whose eye is never dim,  
Does not see you and me.  
—DJD

To know that God sees us brings both conviction and comfort.

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### William Arnot - Proverbs 15:3

"The eyes of the Lord are In every place, beholding the evil and the good. Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?"—Pr 15:3, 11.

THE [omniscience of God](#) is usually considered a fundamental doctrine of natural religion. Nobody denies it. Infidelity in this department is acted, not spoken. Speculative unbelievers are wont, in a free and easy way, to set down at least a very large proportion of the existing Christian profession to the credit of hypocrisy. Hypocrite is a disreputable name, and most men would rather impute it to a neighbour than acknowledge it their own : but it is one thing to repudiate the word, and another to be exempt from the thing which it signifies. That weed seems to grow as freely on the soil of natural religion as in the profession of Christian

faith. A. man may be a hypocrite although he abjures the Bible. Most of those who reject a written revelation profess to learn from the volume of creation that a just God is everywhere present, beholding the evil and the good ; but what disciple of Nature lives consistently with even his own short creed.

The doctrine of the divine omniscience, although owned and argued for by men's lips, is neglected or resisted in their lives. The unholy do not like to have a holy Eye ever open over them, whatever their profession may be. If fallen men, apart from the one Mediator, say or think that the presence of God is pleasant to them, it is because they have radically mistaken either their own character or his : they have either falsely lifted up their own attainments, or falsely dragged down the standard of the Judge.

Atheism is the inner spirit of all the guilty, until they be reconciled through the blood of the cross. All image worship, whether heathen or Romish, is Atheism incarnate. The idol is a body which men, at Satan's bidding, prepare for their own enmity against God. The gods many and lords many that thickly strew the path of humanity over time, are the product ever and anon thrown off by the desperate wriggle of the guilty to escape from the look of an all-seeing Eye, and so be permitted to do their deeds in congenial darkness. When spiders stretched their webs across the eyelids of Jupiter, notwithstanding all the efforts that Greek sculpture had put forth to make the image awful, the human worshipper would hide, without scruple, in his heart the thoughts which he did not wish his deity to know. It was even an express tenet of the heathen superstitions that the authority of the gods was partial and local : one who was dreadful on the hills might be safely despised in the valleys. In this feature, as in all others, the Popish idolatry, imitative rather than inventive, follows the rut in which the ancient current ran. Particular countries and classes of persons are assigned to particular saints. With puerile perseverance, the whole surface of the earth and the whole course of the year have been mapped and appropriated, so that you cannot plant a pin point either in time or space without touching the territory of some Romish god or goddess. In this way the ignorant devotee practically escapes from the conviction of an omniscient Witness. " Divide and conquer" is the maxim of the enemy, when he tries to deaden or destroy that sense of divine inspection which seems to spring native in the human mind. When he cannot persuade a man that there is no such witness, he persuades him, as the next best, that there are a thousand. When a man will not profess to have no god, the same end is accomplished by giving him many.

We sometimes experience and express surprise that rational beings should degrade themselves by worshipping blind, dumb idols, which their own hands have made ; but it is precisely because the idols are blind and dumb that men are willing to worship them. A god or a saint that should really cast the glance of a pure eye into the conscience of the worshipper would not long be held in repute ; the grass would grow again round that idol's shrine. A seeing god would not do : the idolater wants a blind one. The first cause of idolatry is a desire in an impure heart to escape from the look of the living God, and none but a dead image would serve the turn.

From history and experience it appears that idolaters prefer to have an image that looks like life, provided always that it be not living. A real omniscience they will not endure ; but a mimic omniscience pleases the fancy, and rocks the conscience into a sounder sleep. In the present generation the Romish craftsmen have tasked their ingenuity to make the eyes of their pictured saints move upon the canvas. The eyeball of a certain saint rolled, or seemed to roll, in its dusky colouring within the dimly-lighted aisle, and great was the effect on the devotions of the multitude. In places where Protestant truth has not shorn their superstition of its grosser out-growths, the procession of the Fete Dieu is garnished with a huge goggle eye, carried aloft upon a pole, moved in its socket by strings and pulleys, and ticketed " The Omniscient." This becomes an object of great attraction in the crowd. In one aspect it is more childish than any child's play ; but in another aspect a melancholy seriousness pervades it. This hideous mimicry of omniscience is an elaborate effort to weave a veil under which an unclean conscience may comfortably hide from the eye of God. After all the darkening and distorting effects of sin, there lies in the deep of a human soul an appetite for the knowledge of God, which, when it can do no more, stirs now and then, and troubles the man. It is the art of Antichrist to lie on the watch for that blind hunger when first it begins to stir, and throw into its opening mouth heaps of swine-food husks, to gorge and lay it, lest it should seek and get the bread of life.

This is the grosser method, which grosser natures adopt to destroy within themselves the sense of divine omniscience. There is another way running off in an opposite direction,—more refined, indeed, but equally atheistic,—more manly, but not more godly, than the crowded Pantheon of ancient or modern Rome. This other road to rest is Pantheism. If there is speculation in an age, it becomes restive under the thick clay of image-worship. There is a spirit which will not endure a material idol, and yet is not the spirit of God. Dagon falls, and the philosophers make sport of his dishonoured stump. Instead of making a little ugly idol for themselves, they adopt a great and glorious one made to their hands. God, they say, is the soul of Nature ; and Nature therefore is the only god whom they desire or need. Sea, earth, air,—flowers, trees. and living creatures, including man,—the creatures in the aggregate,—the universe is God. In this way they contrive to heal over the wound which the sense of an omniscient Eye makes in an unclean conscience. It is the personality of God that stings the flesh of the alienated. It is easier to deal with Nature in her majestic movements than with the Self of the Holy One. Nature heaves in the sea, and sighs in the wind, and blossoms in the flowers, and bleats on the pastures. Nature glides gently round in her gigantic orbit, and stoops not to notice the thoughts and words of a human being ; he may live as he lists, although Nature is there. Philosophy compels him to reject the paltry, tangible, local gods of all the superstitions. Reason constrains him to own the universality of the Creator's presence. The problem in his mind is, how to conceive of the Lord's eyes being in every place, and yet indifferent to sin. In order to accomplish this, the personal, with its pungency, must

be discharged from the idea of God. This done, the great idol, though more sublime, is not a whit more troublesome than the little one. The creature, whether great or small, whether God's hand-work or man's, cannot be a god to an intelligent, immortal human soul. Neither the idolater's stock nor the philosopher's universe has an eye to follow a transgressor into those chambers where he commits his abominations in the dark ; but in every place "our God is a consuming fire " upon a sin-stained conscience. The darkness and the light are both alike to him (Ps. 139:21).

" In every place" our hearts and lives are open in the sight of Him with whom we have to do. The proposition is absolutely universal. We must beware, however, lest that feature of the word which should make it powerful only render it to us indefinite and meaningless. Man's fickle mind treats universal truths that come from heaven as the eye treats the visible heaven itself. At a distance from the observer all around, the blue canopy seems to descend and lean upon the earth, but where he stands it is far above, out of his sight. It touches not him at all ; and when he goes forward to the line where now it seems to touch other men, he finds it still far above, and the point which applies to this lower world is as distant as ever. Heavenly truth, like heaven, seems to touch all the world around, but not his own immediate sphere, or himself, its centre. The grandest truths are practically lost in this way when they are left whole. We must rightly divide the word, and let the bits come into every crook of our own character. Besides the assent to general truth, there must be specific personal application. A man may own omniscience, and yet live without God in the world. The house of prayer is one important place on earth, and the eyes of the Lord are there when the great congregation has assembled, and the solemn worship has begun. He seeth not as man seeth. Thoughts are visible to Him. Oh ! what sights these pure eyes behold in that place! If our eyes could see them, a scream of surprise would rend the air. " Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery for they say, The Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth" (Ezek. 8:12). Take your place beside a hive of bees in a summer day at noon, and watch the busy traffickers. The outward-bound brush quickly past the heavy-laden incomers in the narrow passage. They flow like two opposite streams of water in the same channel, without impeding each other's motions. Every one is in haste: none tarries for a neighbour. Such a hive is a human heart, and the swarm of winged thoughts which harbour there maintain an intercourse with all the world in constant circulation, while the man sits among the worshippers, still, and upright, and steady, as a bee-hive upon its pedestal. The thoughts that issue from their home in that human heart, bold like robbers in the dark, overleap the fences of holiness, suck at will every flower that they reckon sweet, and return to deposit their gatherings in the owner's cup. The eyes of the Lord are there, beholding the evil.

The family is His own work, and He does not desert it. His eyes are open there, to see how father and mother entwine authority and love, a twofold cord, at once to curb the children's waywardness and lead them in the paths of peace ; how children obey their parents in the Lord ; how a sister employs that gentleness whereby God has made woman great, to soothe and win the robust brother ; how a brother proffers the arm that the Almighty has made strong, a support for a mother or a sister in her weakness to lean upon ; how masters become fathers to their servants, and servants lighten their labour by infusing into its dull heavy body the inspiring soul of love. In the family, the place where all these bonds unite, and all these relations circulate.

Are the eyes of the Lord its Maker ; let all its members " walk as seeing Him who is invisible."

In the street, in the counting-house, in the shop, in the factory, these eyes ever are. God does not forget and forsake a man when he rises from his knees and plunges into business; the man, therefore, should not then and there forget and forsake God.

In the tavern, when its doors are shut and its table spread,—when the light is brilliant and the laugh loud,—when the cup circulates and the head swims, in that place are the eyes of the Lord, and they are like a flame of fire. It would be a salutary though a painful experience, if the eyes of these time-killers were opened for a moment to meet the look of their omniscient Witness, before he become their almighty Judge.

But the eyes of the Lord are bent on this world, to behold the good as well as the evil that grows there. Is there any place among its thorns and thistles which bears fruit pleasant to the eyes of its Maker ? Yes; there are fields which he cultivates (1 Cor. 3:9), and trees which he plants (Isa. 5:3). On these places his eye rests with complacency, beholding the growth of his own grace. One of the places that attract the Redeemer's eye is a shady avenue where a youth saunters alone on a summer eve, communing with his own heart, grieving over its detected backslidings, and breathing a prayer for reconciliation and renewing. That angular recess in the ivy-covered rock, dark in daylight by the thickness of the leafy shade,—that is a place to which the Lord's eye turns intent; for thither, when the fire burned, the penitent turned aside unseen; and there he " wept and made supplication, and prevailed," nor parted from the place, nor let the Angel of the Covenant go, until he had gotten a whole Saviour for his soul, and surrendered his whole soul to the Saviour. This tree of righteousness is the planting of the Lord. By its freshness and fruitfulness he is glorified. The new creation is at least as lovely in the Creator's eye as the old one was before it was marred by sin. In that ransomed captive the Redeemer "shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied."

" Hell and destruction are before the Lord; how much more then the hearts of the children of men" (Pr 15:11) This terrible truth these hearts secretly know, and their desperate writhings to shake it off show how much they dislike it. The Romish confessional is one of

the most pregnant facts in the whole history of man. It is a monument and measure of the guilty creature's enmity against God. We know authoritatively from their own books what Rome expects her priests to do in the confessional, and history gives some glimpses of what they actually do. We have felt the glow of indignation in our breast as we learned how the confessor fastens like a horse-leech on his victim; and how the victim, like a charmed bird, abandons itself to the tyrant's will. We have heard how a full-aged unmarried man explores at will the half-formed thoughts that flutter in the bosom of a maid, and rudely rakes up the secrets that lie the deepest in the memory of a matron. We have wondered at the blindness and stupidity of our common nature, in permitting a man, not more holy than his neighbours, to stand in the place of God to a brother's soul. There is cause for grief, but not ground for surprise. The phenomenon proceeds in the way of natural law. It is the common, well understood process of compounding for the security of the whole, by the voluntary surrender of a part. The confessional is a kind of insurance office, where periodical exposure of the heart to a man is the premium paid for fancied impunity in hiding that heart altogether from the deeper scrutiny of the all-seeing God. Popish transgressors have no particular delight in confession for its own sake. Confession to the priest is felt and dreaded as an evil. The devout often need spurring to make them come; and when they come, it is on the principle of submitting to the less evil in order to escape the greater.

The incoming of the Heart Searcher is feared and loathed, like a deadly and contagious disease. A quack comes up, and by dint of bold profession, persuades the trembler that voluntary inoculation with the same disease in a milder form will secure exemption from the terrible reality. The guilty, although he does not like to have his conscience searched,—because he does not like to have his conscience searched, submits to the searching of his conscience. The pretending penitent accepts the scrutiny by a man, in the hope of escaping thereby the scrutiny of God. The impudent empiric tells his patient that if he submit to inoculation the small-pox will never come. Behold "the human nature of the question ;" behold the philosophy of the confessional.

It is in principle the old question of the heathen,—“ Shall I give the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” (Mic.6:7.) It is not, however, the fruit of the body that is offered, for they do not make their children pass through the fire to Moloch now; the spiritual chastity of the soul is laid down as the price of impunity for sin. God made the human soul for himself; it is vilest prostitution to abandon it to the authoritative search of a sinful man. Yet this unnatural sacrifice is made, this galling yoke is worn, in the vain hope of shutting out the eyes of the Lord from one place of his own world.

But what fearful dilemma have we here! The Holiest changeth not when he comes a visitant to a human heart. He is the same there that he is in the highest heaven. He cannot look upon sin; and how can a human heart welcome Him into its secret chambers! How can the blazing fire welcome in the quenching water? It is easy to commit to memory the seemingly prayer of an ancient penitent, “ Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts” (Ps. 139:23). The dead letters, worn smooth by frequent use, may drop freely from callous lips, leaving no sense of scalding on the conscience; and yet, truth of God though they are, they may be turned into a lie in the act of utterance. The prayer is not true, although it is borrowed from the Bible, if the suppliant invite the All-seeing in, and yet would give a thousand worlds, if he had them, to keep him out for ever.

Christ has declared the difficulty, and solved it: “ I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). When the Son has made a sinner free, he is free indeed. The dear child, pardoned and reconciled, loves and longs for the Father's presence. What! is there neither spot nor wrinkle now upon the man, that he dares to challenge inspection by the Omniscient, and to offer his heart as Jehovah's dwelling-place? He is not yet so pure; and well he knows it. The groan is bursting yet from his broken heart: “ O wretched man that am I who shall deliver me from the body of this death!” (Rom. 7:24.) Many stains defile him yet; but he loathes them now, and longs to be free. The difference between an unconverted and a converted man is not that the one has sins and the other has none; but that the one takes part with his cherished sins against a dreaded God, and the other takes part with a reconciled God against his hated sins. He is out with his former friends, and in with his former adversary. Conversion is a turning, and it is one turning only, but it produces simultaneously and necessarily two distinct effects. Whereas his face was formerly turned away from God, and toward his own sins; it is now turned away from his own sins, and toward God. This one turning, with its twofold result, is in Christ the Mediator, and through the work of the Spirit.

As long as God is my enemy, I am his. I have no more power to change that condition than the polished surface has to refrain from reflecting the sunlight that falls upon it. It is God's love, from the face of Jesus shining into my dark heart, that makes my heart open, and delight to be his dwelling-place. The eye of the just Avenger I cannot endure to be in this place of sin; but the eye of the compassionate Physician I shall gladly admit into this place of disease, for he came from heaven to earth that he might heal such sin-sick souls as mine. When a disciple desires to be searched by the living God, he does not thereby intimate that there are no sins in him to be discovered: he intimates rather that his foes are so many and so lively, that nothing can subdue them except the presence and power of God.

"What will people say about me after I die?" Have you ever asked yourself that question? It is a question that has haunted me for years, and it is one of the most captivating questions anyone can ask himself. In truth, it would do us good to ask ourselves such questions with some frequency: "What will I contribute to the world, the church, and the kingdom of God before I die?" Such questions, the hard questions concerning death, are in fact the very questions of life. In asking ourselves questions about the reality of our lives in the eyes of the analytical world, we may in turn provide ourselves with answers that change the way we live, both before the eyes of men openly and before the eyes of God privately.

Throughout history, men, both great and small, have shaped the world around them, and wherever I travel, I am always on the lookout for the burial places of great men. The graves of history's victors and villains fascinate me to no end. And whether they were penned by friends or by foes, the epitaphs on gravestones reveal the sentiments of those who knew the departed, leaving the legacy of their opinions engraved in stone for generations to come.

A few days ago I was in England and made a brief visit to London's St. Paul's Cathedral, wherein is found the epitaph:

*"Sacred to the memory of General Charles George Gordon who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, his heart to God."*

Truly, a magnificent legacy to which the world is able to bear witness as scores of visitors ponder the epitaph of a mere man whose character is enshrined in accordance with the opinions of mere men. And while such opinions should not be disregarded, they are only opinions, opinions of men who cannot feel the hearts of others and who certainly cannot see the actions of others at all times and in all places.

*It is only the Lord who knows us for who we truly are...  
what matters is not simply how men regard us after we die,  
but how God regards us in this life and the next.*

It is only the Lord who knows us for who we truly are, and just as we cannot hide from His presence, neither can we fool Him by closing our eyes and pretending He's not there. For just as David prayed, "As for me, You uphold me in my integrity, and set me before Your face forever" (Ps. 41:12 NKJV) so we must earnestly seek to be men and women of integrity, not merely before the face of men but before the face of God, Coram Deo. For what matters is not simply how men regard us after we die, but how God regards us in this life and the next.

[Integrity, Coram Deo by Burk Parsons](#) Rev. Burk Parsons is editor of Tabletalk magazine and minister of congregational life at Saint Andrew's Chapel in Sanford, Florida.

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## Coram Deo

Human existence is lived out Coram Deo, "before God" or "in the presence of God." Calvin made a similar claim when he insisted that in every dimension of life human beings have "business with God" (*negotium cum Deo*).<sup>22</sup> This has nothing to do with formal belief in God, hence Luther's rejection of the classical arguments for the existence of God. For Luther "God" can never be placed in quotation marks. The great sin of scholastic theology (and also, from Luther's perspective, of neo-Kantian philosophy) was precisely the attempt to make of God an ordering concept, the First Principle, or even Necessary Being. Such a procedure placed God at a distance, made God the object of neutral inquiry, and thus exempted the human from deciding for or against God. But the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is not a God we can discuss, or argue about, a God whose existence can be decided in the cool objectivity of a graduate seminar. The living God of the Bible is the God who meets us in judgment and mercy, the God who damns us and saves us. Coram Deo means that while we are always at God's disposal, God is never at ours. "To believe in such a God," Luther said, "is to go down on your knees."<sup>23</sup> (Timothy George - Borrow [Theology of the Reformers page 58](#))

- 22 - Corpus Reformatorum - p. 100: "I am well aware that it is with God that I have to do [mihi esse negotium cum Deo]." Cf. Institutes 1.17.2.
- 23 - "Habere deum est colere deum." The translation is that of J. S. Whale, The Protestant Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), p. 17.

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The post-Enlightenment split between the study of the Bible as an academic discipline and the reading of the Bible as spiritual nurture was foreign to the reformers. For them the study of the Bible was transformative at the most basic level of the human person: coram deo.

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To live life Coram Deo is to gladly concede that God is Lord of all, acknowledging that each and every aspect of our lives are lived before Him, under His authority, and unto His glory. Not only are we constantly under His penetrating gaze, but Coram Deo implies

that we begin to see as He sees. What He sees is the church being adorned in righteousness, being made ready for the Bridegroom's arrival. To live life coram Deo is to eagerly say with the apostle John in the book of Revelation, "Come, Lord Jesus." - Robert Ingram

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John the Baptist's ministry was performed in the personal presence of the Lord Jesus Christ! But is this not in a sense true of all our Spirit enabled ministry for the Lord? Is not all we do, performed Coram Deo, before the face of God? And what a difference it makes if enabled by the Spirit, we will maintain this "Coram Deo" approach to everything, in these last days which are filled with variegated temptations and trivial trifles!

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**A CHARGE TO LIVE CORAM DEO** - 1 Timothy 6:13 I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate,

I charge you in the presence of God - A solemn responsibility to Timothy, one which is given in the presence of "two Witnesses", of Whom there are no greater (God the Father and God the Son). One wonders if Timothy felt any "pressure" as we often say today? Paul acting much like a military general, commands his young protégée with the reminder that the Commander in Chief, while not visibly present, is still able to watch his conduct.

**THOUGHT** - The Latin phrase is Coram Deo, before the face of God! What impact would it have on our thoughts, words and deeds, if we truly conducted ourselves CORAM DEO and "in fear during the time of (our) stay upon earth"? How might this truth serve to impede our willful, rebellious sins, if prior to committing them we soberly recalled the impartial judgment of our Father regarding what we were making provision to carry out (cp Ro 13:14)? How much more quickly would we be motivated to confess and repent our sins and transgressions against our Father?

*May God work a work of mercy and grace in our rebellious hearts,  
which causes us to live daily, moment by moment with a "Coram Deo" mindset,  
knowing that one day we will stand before the One Who alone is Holy, Holy, Holy. Amen.*

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**SOMEONE'S WATCHING** - Gregg Laurie [Every Day with Jesus: Forty Years of Favorite Devotions - Page 265](#)

The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. (Proverbs 15:3)

A little boy was always getting into trouble in his Sunday School class, so in exasperation, his teacher said to him, "I want you to know that God is watching you all the time. Even when I can't keep my eyes on you, God has His eyes on you. He is watching you. So you'd better straighten up."

The boy was terrified by the thought of God watching him all the time. After Sunday School, he told his parents, "The teacher said that God is watching me all the time." They could see that the thought terrified their son rather than bringing comfort to his heart. So his parents put it into proper context for him. They said, "Yes, it's true that God is always watching you. But the reason is because He loves you so much that He can't take His eyes off you."

Many times when we think of God watching us, what comes to mind are the surveillance cameras we have in public places today. I knew someone who worked in a department store and showed me how these work. They are hidden in places where we tend to never look, and they can pretty much watch everyone. People don't even realize a camera is turning around and following them wherever they go.

So when we consider the fact that God is watching us, we might think, That is terrifying. But it all depends. If we are rebelling against the Lord, then the thought of it can be more than a little frightening.

But if our hearts are right with Him, then...what an incredible comfort! He never loses track of us, never misplaces our file, never takes His loving attention from us for even one moment. God is watching us, but He loves us so much that He can't take His eyes off us. We may lose sight of God, but He never loses sight of us.

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The Old Testament teaches that living godly is intimately related to a "fear of the Lord" where fear connotes reverential awe or living **Coram Deo** (before the face of God) recognizing that all evil is a direct affront ("in His face") to His holy character. Thus we see men like Job "fearing God and turning away from evil" (Job 1:1). The effect of holy fear is a holy (godly) life.

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## **Ray Pritchard - Coram Deo**

Here is a simple question that will replace many of the Do's and Don'ts: Can I do this to God's glory? That is, if I do this, will it

enhance God's reputation in the world? Will those who watch me know that I know God from my behavior? Or will I simply have to explain this away or apologize for it later?

That brings us back to Question One of the Westminster Shorter Catechism. What is the chief end of man? To glorify God and enjoy him forever. We were made to glorify God. Nothing works right when we don't.

The Puritans used to talk about the Latin phrase *coram deo*, which means "under the face of God." It's a reminder that God is always watching everything we do. His eye is always on us, nothing escapes his notice, and that all of life must be lived for his approval.

J. S. Bach carved the words *Soli Deo Gloria* on his organ at Leipzig to remind him that all his music be composed and performed for the glory of God. That's why the initials SDG appear at the end of his compositions—To God Alone Be the Glory! That's what I mean by intentional God-centered living.

All I am saying may be summed up this way. People watch what we do and what we say and draw huge conclusions from the tiniest personal decisions. Living in the light of God's glory means to live so that others will draw the right conclusions as they watch us.

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**Rob Morgan** - Sometimes it's good to learn a new word or a new phrase, so let me give you one. It's the Latin phrase *Coram Deo*. The word *Coram* is Latin for before. And *Deo* means God. *Coram Deo* is a phrase that means to live before God, to live in His presence, to live under His authority, to recognize that wherever we are, He is there—and so we're on sacred ground. Jesus was living *Coram Deo* in the Upper Room. Paul was living *Coram Deo* in the prison cell. In the darkness of the night when everyone abandoned Jesus, the Father was there. In the intimidation of the imperial court when everyone abandoned Paul, the Lord was present. The true Christian life—true spirituality—is found in living *Coram Deo*, in the constant presence of the Lord.

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### The Painted Eye

"The eyes of the LORD are in every place beholding the evil and the good."—Prov. 15:3

Some years ago there lived in an old-fashioned square on the "south side" of Edinburgh, a widow lady, who, in order to eke out her slender means of subsistence, let part of her house to lodgers. Her husband, who had been a portrait-painter of some note, had but lately died, and left her a nicely-furnished house, though but little means to support it.

A few sketches of his art still remained, and among others which she highly valued was a beautifully-painted eye. At the period in which the painter lived, it was not an uncommon thing among a few eccentric persons to have one of their eyes copied, and presented to a friend as a token of affection.

The painting in question was a remarkable production; the eye being so exquisitely painted, that to an imaginative beholder it seemed to reflect his own feelings, and to respond to them in sorrow or in joy; to flash with anger, or beam with tenderness.

In course of time it happened that a young man, sadly given to evil courses, became the tenant of the widow's parlour where hung the painted eye. A year or two previously he had left his distant home to attend the university, where he was now studying for the medical profession. The parting counsel of his father had been, to remember at all times, and under all circumstances, that the eye of God was upon him. He promised, and at first sincerely intended to let this thought regulate his conduct; but trusting to his own strength, and meeting with companions whose love of pleasure and sinful ways too well suited the natural corruption of his unrenewed heart, he plunged recklessly into excess of riot, and almost succeeded in banishing from his mind the recollection that there was a God above, to whom all his ways were known. Judge, then, of his discomfiture and annoyance to see an eye gazing at him from the wall of his new chamber! He tried, but in vain, to hide from its view by sitting with his back towards that part of the room. But the consciousness that it was there, that it was fixed upon him, so disturbed his mind that he could not rest. Remorse and terror seized upon him, and with a desperate effort he rushed to the picture and turned its face to the wall!

The good widow, little surmising that a picture she so highly valued could be in any way distasteful to her lodger, duly turned it round again; and much she wondered when the curious accident occurred again and again; for the unfortunate youth tried in vain to bear the sight of the eye, which now seemed to flash with anger, or again, to gaze upon him with tender reproach. He could not bear it. But he hardened his heart, and finally quitted his lodging.

How is it with thee? Does the remembrance that God's eye is ever upon thee rejoice thy heart and influence thy conduct in everything? Art thou working as under the eye of thy Master, who seeth in secret, and will reward thee openly?

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**R C Sproul** - 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. [Full article](#), see here in book [In the Presence of God: Devotional Readings on the ... - Page xiv](#) or borrow [In the Presence of God](#) to see all 62 uses of "Coram Deo" in Dr Sproul's book. Click the links in the left panel and that allows you to view 2 pages).

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## Coram Deo

You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar (Psalm 139:2).

In our study of James 2, we have been looking at faith and works. Before beginning chapter 3, we will look more deeply at living to please God with studies taken from the Pleasing God lecture series.

The Protestant Reformers used the Latin phrase *Coram Deo* to describe what they regarded as the fundamental attitude a believer should have regarding God. *Coram Deo* means "before God" or "before the face of God." Living *Coram Deo* means that we do not segment our lives, giving some time to God and some to our business or schooling while keeping other parts to ourselves. Rather, the idea is to live all of our lives consciously in the presence of God, under the authority of God, and for the honor and glory of God. That is what the Christian life is all about.

This sounds idealistic. Nobody lives his life constantly aware of God's eye. So practically speaking, what does it mean to live *coram Deo*? It means to press through the hard times and continue on, living for God through Christ. It is like persevering in piano lessons or any other skill that takes years of practice. Only after we have practiced for a while, doing things that are not interesting at all, do we get to the point where we can play a piece of music well. Each new piece requires hours and weeks of drudgery work before the beauty comes. Similarly, living the Christian life involves dogged perseverance if we are going to grow to please God.

*If God made His presence felt with us all the time, living Coram Deo would not be a challenge. But as it is, we must live by faith.*

If God made His presence felt with us all the time, living Coram Deo would not be a challenge. But as it is, we must live by faith. It is like the life of Robin Hood. King Richard the Lion-Hearted is away on a spiritual quest. The land has fallen under the domain of the evil Prince John. Robin Hood, however, remains loyal to the true king. He keeps in mind that Richard is king. He keeps alive the memory of Richard among the people. He obeys Richard's laws, protecting the weak from the wicked. Finally, King Richard returns, and Robin Hood's perseverance is rewarded.

There is one major difference, however. King Richard really was away, but Jesus is with us always. We don't usually sense His presence, but He is here.

**CORAM DEO** One of the primary ways to increase our awareness of God's presence is through prayer. A consistent prayer life is one of the most difficult skills a Christian is called to acquire. If you don't do so already, renew your effort to practice prayer every day. Use the Psalms as your guide. Seek to become a prayer virtuoso.

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#### **Puritan Thomas Brooks -The Golden Key to Open Hidden Treasures" Joseph saw God in the room!**

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." Proverbs 15:3

The harboring of any known sin, either in heart or life, is a high contempt of the all-seeing eye of God—of the omnipresence of God.

It is well known what Ahasuerus, that great monarch, said concerning Haman, when he found him cast upon the queen's couch on which she sat: "What!" says he, "Will he even assault the queen right here in the palace, before my very eyes!" What! will he dare to commit such a villainy—as I stand and look on?

O sirs! to do wickedly in the sight of God, is a thing which He looks upon as the greatest affront and indignity that can possibly be done unto Him. "What!" says He, "Will you be drunk before Me, and swear and blaspheme before Me, and be wanton and immoral before Me, and break My laws before My eyes!"

This, then, is the killing aggravation of all sin—that is done before the face of God—in the presence of God! The consideration of God's omnipresence—that He stands and looks on, should be as a bar, to stop the proceedings of all wicked intentions; and a great dissuasive from sin.

It was an excellent saying of Ambrose, "If you cannot hide yourself from the sun, which is God's minister of light—how impossible will it be to hide yourself from Him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun!"

There is no drawing of a curtain between God and you. When you are in secret—consider that God is present.

God is all eye. He sees . . . all things, in all places, at all times.

The godly are dissuaded from wickedness, upon the consideration of God's eye and omniscience. Joseph saw God in the room—and therefore dared not yield to lust. But Potiphar's wife saw none but Joseph—and so was impudently alluring and tempting him to sin.

I have read of two godly men, who took contrary courses with two harlots—whom they desired to reclaim from their wicked course of life.

One of the men told one of the women, that he was desirous to enjoy her company in secret. After she had brought him into a private room, and locked the door, he told her, "All your bars and bolts cannot keep God out!"

The other godly man asked the other harlot to be unchaste with him openly in the streets—which she rejected as an insane request. He then told her, "It was better to do it before the eyes of a crowd—than before the eyes of the all-seeing God!"

Oh, why shall not the presence of that God who hates sin, and who is resolved to punish it with hell-flames, make us ashamed or afraid to sin, and dare Him to His face! Let your eye be ever on Him—whose eye is always on you!