

Case Study

Fulfilling the Great Commission Using Videoconferencing Technology to Conduct Asynchronous e-Learning Course

Middlesex Institute of Theology & Technology

Next Level Living / The Pursuit of Excellence in Your Christian Walk



Biblical Life College and Seminary offers an excellence seminar entitled **Next Level Living**. This free seminar is designed to aid students in achieving new heights in God in all areas of life. There is a higher level of excellence and blessing waiting for you!

Based on this concept, I employed an asynchronous approach to develop a course that could be taken individually, following a syllabus that outlined assignments and due dates for homework. The requirements included seven book reports (student's choice), viewing of video lessons including homework assignments and a final exam essay, all to be returned by email.

The feedback was excellent. MITT offers classes three times a week. Some students have matriculated seven to ten years. This is wonderful, however it means that some semesters, they have taken all the courses offered for that semester or they are unable to attend a particular class on a particular night. Thus, technology to the rescue and Next Level Living / The Pursuit of Excellence in Your Christian Walk was developed. This class is only offered to mature students who have proven their commitment to Christian Education and who can handle computer "glitches". The results were more than satisfactory.

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<p>Next Level Living / The Pursuit of Excellence in Your Christian Walk</p>	<p>Module: Coram Deo Homework</p>	<p>Course No. NLL 200 Due:</p>
<p>Video: In the Presence of God by R. C. Sproul</p>		

Coram Deo is a Latin phrase translated "in the presence of God". It summarizes the idea of Christians living in the presence of, under the authority of, and to the honor and glory of God.

I. Affirming Divine Sovereignty

Our God remains incomprehensible and retains His simplicity. He tells us in His Word that He is not a God of confusion but of order. He is not at war with Himself. He was, is, and evermore will be a law unto Himself. He is altogether good, altogether holy, and altogether sovereign. This we must affirm to maintain a biblical concept of divine sovereignty. Yet we must always balance this understanding with a clear understanding that God always exercises both His

_____ and _____ according to His

_____..

In this we can rest, knowing that He wishes for, and has the power to bring about, all good things for us His children.

Coram Deo: Reaffirm your _____ in the Sovereignty of God, Who is working all things together for _____.

II. Understanding Free Will

Martin Luther (Nov 10, 1483 - Feb 18, 1546) was a German theologian, an Augustinian monk, and an ecclesiastical reformer whose teachings inspired the Reformation and deeply influenced the doctrines and culture of the Lutheran and Protestant traditions.

Luther's contributions to Western civilization went beyond the life of the Christian Church. Luther's translations of the Bible helped to develop a standard version of the German language and added several principles to the art of translation. Luther's hymns inspired the development of congregational singing in Christianity. His marriage on June 13, 1525, to Katharina von Bora began a movement of clerical marriage within many Christian traditions.

Martin Luther struggled greatly with the relationship of God's sovereignty and human free will and sin, especially with the Old Testament passages where we read that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 4:21).

One might ask "Doesn't this suggest that God not only works through the desires and actions of humans but He actually forces _____ upon people?"

***Coram Deo*: Ask God to keep your heart soft and pliable to His divine will and purposes.**

III. Defining God's Will - Few concepts in theology generate more confusion than the will of God. The Bible uses the expression "will of God" in various ways. We encounter two different Greek words in the New Testament (boule and thelema), both of which are capable of several nuances.

- They encompass such ideas as the _____ of God,
- the _____ of God,
- the _____ of God,
- the _____ of God, as well as other nuances.

Psalm 40:8; NIV *I desire to do your will, my God; Your law is within my heart.*"

Psalm 143:10; NIV *Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God; may Your good Spirit lead me on level ground.*

Matthew 6:10; NIV *Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

IV. Theologians give us at least three different renderings of "The Will of God":

a. Comprehending the Decretive Will of God -

aka the sovereign will of God by which He brings to pass whatever He pleases by His divine degree. Example - creation. "Let there be light." The decretive will of God can have no other effect, no other consequence than what God sovereignly commands.

b. Examining the Perceptive Will of God

relates to the revealed commandments of God's_____. This decree does not carry with it the immediate necessity of consequence. It is possible for us to refuse to obey this command. We may have the power to disobey the precept, however, we do not have the power to disobey it

_____. Nor can we annul it by our disregard. His Law remains intact whether we obey it or disobey it.

c. Exposing that which the world calls the Permissive Will of God

To say that God "allows" or "permits" evil does not mean that He grants

_____ to it. God never permits sin in the sense that He

puts His _____ of it in His creatures.

Divine permission is that God simply lets it happen. That is, He does not directly intervene to prevent its happening. Some theologies view this drama as if God were impotent to do anything about human sin. This view makes man sovereign, not God. This view says that God permits what He cannot help, that He does not have sovereign power over it. This is unvarnished _____.

Intellectually, a disciple can search the scriptures to rightly divide the various forms of God's will. But it is in a **Coram Deo** frame of reference, a tangible visitation of the Spirit of God that we gain insight into the heart of God - a place that surpasses our ability to express that experience.

IV. Pastor Jack Hayford shares an occasion when he experienced the tangible presence of God. When the face of God was up close and personal.

It happened on the first Saturday in 1971, on a chilly but crystal clear southern California day. I had just finished preparing for the Sunday morning service and, with Bible and notes in hand, I was standing in the church prayer chapel. I was not there to pray. My mission was much more mundane. I just wanted to adjust the temperature on the thermostat.

Utterly unaware that I was about to experience one of the most miraculous moments of my life, I finished my business with the thermostat and turned to head for the door. As I did, what met my eyes was a sight I was in no way prepared to see. It was something I didn't talk about for several years, and even now only tell for a very specific purpose.

The room was filled with a visible, silver mist. I stared in amazement, knowing what it appeared to be. I'd read in the Bible about the cloud-like manifestation of the Glory of the Lord. I'd heard people talk about the Shekinah glow of His presence. But I'd never expected to see it myself. The very thought seemed so pretentious I was afraid to let it settle in my mind. Stepping out of the chapel into another room, I rubbed my eyes. Then I went back in, only to find the mist was still there. As I gazed at it once again in astonishment, I heard the Lord speak clearly inside me. "It is what you think it is," He said. "I have given My Glory to dwell in this place."

Sometimes people ask me what I did at that moment. "Did you pray?" they say. "Did you fall down on your face and cry hallelujah, or carve something in the altar?" No, as unspiritual as it may sound, I didn't. I simply watched, thanking the Lord again and again, as the mist gradually dissipated. When I couldn't see it anymore I walked out the door and went home.

The next morning in church, although nothing unusual took place, it became clear we had passed a sacred spiritual milestone. Instead of the usual 100 people, 170 showed up for the service. From then on, year after year, they kept coming . . . first by the hundreds, then by the thousands. The Church began growing and never stopped.

Thankful as I am to be a part of all this, however, I am keenly aware that none of it is due to any particular accomplishment of my own. I am not special or remarkable in any way. I'm simply a case study of God at work in someone's life. I'm just an example of what can happen when you're in the middle of a place where God's Glory comes to dwell.

This is the reason I tell my story: Because God never intended it to be unique. The gift of His Glory is not reserved exclusively for certain people and certain regions. According to Isaiah 4:5, ". . . *the LORD will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense.*"

The Lord desires for His Glory to be upon every place where God's people dwell. He wants His Glory to be in your home and in your car as you drive to work. He wants it to envelope you, much like the fire of the Holy Spirit enveloped the early disciples on Pentecost, and abide on you always, every day of your life.

How, exactly, do we make room for God's Glory?

- By walking in _____ to the Lord and surrendering to His will;

- by _____ Him daily,
- _____ to His voice, and
- _____ on His Word.

We make room for God's Glory in our lives by kneeling or raising our hands to Him each morning when we rise; singing His praises, acknowledging our devotion, and saying, "Lord I need You today." And we do such things, not as a utilitarian duty but with reverence, from our heart, we experience His presence. We are changed into His likeness, from one degree of glory to another.

So I want to encourage you, if you aren't doing this already, invest time every day in worshipping and fellowshiping with the Lord. I realize that's not always easy to do, especially in our busy, noisy culture, but it's crucial because you need His Glory on your life to fulfill your calling as a believer. You need to be refreshed and strengthened by God's presence every day because your call is just as life-long as mine, and just as precious to God.

God is on the move today just as He was on that unforgettable day in 1971. For all of us in God's kingdom these are milestone times. I believe in eternity to come we will look back at them, marveling, and say, "Look what the Lord has done!"

*With gratitude and love, **Pastor Jack Hayford** and Your Friends at [Jack Hayford Ministries](#).*

Conclusion: Coram Deo - in the Presence of God, in the face of God.

Let us sincerely desire the tangible presence of God in our Christian Walk. Up close and personal.