Discussion Guide
Coram Deo — Part 1
LEADER GUIDE

In this series, we're exploring what it means to live Coram Deo—before the face of God. Through Scripture, we'll see how faith isn't meant to be compartmentalized but lived out in every moment, in God's presence, under His authority, and for His glory. Whether in ordinary routines or significant decisions, Coram Deo invites us to become more aware of God's nearness and align our lives with His purposes. As we learn to live fully before Him, we'll discover deeper obedience, greater freedom, and a life shaped by His grace.

NEED A RESOURCE, HAVE A QUESTION, OR WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION?
Let us know how we can help! Contact your groups director or discipleship@rockbridge.cc

"O my God, since thou art with me, and I must now, in obedience to thy commands, apply my mind to these outward things, I beseech thee to grant me the grace to continue in thy presence... "
[Brother Lawrence, "The Practice of the Presence of God"]

LEADER RESOURCES || Leader Note *We do our best to equip, empower, and encourage you to shepherd your group well. Access a resource by clicking on the underlined title and share them with your group!*

- **Passage Summary**
  - What happens when the Lord's presence is prevailing? Psalm 27 illustrates that living conscious of God's presence is to be our top priority, to shape our perspective, and to be our singular passion and pursuit. However, God's presence has competition: other things can predominate us. But when God's presence prevails in our hearts, we are living our best life. God is our environment, our home, and our reward.

- **The Practice of the Presence of God**
  - This short audiobook is the story of a monk whose life work was to spend all his time in the presence of God.

ENGAGE & CONNECT || Leader Note *The goal for the icebreaker is to prepare your group for the conversation ahead by connecting with one another's hearts and building joy together.*

Who do you know who changes the entire atmosphere of a room when they arrive?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER || Leader Note *Begin your time together thanking God for his presence and praying His word back to Him. Ask a few people to pray, taking a posture of humility and dependence!*

Lord, please draw near to us. We know that You're always here, but we want more of You than ever before.

MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE || Leader Note *Help your group memorize this verse together by having each person read it aloud, then see if someone is willing to try to quote it from memory. The goal is to enjoy hiding God's word in our hearts together.*

"You have said, 'Seek my face.' My heart says to you, 'Your face, Lord, do I seek.'"
[Psalm 27:8]

BIG IDEA || Leader Note *Read this aloud so your group knows the theme of today's reading and discussion.*

Presence is the point.

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION || Leader Note *Have people read aloud the passage as instructed. Your role is to FACILITATE, so keep your group moving along, encourage people to share, and look for opportunities to point out the grace and glory of God! Here are two reminders: 1) Every question does not have to be answered … go where the Spirit leads! 2) Answers do not have to be read aloud … they're for guidance!*

1. In the sermon, Matt challenged us to "spend a day with God." How are you thinking about or planning your intentional day with God? What is challenging you about it? Exciting you about it?

Have someone read aloud Psalm 27. We will be using the ESV as our primary version, but consider having someone else read it aloud again, possibly in a different translation to gain another perspective (i.e. CEB, the Message, Amplified).

2. What (or who) do you fear? *We have a lot of fears. Talking about them in general is easier than facing them. Write down what people in your group share as their fears, and as you pray for each person this week, ask God to cast their fear out with His perfect love. When God is our light and salvation, the stronghold of our life, fear cannot keep a grip on our minds.*

3. What are some of the things that David wants to do in God's presence in verse 4? *He lists several things: living with/dwelling, gazing on the Lord's beauty, and inquiring/asking questions.*

4. What would you like to do in God's presence? *We may have questions, may want to just rest and be restored/refilled. We may want to hear guidance or draw closer to the Lord. But we don't often think through our desire for God. It is good to want Him.*

5. How would someone seek God's face? *There will be the "usual suspects" of things we've been trained to respond with: singing, prayer, Bible reading. Keep after more answers than that. Asking difficult questions, waiting on the Lord, pouring our hearts out to Him, sneaking away to a quiet place to spend time with Him, coming without an agenda to just sit with Him, repenting of sin, directing our shower thoughts to Him in prayer… there are so many ways to seek the Lord's face.*

6. David mentions an interesting worry in verse 9: "Cast me not off; forsake me not," and pairs it with an experience of having been forsaken in his past. What have you experienced that you're afraid will happen again with God? *Our brains learn well what to expect from our past, but part of being transformed by the renewing of our minds is letting God's word teach us to expect something different. This will depend upon the person, and it may be heavy. If something is monopolizing the time, it may be useful to ask, "and how are you afraid of that happening again with God?" to keep it on track. Ask the Lord to discern how to honor people's stories and their time well–it's sometimes important to hear someone out, and the Lord can give you wisdom.*

7. David doesn't look forward to heaven in this particular passage, but to seeing God's goodness in the land of the living (verse 13). What goodness from the Lord are you waiting for that you hope to see in this life? *It's amazing watching what sorts of hopes change over time. Some may have hopes that adult children will return to Christ, or that young children will grow to have faith. The goodness of the Lord takes the form of so many blessings, and you can ask the Lord with each person as they share that He will show them His goodness here. Even if they're still preoccupied with lesser good things, the goodness of God is simply more of* ***who He is****.*

8. Has this past year been more about learning new things, unlearning old things, or overcoming something? What things were they? *This is another space to stop and pray after hearing what people share and ask the Lord to grow each person in the group in the new year–be that through unlearning old things, learning new things, overcoming things, or a combination of all three.*

STEP OF OBEDIENCE || Leader Note *This is an opportunity for people to put into practice what the Spirit is inviting them to do and live in obedience to God for the sake of love! You can encourage your group to be accountable to one another and use these to follow up with one another throughout the week.*

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

As you consider your next step, reflect on: 1) What do you need to do to create a space where you can just be with God? 2) How can we seek the face of God individually and as a group?

Give your group a few moments to reflect on their answers to the questions above. Then have your group answer the question aloud. Feel free to separate into smaller groups of 2 or 3 for this question, so each person has others praying with them for the needs they're taking before the throne. The possible next steps of faith below are not for discussion, but simply a resource for your group members.

Step of Faith Ideas

1. Commit to seeking God as a way of life, being present with Him like never before.
2. As you read His word this week, ask Him questions about what seems odd or difficult in it.

PRAYER FOCUS || Leader Note *Be intentional about saving at least 5 minutes to pray together. Try the prayer activity below or pray for one another's personal requests!*

All my Days with God

It is better to spend one day in His courts than a thousand elsewhere.

- Entrust your needs to God's care
- Spend time with Him without an agenda
- Give Him what comes to mind throughout the day through constant prayer
- Close your time by reading this prayer together:
    - *"Lord, let us draw near to You as You have drawn near to us. Strengthen us and fill our hearts with courage so that we can endure the wait. Please come and dwell within us as we desire You more than we ever have before. Amen."*