



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 18, 2017

R.C. Sproul Goes to His Eternal Reward

Robert Charles “R.C.” Sproul left his earthly existence [around 3:00 p.m. Thursday afternoon](#) in a hospital in Altamonte Springs, Florida, surrounded by his wife, Vespa, and members of his family.

When he suffered a stroke in 2015, someone asked him what he wanted to see engraved on his tombstone. His cheerful response: “I told you I was sick!”

He never fully recovered from that stroke, and in early December a combination of the flu and COPD (from which he suffered for years) sent him back to the hospital. Despite the medical efforts to restore his breathing, he passed into eternity after 12 days in the hospital, at the age of 78.



Sproul came to faith in Christ in an experience that he said was probably unique in all of human history. As a football player at Westminster College, he was having dinner with the captain of the team:

[The captain] quoted Ecclesiastes 11:3: “Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there will it lie.” [I] just feel certain I’m the only person in church history that was converted by that verse. God just took that verse and struck my soul with it.

I saw myself as a log that was rotting in the woods. And I was going nowhere. When I left that guy’s table I went up to my room. And into my room by myself, in the dark, I got on my knees and cried out to God to forgive me.

As Sproul’s faith deepened and his influence expanded, he was led to start Ligonier Ministries in Pennsylvania’s Ligonier Valley just outside Pittsburgh in 1971. He wrote, studied, preached, taught, held conferences, and in general did everything he could to — in the words of the ministry itself — “equip Christians to articulate what they believe, why they believe it, how to live it, and how to share it.” As Chris Larson, one of R.C.’s students and now president and CEO of Ligonier Ministries, expressed it: “Through his teaching ministry, many of us learned that God is bigger than we knew, our sin is more deeply rooted than we imagined, and the grace of God in Jesus Christ is overwhelming.”

Although taking himself in a light-hearted manner, R.C. took the message of the Gospel very seriously indeed: “Whatever else we do with this Gospel, we must never, never, ever, ever, ever mess with it.” A Calvinist, Sproul was a critic of the Roman Catholic Church and its theology, and sharply criticized the 1994 attempt to reconcile the differences between Protestants and Catholics in “Evangelicals and Catholics Together.” Sproul held that essential differences made reconciliation impossible.

An indefatigable laborer for the Gospel, Sproul and his ministry poured out a veritable river of educational materials, including more than 500 teaching programs on apologetics, philosophy, ethics, Christian theology, and discipleship available in both video and audio formats. His ministry offers more than 500 books authored by more than 100 of Sproul’s students, including 100 written by Sproul



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himself. His radio program, *Renewing Your Mind*, reaches potentially 100 million people, while more than 200,000 people receive his monthly *Tabletalk* magazine. Ligonier's website receives over 500,000 unique visitors every month, with close to four million page views. Its Christian Internet radio program is broadcast to believers in more than 175 countries.

With his departure from this life, not only is Sproul now enjoying his heavenly reward, but the angels there are celebrating his arrival. In Sproul's last tweet dated December 1, he wrote, "When God writes our names in the 'Lamb's Book of Life,' he doesn't do it with an eraser handy. He does it for eternity."

Photo of R.C. Sproul by [James Thompson](#)

An Ivy League graduate and former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at [LightFromTheRight.com](#), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelmann@thenewamerican.com.



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