

# REFLECTIONS

C3Women—Christ-Centered, Connected, Called

September 2019

- IN THIS ISSUE -

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Introducing the C3W 2019-2020 Theme

*Following Jesus Far from Home:  
Living Counter-Culturally as Christian Women*

Following Jesus Far from Home  
A Reflection by Christy Gregory



C3W Fall Gathering

Knox Presbyterian Church  
Friday, September 27  
7:00-10:00pm

Following Jesus Far from Home  
Scripture Cards to Download and a Memory Challenge



Resources: Book Reviews & Podcasts

Ladies Night Out  
October 10

P.F. CHANG'S



## Cozy Gatherings - Coming in November



**STEADFAST**  
The Gospel Coalition  
Women's Conference  
Indianapolis, June 11-13



## C3Women's Ministry Calendar, 2019-2020

C3W 2019-2020 Theme

### **FOLLOWING JESUS FAR FROM HOME:** *Living Counter-Culturally as Christian Women*

We live in a world today that has shifted from one that in the not too distant past embraced Christianity as a societal good, to a world in which our faith is often viewed at best as an anachronism or worse as dangerous and bigoted. Because we are citizens of a Kingdom not of this world, we are by definition strangers and aliens living as exiles as we follow Jesus, our true Redeemer King, who will one day bring us home into the fullness of His Kingdom. But until that day we are sojourners far from home following King Jesus with a destiny, a purpose, affections, allegiances, and hopes that are shaped by the Cross, not by the world.

With this context as our backdrop, we want to spend the next year considering what it means to be Christian women living counter-culturally for God's glory and the sake of the world. In Gatherings large and small we'll take up the challenge to embrace our calling as women who are Christ-centered, Connected, and Called—women whose very identity, relationships, and purpose are shaped by the Cross. Join us on this journey as we seek to encourage each other using our road map, the Scriptures, to be “sober-minded, setting our hope fully on the grace that will be brought to us at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:13) as we follow Jesus far from home.



*1 Peter 2:11-12*

*Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.*

## Following Jesus Far from Home

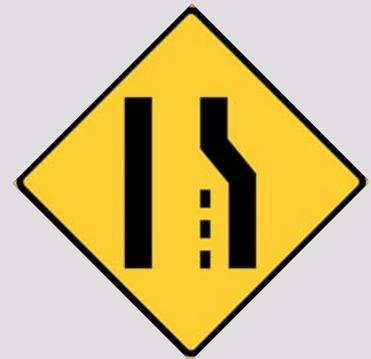
*A Reflection by Christy Gregory*



Anyone who has ever moved knows that it takes a long time to feel at home. Even when all of the boxes are unpacked (or at least you have some idea what is in them that you don't currently need) and you don't get lost every time you leave your house and you know at least 5 people's names, you still can't quite feel like yourself because you aren't really rooted yet. No one really knows you and that makes it hard to really know

yourself in this strange new place where everything is a first impression and you have the same initial conversations everywhere you go.

Even if you haven't moved, you know that this feeling of "not at homeness" can creep up on us at any time. I feel it when I am mad at the weeds for growing overnight and I think, "This is not the way it is supposed to be!", or I get poison ivy and think "Nature should not be my enemy," or in slightly bigger ways, when (just as a generic example) there is an arrow telling you that the lane is ending and so many people try to pass and squeeze in that you want to do something naughty. And I am constantly aware that I am not the way I am supposed to be. I am not supposed to be mad at my kids when we are running late (when it is probably my fault), or frustrated because something happens that I don't like and can't control, or angry and unwilling to forgive because that would take more emotional energy and maturity than I currently have. My actions and desires should match what I want to feel and do but they often don't, and I am fully aware that I am not at home. Not in this world, not with people, not with myself. Not in the truest sense of the word where things are as they should be. I can feel that things are broken and that I am in exile, and I am guessing that you often can too.

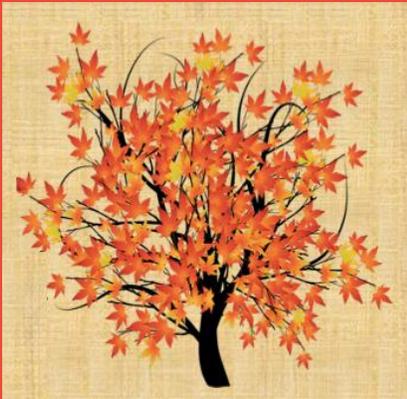


***"I am fully aware that I am not at home. Not in this world, not with people, not with myself."***

And I find that my first reaction to this feeling of exile is not very helpful. To give you a picture of how ridiculous my instincts can be, I am the person that all people laugh at on airplanes. If you ever fly with me, you are free to laugh and it won't hurt my feelings. No matter how many times I have flown, I HATE turbulence. I will grip the armrests and close my eyes and hold on as if that is going to do anything to keep the plane steady. And I have this same tendency when I am experiencing the feelings of

exile. I want to grip on and control and make circumstances submit to what I want through planning or research or hard work, etc. But, as you can guess, this doesn't work very well.

## REFLECTION continued below



### C3W Fall Gathering September 27, 7:00-10:00pm Knox Presbyterian Church

Join us for an evening of worship, fellowship, and a coffehouse with fall treats as we kick off our C3W ministry year. Deb Mantel will lead us in a rich time of praise and worship. Tammy Ause will reflect on our theme, *Following Jesus Far from Home: Living Counter-Culturally as Christian Women*.

### Fall Gathering Sign-up

Signing up is not required, but it helps us plan so that we can be sure to offer you and your guests abundant hospitality.



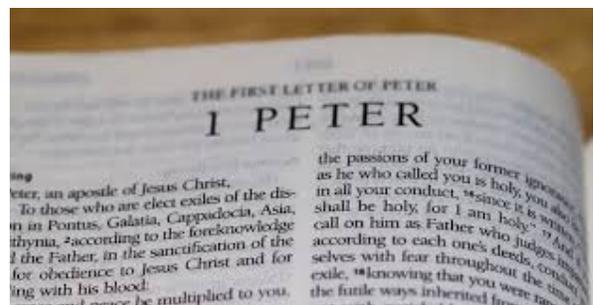
## Scripture Cards

As we follow Jesus far from home, Scripture is the road map we need to direct our path and give us courage and hope to live counter-culturally for God's glory and the sake of the world. To that end, you will find a Scripture card in each issue of our Reflections newsletter that you can download and print. Put these lovely cards in your purse, on a kitchen cabinet, in your car, on your desk at

work...to encourage you on this journey. [Download your copy here.](#) (Also available pre-printed on the C3W table in the atrium on Sunday mornings.)

## 1 Peter Memory Challenge

God's commands are always intended for our good, so His command to hide His Word in our hearts is a means of blessing. With that in mind, you're invited to join your C3W sisters to commit the letter of 1 Peter to memory this year! It's full of rich and often familiar passages that will challenge, encourage and comfort you as you seek to follow Jesus far from home. Peter's letter to the first century Christian exiles will ring true today as we experience the alienation of being citizens of Jesus' Kingdom in a world that increasingly dismisses that reality. This may seem a daunting challenge but let's give it



a try and see how far we get. We'll check in with each other over the next few months to share encouragement, see how the Lord is blessing us and celebrate however far we've gotten with a dinner together in May. Happy memorizing! [Click here to let others know you've taken up the challenge.](#)

## Resources

### Faithfully Following Jesus Far from Home

by Jennifer Donovan



“Who is the most influential woman in your church?” That tagline on a Gospel Coalition article caught my eye. Thinking, “the pastor’s wife,” I opened the article to check my answer. Wrong! [According to Jen Oshman](#), it’s Rachel Hollis, author of two of books that come in today at numbers 14 and 15 on the Amazon non-fiction “Most Read Books of the Week” list. Written primarily for a Christian audience, her books are very engaging with personal stories of success. Yet [in her review](#), Ms. Oshman takes issue with much of the content of

Hollis' latest book, *Girl, Stop Apologizing*, because it lacks a firm scriptural basis and instead draws on some misleading tenets of [prosperity gospel theology](#). I was intrigued and began asking some women at Knox if they had read her books. At least one had and her opinion coincided with the reviewer’s. I also found that at least one of Hollis' books has been available through the Knox library and has a waitlist to check it out! That tagline was proving true. Perhaps you’ve read either *Girl, Wash Your Face* or *Girl, Stop Apologizing* and have found some real encouragement while discarding the chaff. And, that’s great. ([You can read a charitable and fair review of her first book, \*Girl, Wash Your Face\*, here.](#))

But my biggest take away from this was to begin to wonder how our C3Women’s Ministry might find an avenue for recommending excellent books, podcasts, and articles - resources that will encourage us to grow in Christ-likeness and holiness. We want to make the most spiritually beneficial use of the scant time that we have for reading and listening in the midst of our busy schedules! So, our C3W Core Team took up the challenge to ponder this and out of that process was birthed our Reflections newsletter that you’re reading today. We hope to offer a few excellent resources in each issue that will help us faithfully follow Jesus far from home this year in our many roles and life stages!

Here are three suggestions for this month:

#### [\*\*\*How to Raise an Alien Child\*\*\*](#)

by Jen Wilkin

This podcast is one of the best talks I’ve ever heard on parenting! Author, speaker, and Bible teacher Jen Wilkin helps us set our sights on what is truly important and of eternal significance for our children - helping them grow into faithful Christian adults. She recognizes that as “aliens and strangers” in this world, Christian parents will

have different priorities and practices which are often very counter-cultural to our neighbors, friends, and even at times our families. But by making parenting choices that help our children fix their eyes on Jesus rather than the offerings of the world, we can give them a strong foundation to undergird that journey of faithfulness.



### *When Choosing a Career, Don't Just Follow Your Passion*

by Bethany Jenkins

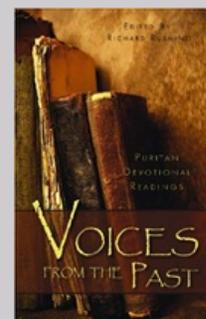
Bethany Jenkins is Vice President of Forums at The Veritas Forum, a contributor at The Gospel Coalition, and Senior Fellow at The King's College. In this podcast she invites us to think more broadly than the "passion first" model as we seek a career path. Instead, she encourages us to adopt a "disciple's mindset" that includes loving people, pursuing

faithfulness with a bias toward action. She grounds her talk in the Upper Room discourse that Jesus has with His disciples as He washes their feet.

### *Voices from the Past - Puritan Devotional Readings*

Edited by Richard Rushing

The Puritans knew what it meant to be aliens and strangers. Desiring the purification of the English church, they became targets of abuse, disenfranchisement, and even death. Out of this crucible came rich, thoughtful, Christ-centered reflections and writings. Richard Rushing has collected excerpts from many of these great writers into a year long devotional book. As we live in a world that increasingly dismisses our faith and seeks to marginalize its practice, we can resonate with both the acknowledgement of the struggle and the sure hope of victory secured by the life and death of Jesus. These devotional readings encourage us again and again to lift our eyes to our "inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for us" (1 Peter 1:4) so that we will not grow weary on the journey!



# P.F. CHANG'S®

C3W Autumn Ladies Night Out  
720 Briarwood Circle  
Thursday, October 10, 6:30pm

Enjoy an evening of great food (allergy friendly) and fellowship at P.F. Chang's getting to know your Knox sisters. Feel free to bring a friend! We'll order and pay individually. *Please RSVP by October 8 to reserve your spot.*

[Sign up for Ladies Night Out at P.F.Chang's](#)

## Cozy Gatherings - Coming in November

Cozy Gatherings are small gatherings of 6-8 women designed to deepen our relationship with Jesus, develop flourishing friendships, and explore God's calling on our lives. These intimate, "in home," one-time events—morning or afternoon, coffee/tea, lunch, dinner, or dessert—invite women to share food and conversation in a warm and welcoming environment where we can engage in honest dialogue around our theme, "Following Jesus Far from Home."



You'll hear more about Cozy Gatherings in October and have the opportunity to sign up for one. If you would like to host or co-host a Cozy Gathering, please sign up below.

[Sign up here if you would like to host or co-host a Cozy Gathering in November.](#)



The Gospel Coalition  
Women's Conference 2020  
June 11-13 in Indianapolis  
*STEADFAST*  
*The Book of James*

TGCW conference registration is now open, and Knox has a group discount code. "Opening Promo" registration (\$144 with Knox discount code) is available through November 1. Knox discount code: **KNOXPRESBY**

To register, choose "Opening Promo" registration. Enter the discount code at the bottom of that page. Then click "Continue" to complete your registration.

After you register, if you would like to arrange to carpool and/or share lodging, sign up here! C3W will be in touch to help facilitate those connections.

## C3Women's Ministry Calendar 2019-2020

2019

2020

*January 30*—Ladies Night Out

*February 19*—Winter Ladies Night Out  
*T2 Groups begin in February*

*March 6-7* - Mini-Retreat at Knox



**September 27 - C3W Fall Gathering**  
Speaker:  
Tammy Ause

*Mini-Gatherings begin in March*

**April 18 - Spring Brunch**  
Speaker: Mary Willson

**May 14 - Spring Ladies Night Out**



**October 10 - Autumn Ladies Night Out, PF Chang's**

**June 11-13 - The Gospel Coalition Women's Conference, in Indianapolis**

**November 4-23 - Cozy Gatherings**

**December 6 - Advent Gathering**  
Speaker: Connally Gilliam

### ***Following Jesus Far from Home, A Reflection (cont'd)***

I think one of the things that God has been teaching me in this past year is that my feelings of exile are actually good. Right now this earth isn't my home and I can't expect it to feel like home. When I feel out of place with my environment or myself, I can thank God for that and pray "Come Lord Jesus" as I long for a better eternal home. I can accept things (on a good day) that are not as they should be because I know that things in this world are broken—and also know that I can rest because one day they won't be. One day I won't be broken either. I am grateful to be reminded that this world and body aren't my home because then I can look forward to the home to come and can live in the peace of that coming reality. These challenges and frustrations are gifts that keep our hearts from settling in here while we are waiting to be brought to our Father's house. God keeps us from finding what we are looking for and allows our expectations to not be met because that is His good for us. As Paul says in Romans,

These sterile and barren bodies of ours are yearning for full deliverance. That is why waiting doesn't diminish us any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We don't see what is enlarging us but the longer we wait the larger we become and the more joyful our expectancy. Meanwhile in the moment we get tired of waiting. God's spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray it doesn't matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. He knows us far better than we know ourselves...and keeps us present before God. That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good. God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those

who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in Him.

(Romans 8:23-29, *The Message*)

One of my very favorite books is *A Diary of Private Prayer* by John Baillie. Let's join as sisters as we wait and pray together:

Let me never think, O eternal Father, that I am here to stay. Let me always remember that I am a stranger and pilgrim on earth. Lord, by your grace prevent me from losing myself so much in the joys of earth that I have no longing left for the purer joys of heaven. Do not let the happiness of today become a trap to my overworldly heart. And if today instead of happiness I suffer any disappointment or defeat, if there is any sorrow where I hope for joy, or sickness where I look for health, give me grace to accept it as a loving reminder that this is not my home. Thank you Lord that you have set eternity so firmly in my heart that no earthy thing can ever fully satisfy me. Thank you that every present joy is so mixed with sadness and unrest that it makes my mind look up to the prospect of a more perfect joy. Above all, thank you for the sure hope and promise of eternal life in your presence. Amen. (p. 85)

***When I feel out of place with my environment or myself,  
I can thank God for that and pray "Come Lord Jesus"  
as I long for a better eternal home.***

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Coming in the November C3W REFLECTIONS newsletter:

- Advent Gathering Sign-Up
  - Advent Devotional Reviews
  - Information about T2 Mentoring Groups
  - More resources to encourage you in your walk with the Lord
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