

Lives of Fragrance

2 Corinthians 4:14-17

October 2025 | Vol. 4, Issue 4



What's New

October

Women's Bible studies in progress! Join in!

October 4th

Bridal Shower for Hannah Braswell at TBC from
10am–12pm. RSVP to Victoria Terronez 918-409-7582

December 6th

TBC Women's Christmas Tea

Tressa Nunley loves women's retreats! Tressa shares insights from the 2025 Women's Retreat.

Reflections on Coram Deo

By Tressa Nunley

Coram Deo was the theme of the 2025 TBC Women's Fall Retreat. To be honest, I kept wondering: what is the meaning of Coram Deo? Yet in the busyness of life, I kept intending, but failing, to look it up. No excuse, I know... our phones, complete with access to the world-wide web, are almost always in our hands. I just kept being "busy" and forgetting to look it up. Regardless, even with my lack of preparedness, I did register to attend the retreat and I am so thankful I did.

The extended fellowship with my sisters in Christ was full of fun, laughter, discussions, encouragement, learning, and prayer. The retreat time provided opportunities to meet new women and to deepen familiar relationships to a new level.

Although the free time was limited, I did enjoy a few short hikes around the campgrounds. I love hiking and adventure, where I often find refreshment to my soul, purposefully slowing down, or even stopping, long enough to see God's beautiful creation and to commune with Him in praise, in thanksgiving, and in confession. Without realizing its meaning, I was experiencing "Coram Deo".

Jess Ahrend, our guest speaker, gave us great encouragement and admonishment in living our lives for God's glory. Jess's sessions included, "Our Lives Before God", "Our Minds Before God" and "Our Hearts Before God". Each session was full of truth. Unfortunately, the sessions are not recorded, but I encourage you to ask those who attended to share what they learned.

Included in this newsletter are a few comments from other attendees, to give you a taste. My greatest takeaway from the teaching was from the last session. I left, pondering: what is the "obscure" work that God has for me, and am I doing this work from an obedient heart and for His glory? There is much more to unpack from this challenge than I can explain in a newsletter, but if you will ask me, I am excited to share more.

As I sat down today to write my thoughts about the retreat, I finally looked up "Coram Deo".

What a joy! I can see it so clearly now in everything about the retreat: from my time with friends, to my personal time on the hike, to the messages from God's Word through Jessica.

The following description is my paraphrase of quotes taken from Al...

In Latin, the word "Coram" means face, and the word "Deo" means God. Together the phrase means "before the face of God" or "in the presence of God". It describes the Christian concept of living one's entire life in the conscious awareness of God's presence, under His authority, and for His glory. This perspective calls for an integrated, God-centered life where all daily activities (even seemingly mundane or ordinary tasks) are performed as a form of worship and service to God for the Lord's glory.

Lord willing, I will be able to "retreat" again next year with my sisters from Tulsa Bible Church, and it is my hope that you will decide to be with us as well.

An obscure work
From an obedient heart
For the Glory of One

Thoughts on the Retreat

Four ladies who attended the Retreat share what made it meaningful to them.

Cheryl Brown

I want to thank all the women who made the Women's Retreat this year to be meaningful spiritually, a lot of fun, engaging with friends, and meeting three new friends at my table through our table questions and discussions. The theme of *Coram Deo, In the Presence of God*, drew me in and did not disappoint. Jess Ahrend was an excellent teacher. My takeaways were her three Session topics: our Minds, Lives, and Hearts before God. *God will use us and will show us how to fill the little spaces of His work.*

Evelyn Heitman

I think one of the reasons I enjoyed our women's retreat was being able to be there Friday and Saturday. It was fun getting to know more of the women from our church through playing games, singing, and sharing. I won a packet of face masks from the games we played and shared them with the ladies and we had a face mask party before going to bed Friday night. That built more friendship, laughs, and a collection of silly pictures. To live fully is to have a position and posture of observing God's work from an obedient heart for the glory of One. Jess said something like this and I'm chewing on that thought and ways to apply it to my life. I also appreciated her challenge to us in God's global purpose by considering habits as we partner with our missionaries; have we considered writing letters to our missionaries or sending them items they really need (Diet Coke, Dr. Pepper, special teas, etc.), and what about welcoming internationals?



Jess Ahrend

Diane Thomas

There is always a reason I love going to our ladies' retreat: fellowship, a time of friendships strengthened, and new relationships forged through our sisterhood in Christ. Can't wait for next year already.

Ally Patterson

I really enjoyed getting to spend time with the ladies at dinner, games, and the campfire on Friday night. One of my favorite parts of retreat is on Friday night, when we get to spend time worshipping God all together, united as one voice under the stars, worshipping our Creator. I loved how in one of the sessions (on Saturday), Jess looked at what she described as, "An obscure work, from an obedient heart, for the glory of God." Through this, she described what it has looked like for believers in the past to do the work God has placed on their heart and what it looks like for us as believers now.

Recipes

Stephanie Villines

Stephanie shares two recipes with us! Plan to add these scrumptious additions to your fall rotation.

Roast Chicken

Stephanie states that this roast chicken is a family favorite. "It is so good! Although it takes 2 hours to bake, plan ahead, because it is worth it!"

- 6–7 lb. roasting chicken
- 2 small lemons
- 1 T plus 1 tsp. coarse salt
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 c. water

Mash salt, paprika, and garlic into a paste. Rub half inside and half outside the chicken. Roll lemons on the counter and pierce 20 times with a fork or skewer. Put lemons inside chicken. Pour water in the bottom of the pan. Bake uncovered the first hour, then cover and continue baking until done. Bake at 350°.

Cranberry Orange Bread

Stephanie comments, "This delicious recipe is both sweet and tart. It's a favorite of mine."

- 2 c. flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 c. sugar
- 2 T butter, softened
- 1 large egg
- 1 c. orange juice
- 1 c. chopped cranberries
- ½ c. chopped nuts
- 2 T grated orange rind

In medium bowl, combine flour, salt, baking powder, baking soda, and set aside. Beat sugar and butter in a large bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in egg until well blended. Add dry ingredients and orange juice alternately to sugar mixture, mixing well after each addition. Stir in cranberries, chopped nuts, and orange rind. Pour into well-greased 8.5 × 4.5-inch loaf pan. Bake at 350° for 50–55 minutes or until wooden pick inserted into center comes out clean. Cool in pan for 15 minutes, then remove from pan. Cool completely on wire rack. Wrap in plastic wrap and store at room temperature. Alternate baking pan: bake in well-greased muffin tin for 20 minutes.

Lives of Fragrance is a publication of the Women's Ministries of Tulsa Bible Church. For corrections, comments, or written contributions, please email flnewsandviews@gmail.com.

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