

# How to Make the Most of TGCW18

MAY 14, 2018 | [Mary Willson](#) • [Kathleen Nielson](#)

The Gospel Coalition's [2018 Women's Conference](#) (TGCW18) is quickly approaching—it begins one month from today. (There's still [time to register](#), but spots are filling up fast.)

We're thrilled by the prospect of thousands of women gathering and growing together around the Word, primarily the book of Deuteronomy. We regularly hear from women who have leveraged content from TGCW conferences not only for themselves but also for people around them, especially in their churches.

Using the wisdom of those involved in previous years, here are five ways both attendees and online listeners can make the most of TGCW18—not only during the conference but also before and after.

## 1. Pray

The most important preparation for the conference is to pray for God's blessing—and to pray specifically that he would use his breathed-out words in Deuteronomy to pierce our hearts and transform our lives. This Old Testament book calls us to worship our God of grace; we can begin to pray and worship through its words even now as we prepare to dig into them together next month.

## 2. Read

Read the book of Deuteronomy in advance! It's 34 chapters—shorter than many novels. Read through it quickly first, without stopping to ask all the questions you'll want to ask eventually. Just get a sense of the beautiful whole. This would be a great activity to do with a friend or group of friends. A read-through helps us imagine what it was like for the Israelites to gather on the plains of Moab and hear Moses speak his final words as they prepared to cross the Jordan River into the Promised Land. After this initial read-through, you might want to re-read and journal some of your thoughts, prayers, and questions. A [study Bible](#) can help situate you in the book's time and place.

## 3. Collaborate

For those of you attending TGCW18 on your own, opportunities abound to connect with other women from all over the world for mutual encouragement and partnership in the gospel. For those who plan to livestream, perhaps you'll want to recruit a friend to listen as well so you can discuss what you've heard. We often hear from women that their pastors, elders, and other church leaders pray for them as they participate in the conference and want to interact with them afterward regarding the content.

Women often attend or livestream the conference with friends, family, and other women from their church. Some women in groups deliberately register for different workshops, so their group collectively covers more ground. When these women meet up again, each shares about the sessions she heard, and

then the group works through the material. This sort of collaboration can be informal (sharing thoughts over a meal at TGCW18) or more formal (assigning specific workshops to people and planning a time for discussion at the conference or afterward). Several groups have reconvened a couple weeks after the conference to pray, process material, and consider how they could bless their local church with the teaching and encouragement they received at the conference.

## 4. Multiply

Women around the world have used TGCW conference material for strategic training in their local or regional context. After TGCW16, one woman and her church leaders organized and hosted a regional conference for women, where women taught portions of 1 Peter and led workshops on topics relevant to that region. Another woman gathered a group of women who wanted to grow in their studying, handling, and sharing of the Scriptures, and she used TGCW16 videos as a launching point. Each woman worked independently through that week's assigned passage in 1 Peter and, after her own study, watched the video of the TGCW16 exposition. Then the women met, worked through the passage, and discussed how the TGC expositor handled the passage (including how it could have been handled more effectively!) and how these women could share this passage in their contexts. Today each group member writes her own material for their meetings, and they continue to give feedback and encouragement. There are all kinds of outcomes for discipleship we haven't mentioned here, including writing a basic Bible study to work through with a friend.

The simple discipline of listening for others, as well as for ourselves, helps us pass on what we receive. We can listen for the little nugget that could refresh and equip our friend who is deeply discouraged, dealing with chronic illness, or wrestling with how to follow Jesus in an unjust world. We can listen for the framework that could help shape our local church's mercy ministry. We can listen for stories of God's work throughout the world that can encourage the saints in our church to pray and give sacrificially for the cause of global missions.

## 5. Pray!

Prayer isn't really a first and last step; it's more like a blanket that covers the whole process. How impertinent it would be for us to dive into the Scriptures without asking the One who inspired them by his Spirit for help. So again, pray. Pray that the Lord's living and active Word would be heard clearly by those who gather in June. And let's pray that this Word would be like seeds planted in good soil, bearing fruit that spreads into many lives, all for the glory of Jesus and the good of his church.

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