

Fumigate Toxic Friends From Your Life

In her book *When Your Bad Meets His Good*, Kimberly Jones-Pothier exhorts readers to clean out their spiritual house and get rooted in God's Word. In her signature, say-it-like-it-is style, Jones-Pothier, aka Real Talk Kim, writes about how lasting change cannot happen without a thorough uprooting of influences that hinder your walk with God. She compares it to when she had to fumigate every room in her house because she kept finding bugs.

At first, she thought it was because her house wasn't clean enough. But the exterminator informed her that it was because the pipes were too dry and, consequently, they became easy access points for pests. He recommended Jones-Pothier run water in her bathtub and sinks on a weekly basis.

In this same way, Jones-Pothier recommends that readers regularly cleanse their minds.

"To keep out the 'bugs' that try to infiltrate your mind, you must stay connected to the Holy Spirit and let the water of God's Word renew your mind daily," she says.

These "bugs" include internal forces such as negative self-talk and temptation. But spiritual pests can also include people who are bad influences. The Bible warns of this kind of relationship:

"He who walks with wise men will be wise, but a companion of fools will be destroyed" (Prov. 13:20).

"Do not be deceived: 'Bad company corrupts good morals'" (1 Cor. 15:33).

"The righteous is a guide to his neighbors, but the way of the

wicked leads them astray” (Prov. 12:26).

In her book, Jones-Pothier reflects on a high school friend who had a controlling personality, and led her to do whatever she suggested they do. Jones-Pothier disobeyed her parents just to follow her friend. She ignored her mother and father’s words of caution but, now in retrospect, she realizes how the friendship trained her to be dangerously complaisant.

“Not until many years later did I realize that in my immaturity I had surrendered my identity and become whoever my friend wanted me to be,” she says.

Eventually, the friend cut Jones-Pothier out of her life. Jones-Pothier acknowledges how, sometimes, a person’s rejection is God’s protection. To seek a life that glorifies God, you may need distance or complete disconnection from unwise company.

Conversely, Jones-Pothier stresses the importance of having a team of trusted friends. She points to Jesus who chose 12 men to be His trusted disciples. When He knew His crucifixion was coming soon, He asked His disciples to pray with Him. Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Judas, Bartholomew, Thomas, James (son of Alphaeus), Matthew, Simon and Judas Iscariot were His support. Although Jesus loved everyone and served many, He didn’t forge close friendships with everybody. Instead, He nurtured an inner circle.

Jones-Pothier encourages you to likewise seek company that will pray you through times of transition and will help facilitate your growth, even if it means being transparent about your sinfulness to receive correction.

“Friends are honest with you. They will tell you that you need to change, but they will love you through the process. For growth to happen, you need people in your life whom you can trust to speak honestly to you and who will allow you to speak honestly to them,” she says.

We see in the Bible how mentorship and iron-sharpening-iron relationships please God:

“So comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, just as you are doing” (1 Thess. 5:11).

“Confess your faults to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man accomplishes much” (James 5:16).

“And let us consider how to spur one another to love and to good works” (Heb. 10:24).

Jones-Pothier emphasizes how ‘spurring one another’ starts in the heart. In order to break sinful habits and exhort others to do the same, you must sincerely desire holiness. This is why fumigating your life—clearing it of spiritual bugs—helps position your spirit for growth. But the process needs to be constant.

“Becoming a new creation is more than accepting Jesus as Lord. It is an ongoing journey of choosing to make Him Lord,” Jones-Pothier says. “We can be tempted to search for truth and light in so many other places, but none of them will give us hope. Jesus, the only true light, is our hope.” {eo}

*This article is based on When Your Bad Meets His Good: Find Purpose in Your Pain (Charisma House, 2018) by **Kimberly Jones-Pothier**. Jones-Pothier, known as “Real Talk Kim,” travels the world fulfilling her passion and purpose of “loving people back to life.” She is a wife, a mother, a pastor, a best-selling author, an entertainer and most importantly a worshipper after God’s own heart. Kim and her husband, Mark Pothier, are the senior pastors of Church of the Harvest in Fayetteville, Georgia. She finds fulfilling purpose in charity work and believes in the compassion of the Holy Spirit, delivering it to those who need it most. Pastor Kim has been featured on The Dr. Oz Show, Preachers of Atlanta, CNN, Nightline and numerous radio shows.*