

Pastor: Many Grieving Churchgoers Fall Into This Destructive Habit

In his book *Restored at the Root* (August 2019), Joseph W. Walker III recounts a mistake he made in the midst of grieving the death of his wife. After a rare form of cancer claimed her life, Walker became so overwhelmed with grief that he withdrew from everyone and everything.

He began going on long drives to avoid his workload. He set his phone on “Do not disturb” and ignored his mailbox so people would assume he wasn’t home. Walker isolated himself for nearly six months. As he came to realize, not only was this behavior unhealthy, but it also made him vulnerable to spiritual attack.

“When you are in isolation, you begin to contemplate things you never would have imagined you would consider. This can be a very dark place. The things that run through your mind are frightening, and what makes it worse is that nobody is there to bring you back to a healthy place mentally and spiritually,” Walker says. “You begin to normalize dysfunctional behavior.”

But he also learned how being alone could be used for good. Walker points to Matthew 26 in the Bible, in which Jesus mourns over His coming crucifixion while His disciples sleep (vv. 36–46). Jesus finds Himself at a point in His life when He surrenders to God’s will: “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” (v. 39b).

Walker says, “When you surrender to the will of God, you will be strengthened to endure the periods of aloneness, even when it feels like no one understands the totality of what you are

going through.”

Walker recalls feeling reluctant to spend time with people who didn't understand the depths of his grief, and yet he now knows how the church is meant to be a place of openness and communion. Because of his experience, Walker now understands how damaging it can be to mask misery in the church.

“I believe all of us, regardless of our profession, get consumed with the expectations of people and often neglect what we need for inner healing to take place. Living in unresolved conflict is neither helpful nor productive. If true healing is to occur, we must be willing to face our issues,” he says.

Restored at the Root teaches readers to dig deep and identify hidden wounds that are impacting their marriage, ministry and relationship with God. Walker addresses how to recognize demonic activity beneath struggles, confront instead of camouflage the root issue and break free of demons that wreak havoc on social, emotional and spiritual health.

Listen to the podcasts below to hear people share their powerful testimonies of walking in God's power through cancer!{eoa}

Joseph W. Walker III, *DMin*, is the senior pastor of the historic Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Nashville. He also serves as the international presiding bishop in the Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship International. He received a master of divinity degree from Vanderbilt University and a doctor of ministry degree from Princeton Theological Seminary. He holds two honorary doctorates, from Meharry Medical College and Southern University. Bishop Walker is a regular guest on *The Rickey Smiley Morning Show* radio program and has been a guest on CNN, CBS *This Morning*, and *The Roland Martin Show*. He and his wife, Dr. Stephanie H. Walker, have two children.

Charisma House empowers people through Spirit-inspired

resources. It is the leading publisher of diversified Christian resources motivating people to fulfill God's purpose. For more than twenty years Charisma House has published books, including fourteen New York Times best sellers, that challenge, encourage, teach, and equip Christians.