

T.D. Jakes Speaks Out on Eddie Long Divorce

Bishop T.D. Jakes is speaking out about Bishop Eddie Long's divorce. The Dallas megachurch pastor of the Potter's House says he's praying for Long and his wife, Vanessa.

"For people who are high-profile, like yourself, like me, him or others, it's very difficult to maintain a private life when you are living in a fishbowl all the time," Jakes told CNN's Don Lemon on Saturday. "Sometimes you need to cut off all the lights and put your priorities back into alignment. And my prayers are that the Longs will use this opportunity to get that done."

After his wife filed for divorce due to "irreconcilable differences" with "no hope of reconciliation," Long told New Birth Missionary Baptist Church on Dec. 4 that he would take a leave of absence to deal with "family issues."

"I'm still your pastor. You'll still receive my direction," the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* quoted Long saying. "You've given me some weeks to take care of some family business."

Vanessa announced her plans to divorce her megachurch pastor husband just two days earlier after deliberation, prayerful consideration and plenty of confusion. Her original statement was followed by a recant within hours, which was followed by an official statement from her attorneys confirming the divorce.

Jakes, for his part, appears to be holding out hope that the Longs will work it out.

"I find that the Bible is full of relational information—whether it's in the workplace, whether it's dealing with the mothers, daughters, fathers, sons or, most

importantly, our relationship with God,” Jakes told CNN. “The cross itself is not just the vertical, between us and God, but also horizontal, and implication that God is also concerned about how we get along.”

The Longs got married in 1990. They have three children together and one from Long’s previous marriage. Together they built New Birth Missionary Baptist Church in Lithonia, Ga. But the stress of the varied accusations the charismatic preacher, including four young members of the church claiming that the bishop used gifts, trips and money to coerce them into engaging in sex acts with him beginning when they were 17 or 18, seems to have taken its toll on the marriage.