

*the*  
**CHURCHED**  
*Feminist*

**Presents: Sexuality, Faith, and Black Women:**

*A Greenleaf*

**Bible Study**



“I am single, Christian, and over 40. Waiting is not an option for me, I am a grown woman. I have friends who are much older than me, strugglin’ to remain faithful to the cause. The church needs to address sex. But it doesn’t. Why is sex a taboo subject? Why am I supposed to wait until marriage? What if marriage ain’t comin’ for me?”

**- Krystal**

“I am 14. Boys expect me to do things to them I don’t think I am ready for. I tell them I go to church, but they say they do too. Is sex the only way to get boys to like you?”

**- LaShay**

“I am 63 years old. I was born and raised in the church. We were there practically every day of the week, and my family attended morning and evening services on Sundays. I got pregnant when I was sixteen years old. I will never forget how my pastor, a man who baptized me, brought me up before the entire congregation and shamed me for my sin. He told the whole church I was a fast girl, but God would forgive me. I was sat down from Sunday School, youth fellowship, and the choir right after that. He never said anything about the father of my baby. He was 37. And a deacon in that very same church.”

**- Carisha**

“When I catch the Holy Ghost, I have the same feelings and release as an orgasm. How can it be a dirty, unholy thing to enjoy sex?”

**- Krissy**



“I am a nineteen year old lesbian. Can God still love me?”

- **Ava**

“I would never, ever, talk to my pastor about my sexuality. My parents attend this church, and he tells folks’ business from the pulpit.”

- **Andi**

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These are some of the many comments that find their way into my inbox, my Facebook messenger, and random one-on-one encounters I have with Black women and girls eager to talk about sex, faith, love, church and God in ways that are responsible, in ways that are affirming and not shaming, in ways that are not condescending and judgmental. There is one theme that is persistent through all of these in person and electronic encounters, a thread by which they are all stitched together, and that is this: “why can’t we have these conversations in church?”

It’s a valid question.

Why can’t we?

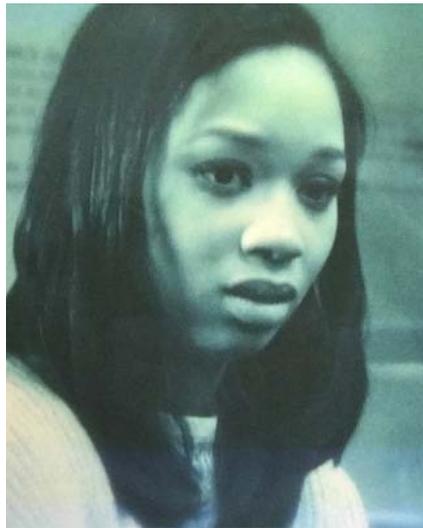
Enter “Greenleaf.” “Greenleaf” is a drama that airs on The Oprah Winfrey Network that deals with the goings on at a Black church in Memphis, Tennessee... and best believe, sin is very much a part of the goings on at Calvary Fellowship World Ministries.

The Greenleaf sisters of this show, Faith, Grace (“GiGi”), and Charity, and the sexual situations they find themselves in, present us with an opportunity to have



this kind of conversation in church. We may find ourselves in their stories, and, not only that, find ways to draw corollaries to women in the Bible. Their stories can encourage us today.

## *Family Tree*



**Faith Greenleaf (center photo, played Terri Abney)** has died prior to the very first episode, quite possibly by her own hand. She is the daughter of Bishop James Greenleaf, played by Keith David and “First Lady” Mae Greenleaf, played by Lynn Whitfield. Her sister, Grace Greenleaf (played by Merle Dandridge), left home 20 years before Faith’s death and came home for her sister’s funeral. We learn right away that she used to preach her face off, but she stopped for reasons that have not yet been fully revealed on the show. What we know so far is that she is divorced, has a teenaged daughter named Sophia, and she is determined to figure out what happened to her sister Faith. Charity Greenleaf-Satterlee is played by Deborah Joy Winans, and she is the quintessential church girl. She is married (for now), recently gave birth to a baby boy named Nathan, and runs the church choir.



Faith is the character that tears at your heartstrings the most because layer by layer over seasons 1 and 2, it appears as though Faith was sexually assaulted by her uncle, Robert “Mac” McCready, menacingly played by **Greg Alan Williams**,



who is also **Lady Mae**’s brother.





We have seen the ugliness of his predilection for young girls, and the heights of his sheer contempt and downright loathing for women in **his treatment of Lorraine.**



The pilot episode of Greenleaf revolves around Grace returning home for Faith's funeral, and how GiGi's very presence upsets family dynamics. We only see Faith in flashbacks: **teaching Bible study lessons to children,**



and sexually explicit pictures of Faith engaging in sexual activity sent to GiGi for



a blackmail payoff from someone from Faith's past.

There is quite a bit of Faith Greenleaf's story that reminds me of Tamar, David's daughter (2 Samuel 13). Her brother Amnon rapes her, and her father, David, the man after God's own heart, does exactly nothing about it. Neither does God, apparently. This text is troubling to say the least, one of many biblical texts that have been used to co-sign a patriarchal theology that suggests God has more in common with maleness than femaleness. Yet, the question remains: Where was God for Tamar? Where was God for Faith, and the countless women like her who endure betrayal, pain, forced rape, by men well known to them?

Rape, as defined by the United States Department of Justice, is:

"The penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim."

A study by the Black Women's Blueprint reveals that more than half of Black girls in America are sexually assaulted before they graduate from high school. Sixty percent of Black women in the United States were sexually assaulted as girls. That is staggering. That means that six out of every ten women in a church pew in a Black church has survived a trauma that their pulpit members do not address, much less discuss. Many of them have stories similar to Tamar's. In 2 Samuel 13, we learn that Tamar was a virgin. She went to see her brother Amnon because he claimed to be sick. He told his servants they could leave his room now that his sister was there to tend to him. When they are alone together, he makes his intentions known: he wants to have sex with her. He wants to be Jaime Lannister to her Cersei. Tamar refuses. In verses 11 and 12, Tamar could not be more clear: she will not consent to have sex with Amnon, her brother. She told him it would be shameful. She reminds him that it would be scandalous. Amnon does not listen to her. He does not abide by her wishes. He does not respect the agency she



had over her own body, and what she would and would not do with it. He forces himself inside of her. He rapes her. Amnon rapes Tamar. And then he casts her out. One of the last things we hear attributed to Tamar is her unwillingness to have sex with her brother. After this horrible incident, she puts ashes all over her body, and wails. This is the last we hear from Tamar in 2 Samuel 13; the narrative shifts from that point to a revenge tale as her other brother, Absalom, takes matters into his own hands. Absalom is offended to his core when David—yes, King David—refuses to punish Amnon for raping their sister. Like Maximus from “Gladiator,” Absalom is son to a negligent father, brother to a sexually assaulted sister, and he will have his vengeance in this life or the next. It is that simple to have a discussion in church about rape, incest, and consent with just a single chapter out of the Old Testament.

*Grace Greenleaf*  
(played by Merle Dandridge)



When it comes to popular culture, the Black church girls have long been ignored. We may see supporting characters on televised dramas of Black women clergy offering support to victims, or providing information to lead character detectives.



Until very recently, we had not seen much about the lives of churched Black women, or their religious practices, depicted on television...until reality shows became popular, that is. There's "Braxton Family Values," a show based on the lives of Toni Braxton and her singing sisters, Traci, Towanda, Trina, and Tamar; "Mary, Mary," based upon the lives of gospel recording sisters Erica and Tina Campbell (both sisters married men with the surname Campbell; their husbands are not brothers except in-law). There was a fascination for a while with the lives of Black preachers in several reality shows no longer on the air such as "The Sisterhood," which aired on TLC in 2012; "Preach," which aired in 2015 on Lifetime was pulled due to backlash; "The Preachers of L.A." which bowed in 2013 and hasn't been back on the air since 2014; and "The Preachers of Detroit" which aired about ten episodes in 2015, and introduced many of us to the Most Reverend Corletta J. Vaughn, Senior Pastor of the Holy Ghost Cathedral.

This year, the FX drama "Shots Fired," a show that deals with the aftermath of the fatal police shootings of two young men in a small southern town, one Black, and one White, prominently featured a Black woman pastor affectionately known as "Pastor J" (Janae James, played by Aisha Hinds). Her portrayal of a Black women cleric was unique in that we saw Pastor J active in a Black Lives Matter-esque movement and speaking truth to power. However, when it comes to Grace "GiGi" Greenleaf, here is a Black woman preacher who is both *sexually active and actively dating*.



**Lady Mae to Grace: “you look like you’ve been rode hard and put away wet.”**



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-GNLky9Olf8>

Lady Mae is quick to condemn GiGi for appearing as though she had been sexually satisfied. It made me wonder how did Lady Mae talk to her daughters about sex. It matters. How we talk about sex in church matters. How we talk about sex using the Bible particularly matters. No matter how one feels about the Holy Scriptures, whether one views them as the Word of God or just words about God, the Bible has been used to justify some heinous things. The Bible has been used to oppress people, based upon the interpretation of an oppressor. If history is told from the point of view of the victor, how the Bible is taught may reflect the interests and points of view of church leaders. Many of our Christian denominations were formed based on interpretations of what specific biblical texts mean.

There are probably more ways to read the Bible than there are Protestant denominations. And when I say, reading the Bible, I don't just mean picking it up



and reading it. I mean reading with a purpose and plan. We all read with different priorities in mind. Here is an example of what I mean. Let's use a familiar passage of the Bible, the Parable of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15: 11-32. If you were an English major, you might be interested in this parable as literature. You would read the text looking for narrative meanings, such as what exactly does "prodigal" mean? What is the form of writing known as "parable," and what are its elements? It doesn't mean that other parts of the story are not important, it means that as an aficionado of literature, you probably read the Bible through that lens. If you were an historian, you might read the Bible looking for historical meaning. A historian would be interested in how the people who were the first recipients of that message heard it. In others words, what it meant at the actual time it was written. We know that "divorce" in biblical times meant something far different that what "divorce" means now. So if a historian was reading this parable, s/he might wonder what it meant when the story tells us that when the younger brother asked for his inheritance, and the father rendered unto both brothers his living. Was it an offense for the son to even ask? And how was this money distributed? Bible geeks like me love to study this stuff. The answer is that the older brother would have received two-thirds while the younger brother would have received one-third.

The Bible has been read in oppressive ways by people who read it in ways that justified their oppression of other races. For us, the descendants of kidnapped Africans who were stolen from their homelands and brought to American shores against their will and forced into unpaid labor until death, it should be of interest to note that the King James version of the Bible was translated into English during the height of the slave trade in the 1600s. And we can see ourselves past readings of the Bible that used verses like "slaves, obey your masters" to not only justify slavery, but slaveholders used these verses to pacify slaves by encouraging them to see that God ordained slavery in the first place, suggesting that it was not we that did this to you; it's God's will. Slavery is simply God's order.



We can see ourselves past that. However, many churches have been slow to see past the inherent sexism in the text. You see, patriarchy, a ten dollar word that simply means the privileging of maleness, may be the backdrop of the Bible, but it is not the message of the Bible. The Bible in the hands of someone who hates you can be dangerous.

As a woman, I read the Bible with the full knowledge of that and govern myself accordingly. And so, as an advocate for Black women, I read the Bible seeking ways to interrogate texts for women's voices, and reading myself into the text. Let me give you some examples of what I mean. If reading the Parable of the Prodigal Son from the perspective of women's voices, I might rename it "The Parable of the Absent Mother." Her voice has been silenced in this parable. Why? Is she dead? And if I were to read myself into a text as a Black feminist, I would read the story about Jesus at Peter's house, the occasions when so many people came to see him there was no more room, so a man afflicted with paralysis was let down through a hole cut through the roof. A Black feminist would recognize that whoever suggested cutting the man through the roof had to be a Black woman... because if anyone knows alternate routes to the top because current conditions make any movement forward difficult, it's a Black woman. How we read the Bible impacts how we interpret it.

So now that I've given you a sense of what I am privileging as I read the Bible, I want us to take a look at the story of Queen Vashti in the book of Esther, Esther 1:9 – 2:17, as a lens to view Grace Greenleaf.

In this text, we have what appears to be a precursor to "The Bachelor," a popular reality show that makes marriage and fairytale romance a commodity (according to Kantar Media, the Bachelor franchises brought ABC more than \$200 million in revenue during the 2012-13 seasons).



Queen Vashti, a woman who occupies a mere ten verses in the entire Bible, appears to be refusing to participate in the rose ceremony. King Ahasuerus displayed his wealth, majesty and bling for nearly six months during a never-ending banquet party for the nobles and governors of the provinces he ruled over. When he was good and drunk, he decided he wanted to show off the beauty of his queen. When he sent his staff to tell the queen to come at the king's command, she refused (verse 12).

This is a powerful message for young girls and grown women. Queen Vashti refused to be sexualized. She refused to participate in his spectacle. Yes, she was dismissed and although we never hear from her or about her again, her message is clear: "I am not here for your shenanigans, King Ahasuerus."

Black women are often afraid of our "no." We are often our own worst oppressor. We often bend and contort ourselves to fit into boxes not meant for us. We embrace antiquated notions about sexual expectations and the waiting to be chosen messages inherent in fairy tales (and "The Bachelor" and "Match Made in Heaven," by the way) that tell us we should be grateful and appreciative for any male attention we get, even when it is negative attention, and that we must compete with other women to get it.

Sometimes churches present marriage and family as the only way a woman can be pleasing in God's sight, seldom exploring other ways to affirm Black womanhood. There has got to be a reason why so many Christian Black women tune in to marriage-themed television shows. Many of the women who have reached out to me shared stories of how they learned about sex either through violence, or from television. This is frightening when you consider that much of what our young men and women learn about sex from television is that it is a dirty joke and childish. Very seldom is there any exploration about Black relationships, Black love, or Black intimacy.



So if the church is silent at worst and limited at best about sexuality in all of its expressions, then who is teaching our sons and daughters about sex? Is it Kirk from “Love and Hip Hop Atlanta,” who justified cheating on his wife because, according to him, she was not having sex with him often enough? Are they learning about sex from advertising, where children are often sexualized, but yet we continue to refuse to teach them about sex even when their very lives depend on the choices they make? Are they learning about sex at school? If you ever want to be horrified, pick up Peggy Orenstein’s book, “Girls and Sex: Navigating the Complicated New Landscape.” She describes the hook-up culture thriving in high schools and colleges across the nation, and the reality of campus sexual assault, pornography, and how sexual myths influence young women’s sexual decision-making. Here is a snippet of the author discussing this with Terry Gross of NPR’s “Fresh Air:

*If you're talking about intercourse, kids are not having intercourse at a younger age. And they're not having more intercourse than they used to. They are engaging in other forms of sexual behavior younger and more often. And one of the things that I became really clear on was that we have to broaden our definition of sex because by ignoring and denying these other forms of sexual behavior that kids are engaging in, we are opening the door to a lot of risky behavior and we're opening the door to a lot of disrespect. So when I would talk to girls for instance about oral sex, that was something that they were doing from a pretty young age and it tended to go one way. And I got so sort of frustrated by hearing about that - and they did it for a lot of reasons. But I started saying, look, what if every time you were with the guy he told you to go get him a glass of water from the kitchen?*

*And he never offered to get you a glass of water. Or if he did he would say, (sighing) you want me to get you a glass of water? I mean, you would*



*never stand for it. And girls, they would bust out laughing when I said it, and they'd say, oh, I never thought about it that way. And, you know, I thought, well, maybe you should if you think that being asked repeatedly to give somebody a glass of water without reciprocation is less insulting than being asked to perform a sexual act over and over.*

Sobering, isn't it? When I asked my mother about sex when I was fifteen, her immediate response was, "are you having sex?" I wasn't, but it didn't stop her from taking me to Planned Parenthood and sitting in on a class they had that explained sexually transmitted diseases and every method of birth control imaginable. But when it came to talking about the 'why' of sex, my mother's response was "just don't do it."

This is why I am particularly grateful for the character of Grace Greenleaf, because she is like so many Black Christian women raised in the church, in her case, a P.K. (preacher's kid), and like so many of us, struggling with the call of God on her life, and a single parent. Add to this that she is struggling to do this in a church whose theology she doesn't seem to be sure she subscribes to anymore. We see this depicted in the conversations she has with her teenaged daughter Sophia, in the episode when she is asked by the grandmother of an infant to baptize her without her the consent of the baby's parents. We see Grace struggling with preaching, struggling with why no one is doing anything about the predator in the family, Uncle Mac, and giving into her own sexual desire when she gets reacquainted with an old flame, Noah, who is now engaged to someone else. All of this is why Grace Greenleaf is important: she is not perfect. She is struggling to keep it together, like all of us. Her faith wavers. Like all of us. She gets hers. *Like the men of the church do.*



*Charity Greenleaf*  
(played by Deborah Joy Winans)

Judges 11: 30-39

Jephthah is a military figure in the book of Judges. He has a reputation for being a brawler, and when the Ammonites become a threat, they ask him to lead their



army. It is likely Jephthah agreed to take the army into battle because they promised to take him off his 'probationary period' and make his job permanent if he is victorious. For reasons we will never exhaust speculation about, Jephthah vows to God (Yahweh) that if he emerges from battle victorious, he will sacrifice "whoever comes out of his house first" when he returns home (Judges 11:31).

### **So many questions:**

**Did it not occur to him that his own child might be the first to greet him if he survived this conflict?**

**Did his daughter have any idea about this vow? Did God provoke him to make such a vow?**

**Where is her mother? Can we assume she is absent, because surely a mother would have encouraged her daughter to be up outta there.**

As with the fate of Queen Vashti, there is no happy, Disney ending for Jephthah's daughter; we are never even favored with her name. And as with Tamar, after this horrible thing happens to her, she exits the scene, and we don't hear from her anymore. All we know about her is that her father made a vow that cost her life. A woman suffers because of something a man did. I see Charity Greenleaf in Jephthah's daughter all day and twice on Sunday.

Charity Greenleaf-Satterlee is the youngest daughter, and we learn right away that she is pretty much ignored by her family. In the first episode, Charity wants to preach, and her father tells her no. It also seems that without fail, at every family dinner, Charity's good news gets upstaged by family drama. It is also not lost on me that she is the biggest sister size-wise, and the darkest sister in skin tone, and she is the ignored sibling.



Charity is married to **Kevin Satterlee**,



and we learn early on in the first season of Greenleaf that he is attracted to men, and **when he shares this with Charity**,



(season 1 episode 12, Veni, Vidi, Vici) his disclosure tears their marriage apart. I don't know if it was wisdom for him to share this information about himself while Charity was pregnant; but they do divorce. In Season Two, he acts on those



urges. Greenleaf is to be applauded for depicted same gender loving people as human beings who love God and love the church, and I hope it is forcing black churches to examine some of the hypocrisy of the condemnation often heaped upon gay members particularly in the choir. We should no longer be comfortable in churches that condemn homosexual activity as sin, but do not address heterosexual activity period.

But back to Charity. Charity Greenleaf is the epitome of church girls that 'did it right.' The girls who kept their knees closed, the ones that kept their purity promises and waited for marriage to have sex still did not get the perfect husbands they felt entitled to, that perfect holy life yet God owed them. Charity is why Black Christian women need a theology of sexual liberation. There is no dispute that her marriage's chances of success are quite low if her husband is gay. Clearly. I want to talk about what may have lead Charity to rush to the altar in the first place.

There is so much hypocrisy about sex in the black church in general that it is hard to know where to begin. Perhaps a good place is the trope of the good church girl. The good church girl does everything 'right.' She does not engage in sexual experimentation before getting married, she dresses modestly and keeps makeup to a minimum; she is the proverbial 'kept' woman who keeps her hormones in check. Never mind the fact that it was God that gave us the desire to be fully expressional sexual beings, the good church girl's script that she has internalized and memorized tells her that if only I do x, y and z, God will bless me with a Christian husband. Cue the credits and Disney fireworks, the end.

This is the social script that many Black girls hear and base their lives waiting for since they made their very first Easter speech for sunrise service: good girls don't. Good girls wait. God will reward you in the end. Charity is the epitome of this girl, all grown up. She did everything right. And if we are honest, many



churched Black women are walking around with the same disappointment in men and in God that they did not get they felt entitled to. That somehow, God reneged like playing out of suit in a game of spades.

Charity probably thought she was going to get that happily ever after: a good man, good sex, and beautiful babies. To find out that her husband was gay? Just. Too.Much. Charity has every right to feel disappointed. I would like to suggest that if Charity had a black theology of sexual liberation, she may have felt less so. While her sister GiGi is clearly wrestling with her sexual desire, too many churches fall silent when it comes to any type of conversation about the number of people in their congregations who are “getting it in.” And like the woman caught in adultery all by herself in John 7:55-8:11, when it does address fornication, the church tends to be much harder on women who exercise any level of sexual agency.

This is particularly difficult for Black women, who have suffered so much erosion of self-esteem through the persistent devaluation of our bodies. Since the first kidnapped African women were stolen from Africa and the Islands and brought to American shores, the shaming of Black female form and appearance has never abated. The imagery of the auction block causes many Black women to stifle themselves, to keep themselves covered, to see themselves as the problem when churched men make advances toward them. This is a powerful weapon in colonizing the mind because it causes its victims to police themselves, and to create boundaries of what is acceptable, and what isn't. Maybe this is why a Black woman like GiGi, one who stands outside of her sexual “invisible fence,” is deemed a problem. And so many of us like Charity look to marriage as the only outlet through which we can get our freak on without shame.



One of the first things I noticed about Charity after she and Kevin separated is her shedding of layers. Charity dresses much more provocatively now. Maybe this is a way of reclaiming her self-esteem. We must dig deep and ask ourselves how much we have internalized the negative stereotypes about Black women's bodies when our first response to Charity's bare shoulders on the pulpit is to shame her.



So how do we talk about sex in the church? A few thoughts.

Sex has both mystery and profound meaning. It is an aspect of love, but is not the most important aspect of life. Sex carries with it emotional power and spiritual power. But churches must cease and desist with reckonings of sex that reduce it to a sinful act that unfairly burdens the female participant with soul ties that bind them to that person for life, or that women can never rid themselves of the 'dirty deposit,' or that women are receptacles and men are depositors. We have to stop presenting women's bodies as problems in need of a corrective. How we navigate sex as a part of our lives, and how to live lives holy and pleasing to the Lord, is a theological rendering that there is no easy answer to. When Jesus stood on the banks of Caesarea Philippi and asked the disciples, "who do people say that I am?" (Matthew 16:13, Mark 8:27, Luke 9:18-19) he posed a question we must all contend with: who is Jesus *to me*? We have all made a decision about who Jesus is. Every religion has contended with the query of who Jesus is, and made decisions about it. Churches simply must wrestle with the question of sex, and how to reconcile it, in a similar fashion.

If the greatest commandment is to "love God with our whole heart, and with all of our soul, and with all of our strength, and with all of our minds: and to love our neighbors as ourselves" (Luke 15:27), we aren't upholding acts of love with profound sweeping judgments and shunning.

Sex is a reality of life, and churches should talk about it as such because many young girls and boys are receiving messages that sexiness is a way to receive approval at the same time sexual violence is a national health problem.

Add to this the stress of being a young black woman (or man) in public spaces.



These are the realities of young Black girlhood:

A Mississippi girl graduating from high school who was denied valedictorian honors, even though she had the highest GPA in her school? Despite her academic achievement, the honor was given to a white classmate whose GPA was less than hers. She had to share this award. And he got to speak first. Yes, this actually happened. And in this same high school, Black girls are 16% of this school but make up 33% of school-related arrests

A sixteen-year-old Florida girl was expelled for a science experiment because they said it was a bomb

Also in Florida, a fifteen year old Black girl was tossed and pinned to the ground by a barrel rolling police officer for attending a pool party

And finally, we've seen the images of a teenaged Black girl being dragged out of her seat and thrown across classroom while still seated in her desk. These, along with countless images of Black people dying on video are many of the images absorbed into our consciousness, are sapping away at our collective self-esteem. Yet, Jesus commands us to love others as we do ourselves. And we cannot love ourselves when we do not value ourselves.

Perhaps sex is, for many, a way of feeling good. We simply cannot keep presenting physical pleasure as a source of shame, a source of being ashamed of the bodies God gave us, and teaching Biblical passages as though choices weren't made in both how to present, and prioritize, the information. A woman's body brought Jesus here. Women's bodies have value. It is not a holy act to hate your body.

Self-hate is not God's work. We've got to stop making people feel as though their



witness is ruined because they engaged in sexual activity.

In every congregation, there are Faiths, Graces, and Charitys, women who have been stifled and are exhausted in their attempts to maintain their lives in the too small boxes society pushes them into, forcing them to be the most nonthreatening versions of themselves they can be in order to be chosen. May we all find ways to embrace ourselves, and each other, in the love work we need to do on ourselves. As biblical scholar Mitzi Smith says, “there is no one size fits all theology.” We are all out here trying to figure it out as best we can, just like GiGi. May we be gentle and patient with ourselves, and remind ourselves that God will always have more grace than we have sin, and every day is another opportunity to do better.









## For Further Reading

The excerpt from NPR's "Fresh Air" was accessed from <http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/03/29/472211301/girls-sex-and-the-importance-of-talking-to-young-women-about-pleasure>, air date 29 March 2016

For more information about Black women and sexual assault, please visit:

<https://rainn.org/statistics>

<https://www.justice.gov/>

<http://www.blackwomensblueprint.org/>

Recommended Readings:

Women and Shame, by Brené Brown

Sexuality and the Black Church, by Kelly Brown Douglas

Bipolar Faith, by Monica Coleman

Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes, and Black Women in America by Melissa Harris-Perry

Good Christian Sex: Why Chastity Isn't the Only Option—And Other Things The Bible Says About Sex, by Bromleigh McCleneghan

At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power, by Danielle L. McGuire

Girls & Sex: Navigating the Complicated New Landscape, by Peggy Orenstein

Unprotected Texts: The Bible's Surprising Contradictions About Sex and Desire, by Jennifer Wright Knust



## About Me



Minister Kimberly Peeler-Ringer is a former television news producer with graduate degrees in biblical and religious studies from the Morehouse School of Religion at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia, and Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. She is a freelance writer and editor whose work has been published online at the *Rhetoric, Race and Religion* blog available at [www.patheo.com](http://www.patheo.com), The Junia Project available at <http://juniaproject.com/>, has been featured at *Baptizing Feminisms* available at <http://www.baptizingfeminism.com/> and her own blog, *The Churched Feminist*. She is listed among the contributors to the multi-volume *New Interpreter's Bible Dictionary* series available from Abingdon Press, and she is a Christian Education consultant who specializes in writing curriculum that reflects the African-American experience. She was licensed to preach at the historic First Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church of Buffalo, New York, and is a sought after workshop leader and speaker. She has recently been selected as a contributor to the upcoming King Bey Bible. You can follow her on Twitter @churchedfem, and you can reach her via her website, [www.thechurchedfeminist.com](http://www.thechurchedfeminist.com).

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