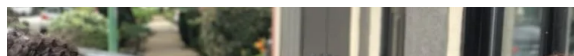


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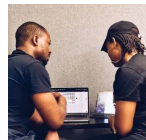
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## 'Righteous and Ratchet' Black Women of Faith Embraced on Jemele Hill's 'Sanctified' Podcast

Hosts Deborah Joy Winans and Lyvonne Briggs talk centering Black women's varied faith experiences in new show.

by **Brandi Hunter** - January 23, 2023

Reading Time: 3 mins read



(Photo: nappy/Pexels)

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**B**lack women, among the country's **most religious** groups, have long been praised as **“the backbone of the church.”** Yet, they have also been among its most **marginalized**. A podcast from award-winning journalist Jemele Hill explores Black women's varied “religious and cultural conditioning” exclusively on Spotify.

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Actress and singer **Deborah Joy Winans** and body- and sex-positive womanist preacher and author Lyvonne Briggs host the “Sanctified” podcast, which debuted in November 2022 via Hill's Unbothered Network.

“‘Sanctified’ is a sacred storytelling space for recovering church girls who now want to be liberated women of faith,” Briggs told Faithfully Magazine. “We are righteous and we are ratchet. We listen to Megan Thee Stallion and Mahalia Jackson. We twerk and we talk about theology. We get to be both/and.”

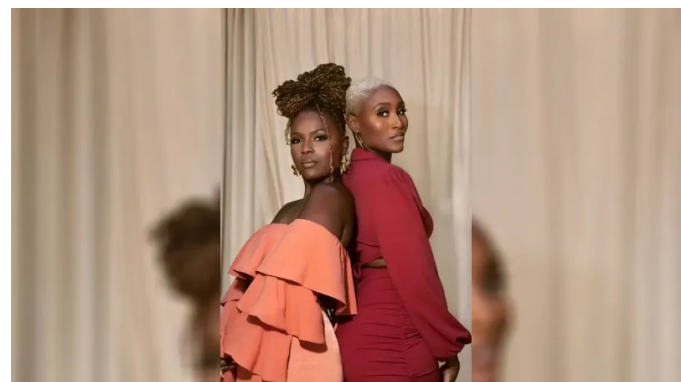
It is important for Black women to “feel welcomed,



Hill's invitation to host the podcast.

The actress, part of the celebrated Winans family, eventually decided that her experiences could potentially help “other young girls that don't have to wait until they're 30, 35 to figure out, ‘Oh, I don't have to do that.’”

“I love my foundation. I praise God for the level of faith and love of God that was instilled in me growing up. But also, there were some things that just didn't jive right. And as I got older, I was fighting just my own self, not understanding who I am because I felt like I had to fit into this perfect picture of what a good Christian girl would look like,” she said.



Deborah Joy Winans and Lyvonne Briggs, hosts of the “Sanctified” podcast. (Photo: Courtesy of Spotify, Unbothered Network)

So far, Briggs and Winans and their guests have tackled purity culture, spiritual abuse, and sex and pleasure, among other topics.

In the episode titled “**Purity Culture is a Scam**” featuring educator and digital storyteller Jameelah Jones, the women discuss the predominantly White Evangelical Christian movement's “chokehold on the Black church.” The purity culture movement, which emerged in the 1990s, has been **criticized** for promoting teachings that “have



shame response to pleasure, and perpetuating rape culture.”

“If you are a Black church girl, you probably didn’t hear the kindest messaging from or beyond the pulpit about your body,” said Briggs, who describes herself as a spiritual leader who is “no longer at war with her body.”

“So our earliest memories of God and our sexuality or even our breasts or our menstrual cycle, it was just rough, with lots of shame and repression. That energy, that conditioning doesn’t just go away. You have to actively deconstruct, decolonize, and reject the narratives that don’t serve you and ask God, ‘What is the truth about who I am?’” added Briggs, who tackles some of these issues in her book, *Sensual Faith: The Art of Coming Home to Your Body*.

Winans and Briggs are aware that not all Black women of faith will identify with many of their viewpoints, and they are OK with that.

“It’s not about you fully agreeing with everything,” Winans said. “It’s just [about] listening and understanding your other sisters and what they’re going through.”

