

Michelle Williams: 'Self-Care Sometimes Means Saying No'—DALLAS, Nov. 13, 2018

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE TACKLES MENTAL HEALTH, GENDER EQUALITY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Nearly 10,000 faith-minded businesswomen from 19 countries gathered at Bishop T.D. Jakes' *Woman, Thou Art Loosed!* Master Class conference to hone their skills across business, entertainment, healthcare, technology, finance and ministry. Jakes and his daughter, Sarah Jakes Roberts, hosted the event, which included talks from Cynthia Marshall, CEO of the Dallas Mavericks; Nona Jones, manager at Facebook; and Michelle Williams, Grammy-award winning singer-songwriter.

Williams, former member of Destiny's Child and now reality star with her new series *Chad Loves Michelle* on OWN, shared her struggles with depression and stressed the importance of prioritizing mental health, as more than one in five adults experience mental illness in a given year. She encouraged busy women to release the temptation to do it all, emphasizing that "self-care sometimes means saying no," and commented on her visit to a mental health facility stating, "It was one of the best things I could have ever done." She debunked the myth of those who are stereotypically thought of being in a mental health facility, telling conference attendees, "Look at the person sitting next to you; that's who was there."

Jakes' "Conversations with America" study found 54 percent of Americans believe women have fewer economic opportunities than men, which is why this year's new Master Class format featured panels on topics such as the challenges female leaders face in male-dominated work environments, how to succeed in corporate America, tips to gain financial freedom and how to achieve work-life balance.

"We recognize the immense challenges facing women today, especially women of color," said Jakes, entrepreneur and senior pastor of The Potter's House. "Powerhouse female businesswomen and leaders cast their vision and provided practical tools to help women advance in their unique spheres of influence. We were thrilled to see nearly 10,000 women equipped with tools for success. My hope is that we are going to see a ripple across America of strong female leaders rising up."

To kick off the conference, The Potter's House celebrated the graduation of 95 women for the God's Leading Ladies mentorship and enrichment program. At the event, Trayvon Martin's mother, Sybrina Fulton, presented the Lady of Grace award to Allison Jean, mother of Botham Jean, to recognize Jean's grace, courage and resilience as she rose up to advocate for her son and others who have unjustly lost their lives.

To support Domestic Violence Awareness Month, attendees participated in The Potter's House's UNITED MegaCare Bags-2-Go campaign. Women donated new and gently used bags for domestic violence victims in partnership with Genesis Women's Shelter. The Bags-2-Go campaign aims to bring dignity back to those who are facing a vulnerable situation and are in transition.

For more than 25 years, *Woman, Thou Art Loosed!* has been training, teaching and inspiring more than half a million women. Jakes revealed the next conference will be held in 2020. Visit WTAL.org for more information about future events. Stay connected on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram by following @MyWTALConf. Photos and video are available.

ABOUT WOMAN, THOU ART LOOSED!

Woman, Thou Art Loosed! began as a women's bible study in 1992 by Bishop Jakes and has since birthed a best-selling book, a widely acclaimed stage play, a GRAMMY®-nominated CD and a national conference. In October 2004, *Woman, Thou Art Loosed!* was developed into a movie in collaboration with Reuben Cannon Productions and became a box office top-10 hit, winning a 2005 NAACP Image Award. Since its inception, the national conference has reached more than half a million women from around the world. For more information, visit WTAL.org.

ABOUT THE POTTER'S HOUSE

Founded in 1996, The Potter's House is a 30,000-member nondenominational, multicultural church and humanitarian organization led by Bishop T.D. Jakes. Consistently ranked among the largest and most influential churches in the U.S., The Potter's House has five locations across Texas, Colorado and California. For more information, visit ThePottersHouse.org.