

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DECONSTRUCT YOUR FAITH?

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What is deconstruction?

Deconstruction of the Christian faith is a process that occurs when people begin to doubt or walk away from their faith because of things they've heard that cast doubt on the Christian faith; because of a major crisis in their lives; or because they have questions, they are afraid to ask or feel no one will address to receive godly, biblical answers. BWI seeks to answer many of these questions and to anchor us in our faith.

Evidence for Christianity so strong skeptics trying to disprove Christianity start to realize the Bible is actually true, Jesus really rose from the grave, Jesus claimed to be God and gave evidence for it and end up becoming a Christian.

Christian students leaving home, whether for college or the workplace, will be confronted with arguments against the Christian faith and may begin to doubt whether Christianity is true.

Don't believe something just because your parents or someone else told you to believe it, decide for yourself whether the belief is true or not.

Students questioning their faith should ask questions and pursue answers to those questions based on what is objectively true.

Why Do Christians Question or Leave their Faith?

Christians will be challenged by intelligent non-Christians throughout their lives. "A lot of young people reject the Christian faith for different reasons, only reject it if you think it is not true."

Some genuinely have questions and want answers but are afraid to ask Christian leaders or other Christian friends/adults in their life, due to fear of being shamed or rejected. Christian families, friends, and church leaders must be prepared to welcome questions from curious

or doubting believers. They must be listened to, mentored, encouraged, and provided the resources they need to help them in their search for biblical truth.

Others use intellectual questions to mask the real issue and driving force behind their questions: They want to have fun and do whatever they desire to do in their lives without having a God telling them what to do with their bodies, their time, and their money. They want to enjoy their lives. "Sometimes the heart of the problem is a problem of the heart."

"The majority of people who leave the Christian faith were never in it, to begin with." They didn't come into the church because they were sinners in need of God's grace; they came because they were hurting and had been told that Jesus would make them feel better. They never humbled themselves before God and asked His forgiveness. They subscribed to a false gospel – one of self-righteousness that does not recognize their true need of God.

The parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) illustrates two ways a Christian student can be tempted to leave their faith: live however they want or obey the rules.

The younger son rejects his father, decides to leave his father's house, and live on his own in a way that his father would not be proud of. A student having grown up in the church and leaving a Christian home for college, like the younger son, will be tempted to leave their faith and go live however they want apart from God.

The older son lived in his father's house and did everything right but was angry and refused to celebrate the younger brother's return home. A student having grown up in the church and has done everything right leaving a Christian home for college, like the older son, will be tempted to think they are better than most people because they didn't do those big sins.

What have those who have walked away from Christianity replaced it with?

The question is which worldview best explains reality as it is. Christianity truly does describe reality as it is – even if it doesn't answer every question. Especially when it comes to suffering, we do not have all the answers. You're not a Christian because you have the answer to every question in your life – it's because you believe that Christianity makes the most sense in the world and provides us with a moral standard.

"If somebody's questioning Christianity it's not enough to say well that's just false and live in a reaction to it. You've got to replace it with something more reasonable, more existentially satisfying, and my response would be good luck. Because Christianity does describe reality as it is, even if we have some unanswered questions."

Some young people feel that Christianity is associated with things they don't want to be a part of – culturally, politically, etc. Looking at Christianity through the lens of current cultural topics, how should we address this with them?

We should tell them to read the Gospel and learn who Jesus is. Tell them to make sure if they reject Jesus, they are not rejecting a “straw man” – a false truth or portrayal of Jesus. And as they read the book of John, they should ask themselves questions such as “Who is this person, Jesus? Why has He turned the world upside down?” Make sure they’ve also considered the BEST of the Christian faith. Provide them with books on apologetics. Tell them to make sure they know Who Jesus is and have considered the best evidence from Him. It’s easier said than done, but we must do it.

How would you help a friend who was questioning their faith?

Don’t freak out about it. Respond how we’d want someone to respond to us. Simply say “Thanks for sharing this with me. I know doubt can be painful.” Ask them questions: “When did you first start to doubt? How have other people responded? How can I be a friend to you through this?” We can’t control other people, but we need to stay in their lives, love them, and be encouraging as they go through this season. They don’t want to let their friends and family down. Set yourself up to be friends with them for the long term. We must have mercy on those who doubt (Jude 1:22).

The theme of this conference is ANCHORED in the faith. How can we walk away from this conference and anchor ourselves to be ready for what comes next? What work does a young person in a Christian school need to do to prepare themselves for the next 10-15 years?

Don’t do it alone. You need Christian friends and mentors in your life - both to sustain you in your Christian faith and to help you walk through a season of questions or doubts if they come. It’s a mistake to try to do it alone.

Satan would like to use intellectual doubt or sin in your life to sidetrack you. Remember that Satan is a liar and a deceiver. Don’t allow Satan to tell you that if you fall short in some way morally if you tell anyone they’ll be ashamed of you. Don’t fall for it. Confess your sin and experience the freedom that comes from Christ – a God Who loves us, forgives us, and sets us free from sin.

Questions to Consider

1. What is your understanding of deconstruction? Do you think it’s ever healthy?
2. Why do you think someone questioning their faith ends up deconverting? Do you know anyone who has left their faith? Why do you think they did so?
3. If you had a friend who was questioning their faith, how would you help? What are good ways to help and bad ways?
4. What does the Bible have to say to those who are wrestling with their faith?
(See Jude 1:22)