

Beware of the Dangers of 'Christian Deconstruction'

We live in a time of seismic, social upheaval, and the shaking has triggered a trend known as “deconstruction” among Christians, especially in Western countries. You may not have heard the term, but it’s everywhere. People are questioning everything—including the church, spiritual leaders, traditional morality and the core doctrines of Christian faith.

Deconstruction made headlines last year when Kevin Max, a member of the popular Christian band DC Talk, announced that he was now an “ex-evangelical.” Noting that he was also “pro-LGBTQIA,” Max said he had been deconstructing his faith “for decades.”

Bart Campolo, son of famous evangelical author Tony Campolo, announced in 2011 that he had become an atheist and secular humanist. He described his journey this way: “I passed through every stage of heresy. It starts with sovereignty going, then biblical authority goes, then I’m a universalist, now I’m marrying gay people. Pretty soon I don’t actually believe Jesus actually rose from the dead in a bodily way.”

Meanwhile, Rob Bell—the controversial Michigan pastor who wrote a book renouncing the Christian doctrine of hell—is now on the rebound after being branded a heretic when “Love Wins” was published in 2011. Bell is no longer a pastor, but his podcast (known as “RobCast”) gets 180,000 downloads a week.

Many of the people who listen to Bell today are in the process of deconstructing their faith.

The deconstruction movement is especially attractive to younger people, who have lost trust in most institutions and who are turned off by Christians who mix politics with faith.

Statistics show that many Millennials and GenZs are abandoning the beliefs of their parents. Similar studies have shown that up to 25% of churchgoers never returned to church after taking a break during the pandemic.

So how is the modern church going to address the challenges posed by deconstruction? I personally believe the reason so many Christians are rejecting faith today is because they never had a strong foundation to begin with, and they never had a genuine, personal encounter with Jesus. If your faith is weak, it can be easily deconstructed. Conversely, if your faith is rock-solid, you will have no interest in dismantling it—and no demon in hell could convince you to tear it down.

I was raised in a traditional church, and I heard the message of the gospel countless times as a child and a teenager. But I went through my own crisis of faith in twelfth grade, and I came close to walking away from God. I was enticed by the lusts of the world. I doubted the truths I had read about in the Bible. I even questioned whether Jesus was really the Son of God.

Yet too many people were praying for me, including an older Christian minister who had invested a lot of time showing me God's unconditional love. A battle raged in my mind for a while, but eventually—the summer before I went to college—I had a profound experience with the Holy Spirit.

The Lord showed me that I could choose the wide road that leads to destruction, or the narrow road that leads to life. And when I chose the narrow road, my doubts faded. It was as if God began pouring concrete in the foundation of my soul, and I felt rooted and secure.

By the time I got to college, my faith only grew stronger. I became a student of the Bible, and I led other students to Christ. And when I faced the inevitable doubts or wilderness seasons, I pressed deeper into prayer or sought counsel from

mentors.

If you, or someone you love, is struggling with a faith crisis right now, take these steps:

1. Tune out the wrong voices. Jesus said there are many false prophets in the world (Matt. 24:11). Don't listen to those who are luring people away from faith in Jesus, or who spend all their time criticizing Christianity.

2. Be honest about your doubts. God doesn't condemn you for asking questions. The disciple Thomas doubted that Jesus had been raised from the dead, so Jesus invited him to touch His wounds (see John 20:27). If you have an open heart toward God, He will answer your questions and resolve your doubts as you follow Him.

3. Focus on Jesus, not people. One of the main reasons Christians question their faith is because the church has disappointed them. But Jesus never told us His people would be perfect. Instead, He called us to forgive those who hurt us. Don't let someone's attitudes, abusive actions, political opinions, racism or bigotry drive you away from God. Instead, say to yourself: "I will forgive them, and I'll pray that by the Holy Spirit's power I'll never act like that."

4. Seek a supernatural moment of true conversion. When Nicodemus came seeking spiritual answers, Jesus' answer surprised him. Jesus said: "You must be born again" (John 3:7b). Real faith isn't built on some deep knowledge from a book; you need a spiritual encounter with Jesus.

5. Build a strong foundation of faith. Don't tear your faith down by listening to the devil's doubts. Study God's Word, believe it, apply it to your life and obey it—even if the deconstructionists make fun of you for believing the Bible. Jesus compared the Christian life to building a house on a sturdy rock—and we need that rock today in these turbulent times.

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