

Why Are So Many Evangelicals Deconstructing Their Faith?

In recent years, a growing number of evangelicals have begun what is commonly referred to as “deconstruction”—a process of reevaluating, questioning or even rejecting the faith they once held. While honest reflection and theological inquiry can be healthy, many who deconstruct do so not from a place of deeper biblical engagement but from personal disillusionment, cultural pressures or a lack of theological grounding. For some, deconstruction is a pathway to a more refined and mature faith. For others, it becomes an exit ramp away from Christianity altogether.

The perceived challenges are not necessarily items I am struggling with personally; I am merely sharing my observations. (Case in point: I have no issue with the exclusivist claim of the historic church regarding Jesus as the only way to salvation.)

20 Reasons Deconstruction Occurs

1. Disillusionment with church culture and leadership. Scandals, abuses of power and failures in moral accountability among high-profile church leaders have led many to question the integrity of the evangelical church. The gap between professed beliefs and actual practices of some spiritual leaders has created deep mistrust.

2. Rigid and dogmatic teachings. For some, their evangelical church’s insistence on strict doctrinal positions leaves little room for exploration or doubt. When people encounter

questions or experiences that don't fit into rigid theological frameworks, they can feel pushed to explore faith outside of these structures.

3. Lack of open dialogue around doubt. Many feel that their questions or doubts aren't welcomed in church settings, which can lead them to seek answers elsewhere. When doubt is discouraged or dismissed, individuals may feel isolated, which can prompt them to reevaluate or leave their faith.

4. Conflicts between faith and science. Issues such as evolution, so-called climate change and medical ethics have sometimes been contentious in evangelical circles. For those who find far-left scientific evidence compelling, the perceived conflict between faith and science can drive a need to reconcile or abandon previous beliefs.

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5. Cultural and political alignment. For some evangelicals, the church's close ties with certain political movements have caused frustration. When faith seems inextricably linked to a specific political agenda, individuals may feel their faith is compromised, particularly if they hold differing political views.

6. Social justice concerns. Many younger evangelicals feel their church has lagged in addressing issues like racial justice, poverty and gender equality. The perceived lack of concern for social issues can cause people to question whether the church aligns with the compassionate and justice-centered life of Jesus.

7. Exclusivist and judgmental attitudes. The evangelical stance that salvation is exclusively for believers can appear judgmental to some, particularly as they encounter people from other religious backgrounds. Those who value inclusivity may find it hard to reconcile with the church's often exclusive

stance on salvation.

8. Personal experiences of trauma or abuse. Unfortunately, some have experienced trauma, abuse or manipulation within evangelical communities. For these individuals, deconstruction can be a process of healing and reclaiming their identity, separating faith from the harm inflicted by certain individuals or groups.

9. The rise of progressive theology and spirituality. Thanks to social media and books, exposure to more progressive interpretations of Christianity and other spiritual perspectives is now easier than ever. This broader access to alternative beliefs invites comparison and often leads to a reconsideration of traditional evangelical doctrines.

10. Desire for a faith more rooted in mystery and wonder. Some attend a church with a dogmatic emphasis on certainty with clear answers, limiting the mystery and depth they seek in a relationship with God. They may feel drawn toward contemplative practices, ancient liturgies or traditions that embrace mystery over rigid certainty.

11. Lack of sound biblical discipleship. Many evangelicals were never deeply discipled in biblical truth, leaving them vulnerable when they encounter challenges to their faith. Without a firm foundation, they may struggle to reconcile complex theological issues.

12. Lack of theological pulpit preaching. Many churches focus on motivational or topical sermons rather than robust theological teaching. Without regular exposure to profound biblical doctrine, believers may lack the tools to wrestle with difficult theological questions, making deconstruction more likely.

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13. Disillusionment vs. deconstruction. Some mistake disillusionment—disappointment with church structures, leadership failures or hypocrisy—for a reason to deconstruct their faith entirely, rather than recognizing that fallible humans do not invalidate biblical truth.

14. Emotional theology vs. rational belief. Many were raised in church cultures that emphasized emotional experiences over intellectual engagement with Scripture. When emotional highs fade or challenges arise, they lack a rational foundation for their faith, leading to doubt and deconstruction.

15. A desire to undermine rather than discover truth. For some, deconstruction is less about sincerely seeking truth and more about critiquing, exposing or dismantling religious structures. They approach faith with skepticism rather than a desire to understand or grow.

16. Reclaiming power from the established church. Deconstruction can sometimes serve as an act of resistance against institutional authority. Some see leaving evangelicalism as a way to assert personal autonomy, rejecting traditional structures they perceive as oppressive.

17. A form of rebellion and autonomy. Some individuals deconstruct not because they have carefully examined biblical doctrine but because they desire moral and lifestyle autonomy. The authority of Scripture becomes an obstacle rather than a guiding truth.

18. Culture, not Scripture, affirms reality for them. Rather than interpreting culture through the lens of Scripture, many deconstruct because they allow cultural ideologies—on morality, identity and justice—to shape their worldview more than biblical teachings.

19. Holding to doctrines they never understood. Many were taught what to believe but not why they thought it. Without a framework for critical thinking, their faith was built on

borrowed convictions rather than personal understanding, making it easy to abandon when challenged.

20. Struggling with hard questions about God's justice (theodicy). Difficult theological questions—such as why a good God allows suffering—can cause many to rethink their faith. Without a biblical grounding in God's sovereignty, justice and the problem of evil, they may find secular explanations more compelling.

Believers must prioritize deep discipleship by engaging in sound biblical teaching and theological study to prevent deconstruction. Other solutions for working through the impulses of deconstruction include: encourage open dialogue about doubts within church communities, for a culture where tough questions are welcomed and addressed; cultivate a personal relationship with God through prayer, Scripture and spiritual disciplines, making faith experiential, not just intellectual; distinguish between church failure and biblical truth, and don't let disappointment with people drive rejection of God; engage with apologetics to develop a well-reasoned faith that withstands cultural pressures. Finally, build a strong Christian community, surrounding yourself with mentors and believers who encourage and challenge your growth.

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Dr. Joseph Mattera is an internationally known author, consultant and theologian whose mission is to influence leaders who influence culture. He is the founding pastor of Resurrection Church and leads several organizations, including the U.S. Coalition of Apostolic Leaders and Christ Covenant Coalition.