

FRACTURED FAITH

Finding Your Way Back to God
in an Age of Deconstruction

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You've read the book—now go deeper!

This practical discussion guide will help you reset your faith through thought provoking, chapter by chapter discussion and application questions. You can go through this study guide alone, or better yet, as a book club with a group of your friends!

For more information visit fracturedfaithbook.com

Where is God in my pain?

1. The introduction sets the stage for pain and disappointment in Lina's life caused by the Church. In your Christian life, have you ever experienced pain and disappointment with your Church? How has it impacted your faith journey?

2. Lina tells the story of her friend who stopped believing God because she didn't feel His presence in her deepest pain. Does her experience sound familiar? Why do you think some people turn to God in their pain while others run from Him instead?

3. What are some of the most common ways Christians deal with the pain of disappointment?

4. What are some of the trite answers you've been given when you've honestly asked the question: "Where is God in my pain?"

5. Where would you put yourself in the deconstruction schematic in this season of your life? Where do you long to be?

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- Why am I disappointed right now?
- What did I really desire and long for?
- Is that desire good or bad?
- If that desire is good, am I willing to surrender it to God who is good and trust him with the outcome?
- If that desire is bad, am I willing to let it go?

Why can't I overcome the sin in my life?

1. One of the most discouraging places to live in the Christian life is the place where you long for change but don't see anything happening. What are some of the emotions you feel when you think about the areas in your life where you long for change, but nothing seems to be happening?

2. Let's talk marshmallows! What is your response to the marshmallow illustration? In what ways did you identify with it? Are there any specific steps in the marshmallow eating cycle that you connected with?

3. “Sin is less about your hormones or your genetic make-up and more about your view of God. Sin is not a habit issue. It’s a heart issue. Sin is not about behavior modification but desire modification.” Does this concept give you more freedom or stress you out more?

4. In what specific ways have you found the Father's house better than living in the pigsty?

5. Reflect on the heart of the Father. How does meditating on the goodness of the Father and his response to the prodigal renew your hope and deepen your longing for God?

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Is this how Christians are supposed to act?

1. Why does the pain caused by other Christians hurt so much more than we might expect it to?

2. One of the hardest questions to answer when you've been hurt by God's people is why God doesn't step in and do something about it? How would you answer this question?

3. One of the most tragic realities is the fact that the #1 most common reason for leaving the church is not Jesus, it's His people. Have you been guilty of reaching wrong conclusions about God because of his people? How can we change that and become people that attract others to Jesus instead of the opposite?

4. God uses our pain to redirect our purposes. Has that ever happened to you in your life?

5. How do you forgive someone who has hurt you so deeply?

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Is God really fair?

1. Let's start with honesty and get something off our chest: what are some of the ways you've observed in this world that make you wonder about the fairness of God? Make a list of the ways you think God is unfair.

2. Let's make this personal: do you struggle with God's justice? Has your struggle led you away from believing God? Do you see the God of the New Testament kinder and more compassionate than the God of the Old Testament?

3. Discuss the difference or nuances between fairness and justice.

4. What is your reaction to the parable in Matthew 20:1-16? Why do you think Jesus highlights a parable that makes God look unfair?

5. “God is not always fair and it’s one of the best things to know about the God of the Bible.” Have you ever benefited from the fact that God isn’t always fair, yet is always just?

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Is this the normal Christian life?

1. “What we often call a crisis of faith is simply the normal Christian life. What we call disillusionment in our faith is often just the normal Christian life.” In what ways do you agree or disagree with this statement?

2. What role has duty played in your Christian life? Have you ever found yourself functioning out of duty instead of delight? Are there times when living out of a sense of duty is a good thing?

3. Take a moment and think about your life for a moment. Divide your life into stages, creating a map of your life so far. Now try to give a title to each season you've identified. How does looking at the big picture change your perspective about what's really happening in your life?

4. How does God use crisis in our life to grow us in our walk with Him? How does brokenness that is birthed from crisis transform us into more mature Christians?

5. Have you ever found yourself in a wrestling match with God? What was at the heart of your struggle? How did things turn out?

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Why can't I feel more of God in my life?

1. What are some of the “red cardinal” moments in your life? Where and how do you tend to experience God’s presence the most?

2. Why do you think so many Christians live with a deep sense of wanting to experience God more deeply, but don't seem to be able to do so?

3. “It’s not our longings for more of God that lead us away from God, it’s our longings for more from God that deconstruct our faith.” Discuss your thoughts and reactions to this sentence.

4. As you think about your present life and circumstances, what would “breakthrough” look like in your life? What might be the “breakthrough” God is offering you instead?

5. The concept of “old practices, new rhythms” is a key concept in the reconstruction of faith. It’s the process of moving from duty and obligation to delight in God’s presence and ways. What rhythms in your Christian life have been life giving? What rhythms need to grow?

6. Would you say you're hedging your life on God's goodness, or are you leery of His silences? What does the life that is quiet enough to hear his whispers look like?

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Why is it so hard for Christians to love?

1. The role of the Christian is to love other people, not fix them. Have you been guilty of trying to fix other people in an effort to make them more acceptable to God? What are some of the ways you've done that?
2. When trying to balance truth and love, on which side do you tend to lean? What advice would you give someone who tends to lean towards one side more than the other?
3. How might a Christian be both set apart from the culture, but be also fully engaged in reaching a post-Christian culture?
4. Describe what a church that is both welcoming to sinners but faithful to the gospel would look like.
5. In order to love well, you will likely risk deeply. What are some of the things you might be willing to risk in order to show those you don't agree with the depth of Christ's love for them?

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Is it supposed to be this hard?

1. Who do you identify with more: Mark or Demas? What was the point of deconstruction in each of these stories?
2. Describe a time in your life when you have been tempted to quit. What was it that kept you from quitting?
3. The Christian life boils down to your yesses. It's often a simple yes that is the catalyst that moves you back to the Lord. Talk about the biggest yesses in your life so far.
4. What's keeping you from living in a place of faith right now? Are you ready to let go of anything that is holding you back from the love of God for you?
5. Let's end by looking at the deconstruction schematic again. Now that you've read this book and walked this journey, where on the deconstruction scale would you place yourself?

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A word from the author

Thank you for joining me on this journey back to God. You have trusted me with your heart and time and I do not take this privilege lightly. I would love to find out more about you. Would you email me your story, or just say hello, at lina@livingwithpower.org. Tell me how God used this book to lead you back to Him.

I'd also love for you to share your thoughts about Fractured Faith on your social media page, or leave an Amazon review so that the word will spread about God's love.

What if you are the catalyst that will help bring someone back to the loving arms of the Father?

Remember that all this time you think you're finding your way back to God is really about understanding that God has already found his way to you!

Cheering you on,

Lina

P.S. If you're looking to find healing and restoration for your soul, check out our retreat center at thehoperanch.org

We provide spiritual retreats for individuals and small groups who desire to hear God more clearly, away from the distractions of everyday life.