

FRACTURED FAITH

Finding Your Way Back to God
in an Age of Deconstruction

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Video Bible Study

Start Here

One of my favorite parts of sharing my story with you is the part where we take a walk back together into the waiting arms of Jesus. I'm talking about the Bible study part. Bible study is an interesting phenomenon. It can turn into a habit. It can be done out of duty. It can fill our heads with knowledge but still leave our hearts dry. I can't tell you how often I've missed God in the pursuit of the study of His word. It shouldn't come as a surprise to us. It happened to the pharisees. If you're reeling from the pain of your disappointments, or if you've been deeply wounded by God's people, you probably understand how easy it is to slip into a Christian life where we're going through the motions, but our hearts are kept safely hidden from God.

When our faith becomes fractured, and it hurts, it's easy to choose numbness over healing. If you've read my book, *Fractured Faith*, then you know my story too well by now.

As a physician I am so well aware of the reality that I'm simply an instrument. I'm not the healer. All I do is help people find their way back to healing. That's my goal in this 7-week Bible study. No matter how much pain you're feeling, or maybe you're on the other side of pain, we're going to experience God's presence once again. We're going to see God's goodness afresh. We're going to find healing. My prayer is that God uses me to help point the way. Perhaps you need someone to lean on as you make your way back into the waiting arms of the Father. Consider this my shoulder to lean on, my gift to you.

I'm so grateful you've trusted me with the pain in your life. We've put together a PDF outline of my notes and study questions that will help you process the material. Each session will close with a Reset activity to help slow you down enough to experience God even more deeply.

Whether you choose to do this study alone or with a group of people, I'm so glad you showed up for the reconstruction of your faith.

Cheering you on,

Lina

Outline

- Lesson 1 Where is God in my pain?
- Lesson 2 Why did my story end up this way?
- Lesson 3 Why can't I overcome sin in my life?
- Lesson 4 Are Christians supposed to act this way?
- Lesson 5 Is God really fair?
- Lesson 6 Is this the normal Christian life?
- Lesson 7 What kind of love is this?

LESSON 1

Where is God in my pain?

FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES

Take some time to read the verses below. Look them up in the Bible, considering the context.

MARK 4:35-41

"On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

LESSON OUTLINE

These are some of the key points from the video session. Feel free to take additional notes in the space provided.

1. It's easier to assume God has forgotten me than to recognize the truth that it is God who _____ into the storm

2. It's easier to _____ God than to trust him when I'm stuck in the middle of the storm

3. It's easier to _____ God when I need him than to reach out to him when I'm unaware of how much I do

4. It's easier to worship God when I've experienced his power but _____
to worship him when I recognize who he really is

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here's your chance to relate the truth of God's word to your own life. After you read the questions, respond in dialogue with others, or in writing.

1. Take some time to tell your story. Write down your life story focusing on the 3-5 most painful events you've ever gone through.
2. What is the biggest storm you're facing right now? How are you relating to God in your storm?
3. Looking back at the suffering in your life, in what ways can you see God's presence with you even when you weren't aware of it?
4. Make a list of all of the questions that you've wrestled with about God and His goodness. Don't force the answers yet. Simply write down your questions and ask God to give you answers.
5. Where are you in the spectrum of the deconstruction of your faith?

RESET

It's time to take a step closer towards God. Individually take a moment to tell God the truth about your pain. One way to do it is to write a letter to God, telling him what stories in your life have been the most painful. Pour your heart out to him. Don't be afraid of telling him what he already knows. Then pray this prayer as we close our time for this session.

*Lord,
Open my eyes that I may see you
Open my ears that I may hear you
Open my mouth that I may praise you
Open my heart to receive all that you have for me today.*

LESSON 2

Why did my story end up this way?

FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES

Take some time to read the verses below. Look them up in the Bible, considering the context.

JOHN 21:4-13

4 Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, "Children, do you have any fish?" They answered him, "No." 6 He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. 7 That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea. 8 The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. 9 When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, 153 of them. And although there were so many, the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish.

LESSON OUTLINE

These are some of the key points from the video session. Feel free to take additional notes in the space provided.

1. When my life hasn't lived up to my expectations it's important to resist the temptation

2. When my life hasn't lived up to my expectations it's critical to understand how _____

3. When my life hasn't lived up to my expectations, I can be sure God is still _____
with open arms

4. When my life hasn't lived up to my expectations my only hope is _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here's your chance to relate the truth of God's word to your own life. After you read the questions, respond in dialogue with others, or in writing.

1. What are some of the ways Christianity has not lived up to your expectations?
2. Have you ever hoped and prayed for something only to receive the bitter taste of disappointment instead? How did your response to God's no's reveal what you love the most?
3. Why do you think God sometimes gives you deep and godly desires but doesn't seem to fulfill them?
4. Instead of bringing God your expectations, bring him your longings. What are some of your longings and how can you bring them to God without fear?

RESET

It's time to take a step closer towards God. For this reset activity, you'll need to find one smooth stone. On one side of the stone write down a one-word summary of the biggest disappointment in your life. Now set the stone on a table and imagine Jesus cooking breakfast for you while that disappointment stares right back at you. What do you think Jesus would say to you? How would you respond? Now turn the stone over and write down a one-word desire you still have in your life. Now surrender that stone to Jesus. You might pray this prayer by faith:

Dear Jesus,

You've seen my pain and sat with me in my disappointment. And you're still here. You're still good. You're still the only one who can give me the deepest desires of my heart. Today I offer you my heart, trusting you to do what only you can. I surrender my deepest longings to you. You're the giver of my dream. You're the haler of my heart. Thank you for what you're resurrecting in my life even in this moment of quiet surrender. Amen.

LESSON 3

Why can't I overcome sin in my life?

FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES

Take some time to read the verses below. Look them up in the Bible, considering the context.

Romans 7:14-25

14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. 15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. 17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. 20 Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 21 So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. 22 For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, 23 but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. 24 Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.

LESSON OUTLINE

These are some of the key points from the video session. Feel free to take additional notes in the space provided.

1. When it comes to overcoming sin in my life it's encouraging to know that _____

2. When it comes to overcoming sin in my life it's essential to understand that I'm _____

3. When it comes to overcoming sin in my life it helps to dig past my sin _____
of my desires

4. When it comes to overcoming sin in my life, I must accept that _____ is greater
than my sin

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here's your chance to relate the truth of God's word to your own life. After you read the questions, respond in dialogue with others, or in writing.

- 1.** Do you think it's possible for people to change? Describe some of the ways you have changed over the course of your life.
- 2.** What areas in your Christian life do you still consistently fall in? What does that say about your faith?
- 3.** The marshmallow test: one of the surest ways to know how much you love God is to consider the marshmallow in your life. Are you willing to give up your marshmallow for the sake of God? What does your answer say about your heart?
- 4.** Sin is not about behavior modification. It's about desire modification. What are some ways you can develop Godly desires in your life?

RESET

It's time to take a step closer towards God. Today we're going to get vulnerable. We're going to burn marshmallows, but you'll need a friend to do that. Read the marshmallow analogy to your friend, then in a step of faith, risk telling your friend what it is you turn to for solace when you're hurting. Now pray with your friend the words to this prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus,

I come before you broken and wanting. I confess that too often in my life I've turned to what feels good rather than to the only one who is good. I thought I could find temporary satisfaction my way, but I've found nothing but guilt and shame. Today, I see the truth. Only you satisfy my deepest longings. Only you understand my heart's cry for more. Free me from the lie that I've crossed the line with you. Help me to receive your grace as I jump into your waiting arms. Thank you for loving me despite my brokenness. Thank you for loving me because of my brokenness. In Jesus' name, Amen.

LESSON 4

Are Christians supposed to act this way?

FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES

Take some time to read the verses below. Look them up in the Bible, considering the context.

Acts 7:23-35

23 When he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the children of Israel. 24 And seeing one of them being wronged, he defended the oppressed man and avenged him by striking down the Egyptian. 25 He supposed that his brothers would understand that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not understand. 26 And on the following day he appeared to them as they were quarreling and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brothers. Why do you wrong each other?' 27 But the man who was wronging his neighbor thrust him aside, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? 28 Do you want to kill me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' 29 At this retort Moses fled and became an exile in the land of Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

30 Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush. 31 When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight, and as he drew near to look, there came the voice of the Lord: 32 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.' And Moses trembled and did not dare to look. 33 Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. 34 I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.'

35 This Moses, whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?'—this man God sent as both ruler and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush.

LESSON OUTLINE

These are some of the key points from the video session. Feel free to take additional notes in the space provided.

1. Nothing _____ than the pain inflicted on you by your own people

2. Nothing will send you _____ faster than the pain inflicted by your own people

3. Nothing will keep you _____ in the wilderness longer than refusing to believe God

4. Nothing is more exhausting than _____ when you're given the chance to let it go

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here's your chance to relate the truth of God's word to your own life. After you read the questions, respond in dialogue with others, or in writing.

1. There's no pain like the pain inflicted by other Christians. What makes the pain inflicted by other Christians so much worse than any other pain?
2. When you hear of someone who has stopped going to church because he/she has been hurt by the church, what's your response?
3. What are some practical ways to rebuild trust with other Christians when you've been wounded by other Christians?
4. When it comes to Church, some argue that it's more important to be the church than to go to church. Do you agree or disagree?

RESET

It's time to take a step closer towards God. Today we're talking about redirection and how God uses your failures and rejections to redirect your calling. So let's go for a walk. Leave your phone at home. Leave your agendas and speaking outlines at home. This walk is going to be a quiet one. Listen to what God says. Enjoy his presence. And with each step you take remind yourself that each time you experience a detour in your life, God is redirecting you back to your calling. When you come back from your walk, open your journal and record what you felt God spoke to you about in your time with him.

LESSON 5

Is God Really Fair?

FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES

Take some time to read the verses below. Look them up in the Bible, considering the context.

Matthew 20:1-16

1 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, 4 and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' 5 So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' 7 They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' 8 And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' 9 And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. 10 Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. 11 And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, 12 saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' 13 But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. 15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' 16 So the last will be first, and the first last."

LESSON OUTLINE

These are some of the key points from the video session. Feel free to take additional notes in the space provided.

1. God's fairness _____ when I'm the one benefiting from it

2. God's fairness _____ when others seem to be benefitting more from it

3. God's fairness _____ when I put myself in the place of God

4. God's fairness _____ in the finished work of Jesus on the cross

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here's your chance to relate the truth of God's word to your own life. After you read the questions, respond in dialogue with others, or in writing.

1. Does it seem unfair to consider that humans don't get to decide whether God is fair or not?
2. Have you ever struggled with God's justice? Has your struggle ever led you away from believing God?
3. What are some of the human struggles that make you doubt the justice of God?
4. How does the mercy of God and His justice meet together in the person of Jesus Christ?
5. If you could ask God one question about his justice, what would you ask?

RESET

It's time to take a step closer towards God. Grab a stack of 3x5 cards. On each card, start writing reasons why you don't deserve God's love and forgiveness. Be brutally honest. Now get a bowl and put the cards in it. Light a match and burn them all up. Now get a new set of cards. On each card, write something God has given you that you do not deserve. Pick your favorite of the new stack. Frame this card and hang it somewhere in your house where you can see it daily. Then pray this prayer of gratitude with me as we close our time for this session.

Dear Jesus,

Thank you doesn't seem enough, but it's the words I know to express the depth of love I feel for all you've done for me. Thank you that your love is not fair, your grace is not fair, and Christ's death on the cross was not fair. Thank you for bearing for me what I could never bear on my own.

Thank you for welcoming me into your arms again. I'll never get enough of your grace in my life. I love you so much, Amen.

LESSON 6

Is this the normal Christian life?

FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES

Take some time to read the verses below. Look them up in the Bible, considering the context.

Genesis 32:22-32

22 The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23 He took them and sent them across the stream, and everything else that he had. 24 And Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. 25 When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched his hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. 26 Then he said, "Let me go, for the day has broken." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." 27 And he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." 28 Then he said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed." 29 Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. 30 So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been delivered." 31 The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip. 32 Therefore to this day the people of Israel do not eat the sinew of the thigh that is on the hip socket, because he touched the socket of Jacob's hip on the sinew of the thigh.

LESSON OUTLINE

These are some of the key points from the video session. Feel free to take additional notes in the space provided.

1. The normal Christian life is a life that tells the story of your _____
with God

2. The normal Christian life is a life of progressive maturity that grows out of _____

3. The normal Christian life is a life of learning how _____

4. The normal Christian life is about saying _____ to God over and over again

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here's your chance to relate the truth of God's word to your own life. After you read the questions, respond in dialogue with others, or in writing.

1. What's the difference between a Christianity born out of duty and one born out of love for God? What are some ways that you can distinguish the difference in a person?
2. Why do you think the Christian life is not meant to be easy and why is that such a surprise for most people these days?
3. Discipleship is about saying yes to God over and over again. When was the last time you said yes to God?
4. What are some things God might be asking you to say yes to right now?

5. What does holiness look like in our modern-day world? On a scale of 1-10 how holy is your life right now?

6. What are some of the most common reasons Christians quit the faith?

7. Have you ever been tempted to quit? What was behind your desire to quit?

RESET

It's time to take a step closer towards God. As we conclude today's session, take some time to jot down a timeline of your life. Identify major events and major setbacks. Now split into three categories. Give each category a title. Can you see God's hand guiding you through each season? Summarize one major lesson God has taught you about himself in each season. Now pray our prayer of awareness as God leads as you close your time for this session.

*Lord,
Open my eyes that I may see you
Open my ears that I may hear you
Open my mouth that I may praise you
Open my heart to receive all that you have for me today.*

LESSON 7

What kind of love is this?

FOUNDATIONAL SCRIPTURES

Take some time to read the verses below. Look them up in the Bible, considering the context.

Luke 15:11-32

11 And he said, "There was a man who had two sons. 12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. 13 Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. 14 And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. 16 And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. 17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants."' 20 And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. 23 And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

LESSON OUTLINE

These are some of the key points from the video session. Feel free to take additional notes in the space provided.

1. Nothing will reconstruct your faith faster than realizing that the _____ life in your Father's house is _____ than the best life away from his presence

2. Nothing will reconstruct your faith faster than redefining the very things that _____ from your father's house to begin with

3. Nothing will reconstruct your faith faster than experiencing _____ of God's love

4. Nothing will reconstruct your faith faster than _____ on the edges of God's goodness

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here's your chance to relate the truth of God's word to your own life. After you read the questions, respond in dialogue with others, or in writing.

1. Where are the places and ways that you tend to experience God most in?
2. When it comes to God's word, why is it so challenging for many Christians to experience God deeply and consistently through his word these days?
3. Think about an area in your life where you long to hear God's voice in. Have you ever shared that desire with someone yet? What does breakthrough in that area look like to you?
4. What do you do when God's silence is deafening in your life? Why do you think God is so silent to our deepest needs at times?

5. Old practices, new rhythms: identify 1-2 old practices that have left you frustrated in the past. How can you return to them with new rhythms?

6. Have you ever been deeply moved by other people's love towards you? Describe a situation where your life was rescued by love.

7. How has your faith been reconstructed through this book?

RESET

It's time to take one final step closer towards God. Today we're going to sing about God's love. We're going to rejoice in who God is. We're going to unleash a torrent of praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Write a poem or a song to the Lord, expressing your love for him. Then go outside to a quiet area and sing out loud to the Lord. Tell him all you've rediscovered about His love for you. Run into His arms again. Rejoice.

You are so deeply and so completely loved.

Answers to fill-in-the-blank

Lesson 1 Where is God in my pain?

- #1 led me
- #2 blame
- #3 cry out to
- #4 life changing

Lesson 2 Why did my story end up this way?

- #1 to hide
- #2 I got to this place
- #3 waiting for me
- #4 surrender

Lesson 3 Why can't I overcome sin in my life?

- #1 I'm not in this alone
- #2 I'm in a war
- #3 to the root
- #4 God's grace

Lesson 4 Are Christians supposed to act this way?

- #1 hurts more
- #2 into the wilderness
- #3 stuck
- #4 holding on to hurt

Lesson 5 Is God Really Fair?

- #1 is welcomed
- #2 is resented
- #3 is questioned
- #4 is complete

Lesson 6 Is this the normal Christian life?

- #1 love relationship
- #2 personal crisis
- #3 to limp
- #4 yes

Lesson 7 What kind of love is this?

- #1 worst, better
- #2 moved you away
- #3 the goodness
- #4 refusing to live