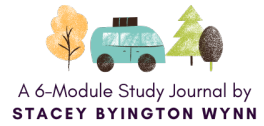




# DECONSTRUCTION

## *Your Journey in Faith*



Transcript for Audio Teaching: [Introduction](#)

Hi! This is Stacey. I want to welcome you to the audio files from my study journal called *Deconstruction: Your Journey in Faith*. If you have not yet purchased your copy, you can find it on Amazon. Each section has an accompanying audio file here on my website. You will also find opportunities to connect with me here, on [ClarityUnleashed.com](#). As a coach I offer personal coaching. If you want to explore this study as a small group, you can run that on your own, or join a virtual group or cohort. You will find more on that on my website.

Why did I write this study? There are so many amazing books and other resources from leaders in this space and I encourage you to take in all that are of interest to you. The modules included in this 6-part study are intended to provide a framework for you to process your personal journey, using Scriptural references that I found supportive for myself. It is a framework that adapts to meet your needs. And it is reusable. Know that once you make it through the modules, you can restart them again and find deeper truths and meaning.

I created this journal during my seminary internship. I am, at the time of this recording, very close to finishing my Master's program and am just wrapping up my internship within a ministry that means so much to me. It is a faith-based online community for women of faith who are in, or who have left destructive marriages. I have been a member of this community for several years now, and my deconstruction began in earnest as I came to terms with my own destructive marriage. Many survivors I have had the privilege of meeting have strong faith and trust in God, while simultaneously have questions about the intersection of faith and church denominations, traditions, practices, and church leadership. Some have been so damaged by their experiences within their marriages or churches that they hesitate to interact with



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Scripture. I honor that and know that sometimes avoiding Scripture for a time is exactly what is needed to heal. My intent with this journal is to demonstrate how deconstruction is very apparent and welcomed, even in our sacred text.

Working through this study journal will support a personal exploration of your faith. We will see about how our relationship with God can change as a result of grief, trauma, and loss. Change is not easy and can feel isolating and uncertain. I believe that you will look back on this time as one of significant growth. Let me encourage you—your testimony matters, your voice matters, and God sees you. You are an image-bearer with a direct connection to God and you were made for relationship with God. Even though we may feel isolated from others as we deconstruct, I want you to know that it is never dangerous or a waste of time to journey deeper into your faith.

Did you know that early followers of Christ were called The Way? It brings to my mind a journey. The name fits the stories of the women and men who met Christ and chose to leave behind their way of life in order to follow Him. I see the same occurrence in our lives. We live life our way for a period of time, and we pick up habits, beliefs, traditions, and practices as we go. Then one day we have a spiritual awakening, and we choose to leave behind our way of life in order to embark on The Way. Our choice becomes the starting point of our deconstruction. Our personal journey with God has a starting point and an ultimate destination. The Way is the path in-between and is comprised of seasons of resting, renewal, and reorientation.

I believe deconstruction is synonymous with the discipleship process known as spiritual formation. Christians mature in faith through disciplines including prayer, personal study, and formal teaching within church and ministry contexts. Sometimes



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teachings and experiences can be unhealthy and even abusive. During deconstruction, Christians faithfully examine how our relationship with God has been influenced by traditions, theology, church leadership, and societal factors experienced in our modern context.

Deconstruction is unique for each believer but typically involves wrestling with Bible translations, teachings, traditions, and personal experiences. Those who embark on the journey meet pushback from church leaders, family members, and friends. Misunderstanding, they believe that deconstruction means walking away from God when it typically leads to a much deeper faith.

I have a few reminders for you as you begin. Even if you do not yet believe these reminders for yourself, picture yourself stepping into them.

First, it is important to remember that nothing separates us from the love of God (Romans 8:38-39). Nothing means nothing. Deconstruction does not separate you from God. You may feel isolated from your prior church, ministry, or even people in your family, but you are not alone.

Second, you are a spiritual leader who makes your own choices and decisions. As a woman, one of the teachings I had to deconstruct is that husbands are the spiritual leaders over their wives. Another was that women require a man's headship or covering, meaning women cannot function within a ministry context independent of male spiritual authority. These are both traditions in some denominations, but I do not see clear support for either in Scripture. What I do see is that each of us is an image-bearer who is called to lead our own faith journey and spiritual formation. I believe nothing Scripturally prohibits any image bearer from leading ministries, teaching, or choosing to use your personal gifts as you pursue a relationship with



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God. While nothing prohibits you from doing these things, your choice may cause others to close their doors and opportunities to you. Seeing doors close in our lives is hard. But what a clear sign that it is time to move forward in a new direction.

Third, you have a direct and empowering connection to the Holy Spirit, Who brings wisdom, truth, and peace. The Holy Spirit equips and empowers us even when church doors are closed and even when our Bibles are closed. Develop an expectation for that connection.

Remain open to seeing, hearing, feeling, and knowing the Spirit's presence.

It is important to use more than one translation as you are studying Scripture. You do not have to purchase them, because you can find them free online. When exploring Scripture, consider reading from three translations. I recommend a formal version (NASB, NRSV), a more conversational version (CEB, NET), and a paraphrase (MSG). Try free online sources to view multiple translations. Why is it important to use multiple translations? The Bible was not written in English, nor was it written in our modern cultural setting. When we open its pages we are stepping into a time machine. Using multiple translations helps us more firmly grasp the culture and language. When we step out of our time machine and into the text, we start interacting with and learning from the lives of the original audience. The more we can do to empathetically step into their shoes, the better job we will do applying their words to our modern lives. I encourage you to approach the text with a holy curiosity, just as you would if you could go back in time to meet the authors and audience. Although studying Scripture is harder this way, I believe it will be an empowering habit to learn.

God speaks to us through Scripture and outside of Scripture. The Holy Spirit helps us navigate through our lives and helps us connect with others in community. We will explore this



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more in a later module. But for now, I encourage you to build your interaction with the Holy Spirit, and to pray for wisdom and discernment. I have developed a pattern of conversation with the Holy Spirit over the past few years and some of the ways we interact are through signs in nature, song lyrics, and themes that are present in books, podcasts, or sermons. If you do not recognize a pattern of communication in your life, pray for it. Simply ask God to connect to you in the coming days and remain open to the His presence.

Some of the modules may spark questions in your mind. Even if you do not know where to go to find answers to your questions, write your questions down. I believe that when the questions come, the answers are not far behind. If you would like to communicate with me directly, you have a few options that you will find in the study journal. Whether we meet in person or not, know that I am honored to walk with you on your journey.