



Transcript for Audio Teaching: [My Story: Clarity Unleashed](#)

Hi! This is Stacey. Thank you so much for joining me on this journey. As you look back at the time you have spent within this material, what stands out most to you? At the end of the book I share some of my own experiences framed by the same modules you have just completed. Like you, I'm still traveling on this path and learning as I go. I can attest to the fact that I take each step more confidently than the last because, like you, I am committed to the hard work of spiritual formation.

I started wrestling with God when I was coming to terms with the fact that my marriage was failing. I didn't know I was beginning a journey of deconstruction. I just felt like the walls were falling in on me from multiple directions and became increasingly disillusioned with the church I was in at the time and Christians who suggested that I stay in a destructive marriage. There was one weekend I was so angry at God I felt I had to get my thoughts on paper. I cried as I wrote God a scathing letter and it felt cathartic. When I was done I started a fire in my firepit, poured a glass of wine, and burned that letter. After that night I never hesitated to openly communicate with God. Give it a try. He already knows what's on your mind.

My Damascus Road experience is one that I will never forget. It was more of a process that included multiple points of extreme clarity. God had to break through my stubbornness and pride. I was trying so hard to keep my life together. I really thought I could fix everything. I needed to read the right books, talk to the right counselor, find the right words to explain my situation. I had a control problem. It had become an idol in my life and a significant one at that. The day those scales fell from my eyes I knew I had to give up. I remember where I was standing when the lightbulb went off in my head. I finally had clarity even though it seemed



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illogical to me. I told God I was going to stop trying to control the outcome of my marriage. I was going to lay it all at God's feet – right there on the altar – and let Him sort it out. I gave up my need to know the outcome and rededicated my faith in that moment.

Since that moment I have continued to unpack and repack my backpack. I have changed churches, started seminary, changed jobs, and embraced the freedom in my newfound faith. It's simplified yet also complex. I try to live with the Greatest Commandments as my anchor along with Romans 8:38. Love God, love others as I love myself, and remember nothing separates ANYONE from the love of God through Christ Jesus.

Loving others does not mean that we put up with toxic behavior. I have had to learn a lot about healthy boundaries. It's one thing to learn about them and another thing to actually employ healthy boundaries. We can hardly go a week without seeing a news story about abuse in the church. We have to recognize that churches are magnets for abusers. Where else can they find such a supply of forgiving, loving, and trusting prey? No one should put up with spiritual, physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, or financial abuse. Christians are not called to "turn the other cheek" and put up with this kind of behavior. We have to get better at spotting abuse, believing victims, supporting victims, and reporting abuse to the authorities.

Finding a perfect church is impossible, but that is not a justification for settling for a toxic one. If you haven't found your church yet, find your people. As I started into my deconstruction, I was closest to women in an online support group. They were my church. Since then, I've found similar communities through podcast Patreon groups, Facebook and groups. If we've learned anything during the pandemic, it is that church doors do not need to be open for the Holy Spirit to navigate our lives and connect us with other believers. Lean into that truth,



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and ask for more connections if you need them. Deconstruction can be an isolating experience. Don't do it all alone.

It might not be the answer you were hoping for, but faith deconstruction lasts a lifetime. From the point that the scales start falling from our eyes, we enter into a renewed relationship with God and begin our journey. We do the hard work of evaluating our worldview against God's truth. We seek more knowledge of theology, history, and traditions. We have real experiences with the Holy Spirit that change us forever.

My advice for faith deconstruction is not too complicated: Rest our physical body, our mind, and our spirit. Practice healthy boundaries. To the extent possible, walk away from unhealthy churches, ministries, and people. Shake the dust off of those sandals. Practice the discipline of capturing negative thoughts and replacing them with positive ones. When the negative thoughts overwhelm, seek professional help outside of the church. When we experience significant shifts in our belief system, take time to reorient to God as the True North. Notice how we feel lighter when we release our burdens to God. Do not equate church to faith. We can retain our faith and deepen it even if we leave our church. Release the burden of trying to explain this journey to those who choose not to listen. Find those with whom we can connect. These supporters may be on podcasts, or in online groups, or sharing advice in books. Let's find and connect with those who "get it."

As soon as I finish this study, I will be turning back to Module 1, just as I hope you do. Rest - Renew - Reorient. Keep putting one foot in front of the other, my friend. I'll see you on the trail ahead!