CHAPTER 1
DOUBT YOUR WAY BACK TO TRUTH
1. If you are facing doubts about Christianity, which question resonates more with you: “Is Christianity true?” or “Is Christianity good?” Why?
2. Think for a minute about the kinds of questions you’re levelling at Christianity. How might you ask those questions of yourself and your worldview?
3. Trevin Wax suggests that anyone who is deconstructing has a “newfound faith”—we don’t ditch our faith and sense of belonging, but rather transfer them to a new story and a new community. What do you think of this claim? Without orthodox Christianity, what or who are you trusting in and belonging to now?
4. What do you think of the main point of this chapter: that those who doubt should ask more questions, rather than fewer? Did it surprise you? How does this change how you think about your deconstruction?

CHAPTER 2
‘PROGRESSIVE’ CHRISTIANITY WAS EVEN SHALLOWER THAN THE EVANGELICAL FAITH I LEFT
1. How is your story of doubt similar or different to Ian Harber’s? Have you also asked the “triangle of questions” about Scripture, politics, and suffering? Which question is most urgent or prominent in your mind?
2. Harber came back to thinking about God in periods of suffering and mourning. Has suffering been part of your deconstruction (or reconstruction)?
3. What role has the response of churches or other Christians played in your deconstruction? Have your doubts been met with genuine engagement, or flippancy and suppression? If the latter, what difference might it have made if people responded differently?
4. What is your response to mysticism—the belief that God is an unknowable mystery? Has that view changed how you think about the Bible?

CHAPTER 3
DECONVERSION IS NOT AS COUNTERCULTURAL AS YOU THINK
1. Before your deconstruction began, had you seen other people publicly posting about their own deconstruction? What did you think and feel as you read those stories?
2. If you’re deconstructing from Christianity, what are you deconstructing to? Do you plan to keep some of the elements of traditional religion and “remix” them? What’s your reasoning for choosing which practices and beliefs you’ll adopt?
3. What role does the pursuit of freedom play in your deconstruction? How do you respond to Jesus’s teaching in John 8:32 that the truth is actually what sets us free?
4. Read the list Brett McCracken gives of how Christianity subverts Western cultural norms (p. 30). Which of these do you find the least appealing? How might your deconstruction be a response to the hard things that Jesus calls his followers to? Do you think that’s a good reason to abandon Jesus altogether?
CHAPTER 4

DON’T DECONSTRUCT—DISENCULTURATE INSTEAD

1. If you were raised in the church, what role does your upbringing play in your current deconstruction? What questions have gone unanswered? What issues or concerns does the Christianity of your childhood fail to address? What are you seeking—or seeking to get away from—as you look outside the church and orthodox belief?

2. Hunter Beaumont uses an illustration to distinguish the kernel of Christianity (the gospel) from its husk (the culture). Does this image help you as you think about your doubts? How would you articulate the kernel of Christianity?

3. Make a list of your main objections to Christianity. Are these issues with the teachings of the Bible or with the Christian subculture? Have you experienced a “cultural shift” of some kind recently which might have triggered these doubts?

4. Beaumont says that there is no such thing as Christianity lived outside culture—we must let the gospel take root in our own culture (pp. 39–40). Have you seen any churches or Christians do that well? How could a Christian live distinctly for Jesus in your current culture?

CHAPTER 5

SEX: TELLING A BETTER STORY

1. Rachel Gilson says that we all come to conversations about sexuality with different stories. What is your story? What role has the issue of sexuality played in your deconstruction?

2. Have you believed or experienced any of the three “false tales” described in this chapter (pp. 46–50)? What could it mean for your views on Christianity to know that the Bible tells us these stories are not true?

3. Gilson describes various ways that marriage is a symbol of how God loves the church (p. 48). Do these points accord with what you’ve been taught by the church about marriage and sexuality? How is your understanding similar or different?

4. How has this chapter changed (or confirmed) your understanding of sexuality? What further questions can you investigate to keep working through your doubts around this issue?

CHAPTER 6

RACE: IS CHRISTIANITY A WHITE MAN’S RELIGION?

1. What role has the issue of race played in your deconstruction?

2. Frederick Douglass and other African Americans from history model how we can respond to racial questions by disentangling instead of deconstructing (pp. 54–56). Do you see this approach as viable? What might get in the way for you or push you toward deconstruction?

3. Claude Atcho urges us to examine the history of Christianity, but most importantly to examine Jesus Christ. When you look at Jesus (as revealed in the Gospels) what do you learn about matters related to race like justice, suffering, and human dignity?

4. How has this chapter changed (or confirmed) your understanding of race issues? What further questions can you investigate to keep working through your doubts around this issue?

CHAPTER 7

POLITICS: JUST SERVANT, TYRANNICAL MASTER

1. What role has the issue of politics played in your deconstruction?

2. Samuel James writes: “The idol of politics promises a feeling of control over this intimidating world” (p. 63). To what extent does a desire for control lie behind your political activism? Have you found that politics delivers that control?

3. How strong is your desire to “win” in political battles? How does this influence your feelings toward people who think differently from you?

4. How has this chapter changed (or confirmed) your understanding of political issues? What further questions can you investigate to keep working through your doubts around this issue?
CHAPTER 8
INTERNET: DECONSTRUCTING FAITH ONLINE
1. What role have the internet and social media played in your deconstruction?
2. Who are you most often or most attentively listening to—online commentators with hot takes or flesh-and-blood people in community?
3. Have you experienced the internet eroding your ability to focus on long-format texts and real-life conversations? What action could you take this week to step back from the shallows of social media and reengage with deep thinking?
4. How has this chapter changed (or confirmed) your understanding of the internet and social media? What further questions can you investigate to keep working through your doubts stemming from these issues?

CHAPTER 9
SOCIAL JUSTICE: BREAKUP OR BREAKTHROUGH?
1. What role have social justice issues played in your deconstruction?
2. Thaddeus Williams gives a list of facts about the history of social justice and Christianity (pp. 79–80). Were you surprised by these facts? How do they change what you think about the place of social justice in authentic, biblical Christianity?
3. Let’s consider the questions Williams himself poses (pp. 82–83): “Is your pursuit of justice bearing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and the other fruits of the Holy Spirit, or is it fostering rotten fruit? Are you filled with more less suspicion, anxiety, and bitterness? Do you assume bigotry, hate, and ignorance are the best or only explanations for why others disagree with you? Do you love the unique image-bearers of God before you, or do you indulge in prejudice based on skin tone, gender, or status?”
4. How has this chapter changed (or confirmed) your understanding of social justice? What further questions can you investigate to keep working through your doubts around this issue?

CHAPTER 10
SCIENCE: WHY SCIENTISM CAN’T EXPLAIN MORALITY OR REALITY
1. What role have scientific issues played in your deconstruction?
2. Ask yourself the question Keith Plummer has all his students ask: “Is there anything that would persuade you that Christianity is true?” Does this chapter challenge how you think about the sort of evidence you should look for?
3. Do you find C. S. Lewis’s argument for the existence of God (presented on pp. 90–91) convincing? Why or why not?
4. How has this chapter changed (or confirmed) your understanding of science and scientism? What further questions can you investigate to keep working through your doubts around these issues?

CHAPTER 11
ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM: WE MUST ASK HARD QUESTIONS
1. What role have issues around intellect played in your deconstruction?
2. Have you heard of the concept of “theological triage” (p. 96), even if the term is unfamiliar? In the churches you’ve been in, what were the essential, first-tier doctrines? Did the presence or absence of theological triage affect how your questions were responded to?
3. Jesus tells his followers in Matthew 22:37 that they must love God with all their minds. Do you feel that this command has been valued by believers around you? What could it look like for Christians to genuinely pursue obedience to this command?
4. How has this chapter changed (or confirmed) your understanding of the intellect and anti-intellectualism? What further questions can you investigate to keep working through your doubts around these issues?
CHAPTER 12
HELL: SKELETON IN GOD’S CLOSET?
1. What role has the issue of hell played in your deconstruction?
2. What did you think hell was like before reading this chapter? How did that influence your understanding of God’s character?
3. Joshua Ryan Butler says that the power of hell is actually unleashed by us—“The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart” (p. 104). Does this change how you think about hell and about what Jesus came to do?
4. How has this chapter changed (or confirmed) your understanding of hell? What further questions can you investigate to keep working through your doubts around this issue?

CHAPTER 13
EMBRACE TRUE BELONGING IN THE CHURCH
1. What has been your experience of community in the church? How does that compare with other communities you’ve been part of, like social clubs, activist groups, workplaces, or political parties?
2. Jeremy Linneman describes how Western individualism has infiltrated the American church (see p. 114). If you’ve experienced this influence, how has this affected your relationships with other Christians?
3. If a lack of belonging has contributed to your deconstruction, what could it look like for you to come back into the church with the goal of building community rather than finding community?
4. Linneman suggests three ways that we can rediscover Christian community (pp. 117–118). What is just one step you could take based on these ideas to start embracing true belonging?

CHAPTER 14
SOMETIMES PEOPLE DON’T BELIEVE
1. Do you tend to attribute belief and unbelief (whether yours or someone else’s) primarily to practical, logical causes, or to spiritual causes? Where are you placing the “weight of belief”?
2. Have you ever struggled with the question of whether you’re really saved? What insight can you find in Jared Wilson’s treatment of this question (p. 129)?
3. Wilson references three Bible passages: John 20, Luke 16:19–31, and 1 Corinthians 1:22–25 (pp. 126–127). What do these passages teach us about the source and nature of faith? How does this compare with how you’ve thought about these issues?
4. In your quest for answers to your doubts, where have you most steadily and carefully looked: at intellectual issues, or at Jesus himself?

CHAPTER 15
TAKE A HARD LOOK AT JESUS
1. How much time have you spent getting to know the real Jesus presented in the Gospels (rather than a “fan-fic Jesus”)? What steps could you take to look more carefully at Jesus?
2. Derek Rishmawy explains some of the narratives common among those who deconstruct (pp. 136–137). Do you see any elements of these narratives in your own story?
3. In all our doubts and questions, the ultimate issue under them all is what we believe about Jesus himself. What is your answer to Jesus’s question in Matthew 16:15: “Who do you say that I am?” How does your response change your perspective on other issues and questions?
4. Now that we’ve reached the end of the book, spend some time in reflection. How has this book shaped your thinking about doubt and the Christian faith? What are the most pressing questions and concerns that remain for you? How can you pray to God for help as you continue to walk through these questions?
As you process what you’ve learned, heed Rishmawy’s closing exhortation to keep turning to Jesus in your doubts: “In the person of Jesus, those hungering for righteousness see his justice. Those thirsty for compassion see One who will not break a bent reed. Those battling doubt meet One who hears prayers to help our unbelief without judgment or shame. And those perplexed with confusion over the complexities of life, and the fear of being lied to yet again, come face to face with the only One who is faithful and true.” (p. 139)