

GNITN

#473

Your Incredibly Shrinking Faith

Shrinkflation Hits The Shelves

In economic terms saying we're experiencing "shrinkflation" is just a way of how manufacturers sell a product at a higher price while giving you less for your money. Unfortunately, the illustrations of this are ironically too large to pick from, but I'll try. I found these in an [article](#) from *businessinsider.com*:

Frito-Lay shrank bags of some of its Dorito's from 9.75 ounces to 9.25 ounces. Bags in both of these sizes, as well as some 9.5-ounce bags, are currently for sale at Target for the same price.

"We took just a little bit out of the bag so we can give you the same price and you can keep enjoying your chips," a Frito-Lay spokesperson told Quartz.

Gatorade redesigned its 32 ounces bottle to be "more aerodynamic and it's easier to grab," a representative told Quartz in March. The new design holds 28 ounces – a 14% drop, despite both bottles being the same height.

Walmart Great Value Paper Towels dropped from 168 sheets per roll to only 120, while the price stayed the same.

A two-pack of Reese's Peanut Butter Cups used to weigh 1.6 ounces. Now it's just 1.5 ounces.

Hefty's mega pack went from 90 bags to 80 bags, at the same price.

Earlier this year, Burger King reduced the number of chicken nuggets in its \$4.49 meals from 10 pieces to eight.

Pizza giant Domino's said in January that it would be cutting down the number of chicken wings in its \$7.99 national promotion from 10 to eight, attributing the decision to the rising price of the protein. It also made the deal online-only to save on the expense of having someone work the phone.

Hershey cut down its 18-ounce pack of dark chocolate Kisses by almost two ounces.

But this shrinking isn't stopping at what you consume physically.

The Reduction of Christianity

As I've noted in a [previous video](#) a whole slew of "bible scholars" are cropping up on social media asserting that they know more than you and many if not all the things you believe as the core of your faith are wrong and have been wrong for a very long time. They seamlessly ramble on and on using this theological view or that theological view and attest that these well-studied sources have found that even basic beliefs like salvation by grace are either too simple or just not right. In one case, they make fun and ridicule the sinners prayer made popular by *Billy Graham* saying it's a great perversion of how your sins are forgiven by God. My pastor calls these critics purists and he's right. They are shrinking your faith by actually making it more complex if that makes any sense. Jesus was very pointed in dealing with those who kept making it harder and harder to get into the kingdom of Heaven:

"Woe to you, Pharisees, and you other religious leaders. Hypocrites! For you won't let others enter the Kingdom of Heaven and won't go in yourselves. And you pretend to be holy, with all your long, public prayers in the streets, while you are evicting widows from their homes.

Hypocrites! 15 Yes, woe upon you hypocrites. For you go to all lengths to make one convert, and then turn him into twice the son of hell you are yourselves. (Matt 23:13-15, TLB)

This whole chapter is a scathing critique of the religious leaders of His day and in my opinion describes these TikTok Bible scholars to a tee. Some wrap themselves in "humility" and want to sound like they are doing Christianity and its followers a solid by revealing these revelations on

things like the word “eagle” should really be translated as “vulture” and even tell us to change our worship songs so that we close our eyes, raising our heads to the skies and sing about rising up on the wings of vultures. And no, I’m not making that up. If you see terms like “deconstruction” or the deviously clever “exvangelical” know that you’re going to get a heavy dose of Bible-bashing from some who still claim to be a Christian but without all those embarrassing things like speaking in tongues, laying on of hands to be healed, or the ghastly thought of the Rapture of the Church. The more these people learn, the smaller their beliefs become.

Understand Or Undermine

To the deconstructionist this heightened scrutiny of what they believe sounds like a healthy examination of beliefs that were ingrained in them from their youth, something I have no problem with since there were things I was taught that I’ve seen that weren’t supported by the Bible. However this crop of critics sometimes are using the tools of social media and its instant credibility and viewership to tear down things that should be verboten to our faith since they remove vital pieces of the foundation of what it means to be a Christian. I like how an [article](#) I found in *gotquestions.org* explains the difference between good scholarly examination of things and unhealthy criticism:

A fundamental belief in biblical Christianity is that of man’s limited understanding compared to God’s unlimited understanding. Scripture often draws this contrast explicitly (Isaiah 55:8–9; Job 38:1–4; John 6:45–46). Scripture also teaches this truth indirectly, noting how sincere Christians often come to different conclusions (Romans 14:1–5; 1 Corinthians 10:28–32). The Bible says we can be stubborn and interpret His will wrongly (John 5:39–40). This does not mean everything is subject to opinion (1 Corinthians 3:10–14; 15:3–8); rather, it means everything should be open to sincere questions (Matthew 7:7–8). Deconstruction claims to explore such issues, though its ultimate motivation is often not to understand, but to undermine. The article goes on to explain how the Church often creates the conditions for deconstructionism to grow and sadly flourish:

Too often, churches and church members act like social clubs, while failing to wrestle with difficult questions about faith. Believing we have established every answer beyond all doubt reflects a natural desire for control. That impulse is not biblical. In fact, it’s what led groups like the Pharisees to claim they could define “honoring the Sabbath” down to how many steps a man could take. Refusal to accept some level of trust in the face of uncertainty is more than a form of legalism (Mark 7:8–9); it’s antithetical to the very concept of faith (Mark 9:24; Hebrews 12:1). Rather than allowing room for sincere doubt and questions, some Christian communities reject anything more than superficial curiosity. That may extend to carelessly labelling those with doubts as unbelievers or troublemakers. This lends weight to those who falsely claim that valid answers are only found outside the church. Faith communities may obsess over teachings that are secondary or even superficial. They may cement cultural and political preferences into their view of Christianity. Those errors also feed the false narrative driving much of the modern deconstruction movement.

Hurt People Hurt People

While simple desires to understand your faith by researching into what the Bible really says about things, some have come to belittle their belief systems because of personal hurt or pain as the *gotquestions.org* article points out:

Some deconstruct in response to deeply personal pain. Those who have been neglected, rejected, or even abused within a church context struggle to separate unbiblical traumas from legitimate teachings of Scripture. Failures and betrayals from Christian leaders create heartache and embarrassment. Pain felt by those we love becomes pain in our own lives. Some respond to these struggles by jettisoning doctrines or beliefs; this is partly an attempt to distance themselves from the stigma of another person's actions.

Many of us know people like this and reaching out to them often takes time and can be frustrating. Too often these hurt people skip the deconstruction phase and toss even being a Christian altogether. I'm not sure who is harder to reach as the people who try to hold on to some vestige of their former beliefs wear their new faith with an air of superiority. They've seen the new light and now are an improved version of what they left behind. Those who simply became a prodigal son or daughter will hopefully get to the pig slop eating phase of their rebellion and repent and run back to God. The pharisaical variants may never come to that point and easily grow in their "better" faith as they can surround themselves with sympathetic sycophants in sullyng their former faith and its "blind" adherents using social media to connect, commiserate and console each other. A religious zealot has more layers of disbelief to cut through if you want to reach them.

Intellectual Honesty

If the foundations are destroyed, What can the righteous do? (Ps 11:3, NKJV)

If you want to change the deconstructionist that comes across your path, there are some Biblical examples of how Jesus handled the misguided faith of those He encountered. In Nicodemus Jesus saw a religious leader who couldn't grasp being born again. Jesus noticed that Nicodemus really wanted answers to his questions so he worked with him giving him examples until he got it. It was in this context that we get the most widely quoted verse in the Bible, **John 3:16**.

Another example was when Jesus went out of His way to talk with the woman at the well in **John 4**. She kept missing that the messiah she desperately wanted and needed was right in front of her. Again, Jesus worked with her religious confusion step by step until the proverbial light came on and then she went from being mixed up, religious and carnal to an excited evangelist. The key element in each of these stories is the intellectual honesty He saw in them. Jesus knew their hearts and saw their sincere desire for truth and worked with them. This was in contrast to His scathing indictment of the religious leaders of His day, the ones that he tore apart intellectually in **Matthew 23**. When I listen to the videos of people who are putting out content as they mock and tear down what they used to believe I pray for them much like Jesus did with Nicodemus, the woman at the well and even the doubting disciple, Thomas. Going back to the *gotquestions.org* article on deconstructionism we read a fitting conclusion to this lesson:

While being respectful of doubters, the church needs to hold its ground on principles that are truly clear or fundamental to faith. That means insisting on truths even if they are controversial to the world at large. The book of Acts records the early church making reasonable

concessions to Jewish believers. The church did not compromise cornerstone teachings in the face of intense pressure to do just that (Acts 15). While accepting the need to consider culture when communicating (1 Corinthians 9:20–23), those early believers also refused to accept false teaching for the sake of popularity (Acts 5:29).

Christians need to lovingly engage questions from seekers and doubters. That might mean simply admitting “I don’t know” and offering to look for an answer together. Not all challenges to faith come from a point of antagonism. Some come in the form of curiosity. Some come in the form of skepticism. Some come with intense personal pain and complicated histories. For those reasons, believers should provide “safe space” for others to express concerns and doubts (Romans 12:18; 14:13). Those who “fall away,” even when lovingly treated, don’t reflect a weakness in the truth of Christianity (1 John 2:19). No one should replace sincere seeking with the attitudes connected to the modern deconstruction movement.