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AbuJamra's "Fractured faith: Finding your way back to God in an age of deconstruction" (book review)

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Book Review



AbuJamra, L. (2021). *Fractured faith: Finding your way back to God in an age of deconstruction*. Chicago: Moody Publishers. 166 pp. \$11.99. ISBN 9780802422699

Lina AbuJamra brings many surprises concerning a faith that has been fractured time and time again. Perhaps the greatest surprise was that the fracturing of her faith occurred mainly from incidents within the confines of the church she was attending. In other words, Christians hurting Christians. She also experienced fracturing from personal relationships, but she seems to place the personal crises in a different consideration than the incidents that caused her to walk away from her church and ministry. Additionally, the relationship problems were from decisions that she made or failed to make. In contrast, she was a victim of others' decisions for the church problems where she had no chance of participation. In summary, she calls all of these incidents, regardless of the source, painful, and for those who share such pains, she believes God can use the words she wrote in the book to touch the reader's heart (pg. 12).

As a Pediatric ER doctor, she has seen and been a part of the pain of many. Pain is a part of human life. However, why does there have to be so much of it and come from so many sources? Her pains began in her early life, from being born in Syria and her family escaping the famine by moving to Lebanon only to face more famine with an addition, persecution (pg. 98). Her writings are so heartfelt and realistic that it is easy to identify with her pains. Remembering similar life events could open the door for people with past pains and circumstances to find some healing. AbuJamra recounts her experiences in church that almost destroyed her faith and did bring her to leave the church. Her faith, using a word from the book's title, was "fractured." She had no intentions of returning to ministry. Nevertheless, it was this fracturing that allowed God to direct her to ministry once again. The account is so vivid that, as before, it is easy to identify with her struggles. From this, a question arises that concerns people who have left the church, the ministry, or both. Did they leave from dissolution, indifference, or with this new understanding, from pain inflicted by the church, a ministry, or a clergy member? Theirs may not be a lack of faith or biblical and spiritual knowledge but a wealth of pain. Such questions come to mind from the reading.

AbuJamra further questions where God was in all of her pain (pg. 21). Why didn't He bring justice to those that have been so hurtful? She questioned why she ended

up this way when all she did in the church was for God? She also asks why does life, in general, have to be this way (pg. 53)?

Perhaps the most significant effect of the book is its genuineness and sincerity. AbuJamra does not spare any words or fail to express her feelings related to her struggles with the church, fellow Christians, sin, God being fair, what everyday life is supposed to be for a Christian, and why God seems so far away at times. All of these wonderings and questions are things that could be experienced and asked by anyone. This openness to the problem of people leaving the church and ministry opens a door that otherwise might have remained closed in believing that the people's indifference to God was due to ignorance or a matter of not caring. Perhaps they do care, but past church pains have turned them away from all of it. AbuJamra does return to ministry but by wholly new paths. She never imagined that some of the ministries would be in Europe and even in Syria, her country of birth. She realized that God had never taken His eyes off of her. She just had to put her eyes back on Him.

Reviewer

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