

Arguments Against False Religions/Cults: Mormonism

Witnessing Approach: A True Testimony?

Our Objective: to show your Mormon friend that the subjective testimony/burning in the bosom that they feel is not a good way to know that Mormonism is true. Feelings cannot be our only access point to true knowledge.

To keep in mind: Mormons will continually revert to their testimony/burning in the bosom as a valid argument for the truth of Mormonism. Most likely, every time you bring a good argument against them, they will revert to this experience. Therefore it is very important that you understand this witnessing approach!

Question to ask: How do you know that Mormonism is true?

Typical response: Because I read the entire Book of Mormon and I then prayed about it and God told me that it was true and that Joseph Smith was a true Prophet. This is what the Book of Mormon tells us to do to know if it is true: *"And if ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost."* –Moroni 10:4

Ask: "Let me make sure I understand what you mean. Are you saying that the way to know that the Book of Mormon is true is to read the entire book, pray and ask God if it is true, and then he will make it known to you through an internal feeling?"

Typical response: "Yes, that is what I mean."

Ask: "What would you say to a Muslim who has read the entire Qur'an and prayed about it and feels that it is the true word of God?"

Typical Response: "I would say that they are wrong because the Book of Mormon is true, not the Qur'an."

Ask: "Do you believe that their feelings are valid?"

Typical Response: "I do not think their feelings are valid, but even if they were, their feelings are from something other than God."

Ask: Can you please read 1 Timothy 4:1 for me?

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" -1 Timothy 4:1

Ask: "How do you know that what you feel is not a seducing spirit who is leading you to believe a lie?"

Typical Response: "It could not be a seducing spirit because it makes me feel peaceful, and righteous, and good. It affirms to me that it is good."

Ask: "If it was a seducing spirit, how would it make you feel? A seducing spirit would be trying to trick you into believing it was peaceful, and righteous, and good."

Typically at this point our Mormon friends will have nothing more to offer, except to revert to their feelings

Say: It seems to me that we need more than only our feelings in order to know what is actually true.

Ask: "Have your feelings ever been wrong?" "How do you know you are right when it comes to the important topic of life after death?"

Ask: Can you read Galatians 1:8-9?

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." -Galatians 1:8-9

Ask: "Do you know what the Gospel that Paul preached was?"

Show them Ephesians 2:8-9, 1 Cor. 15:1-8, John 3:16, Acts 16:31

Ask: Do these passages of Scripture sound like the same Gospel that Joseph Smith teaches?

Typical response: "No, you must keep Celestial Law"

Ask: "Then wouldn't Joseph Smith qualify as a person bringing another Gospel, other than the one that Paul taught? Didn't Joseph Smith receive this revelation from the Angel Moroni, which sounds a lot like what Paul is describing in Galatians?"

SHARE THE TRUE GOSPEL WITH THEM.

Witnessing Approach: Eph. 2:8-9 Salvation?

Our Objective: to show your Mormon friend that the Salvation that Paul is talking about in Ephesians 2:8-9 is not either of the types of Salvation that Mormons believe in.

To keep in Mind: In LDS Theology, there are two types of Salvation, Unconditional (or General) and Conditional (or Individual)

- Unconditional Salvation/General Salvation is also called and considered immortality or resurrection. This will come to all mankind, is a gift, and comes through the grace of God alone. Unconditional or General salvation has no requirement of righteousness, faith or obedience. The only individuals who will not receive Unconditional Salvation are the "sons of perdition".
- Conditional Salvation/Individual salvation is earned and is works based. You cannot experience the best Mormonism has to offer without perfect devotion to the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

Question to ask: Can you read Ephesians 2:8-9 for me?

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." –Ephesians 2:8-9

Ask: What type of Salvation is Paul referring to when he says "ye are saved"?

Typical Response: He is referring to Unconditional/General Salvation.

Ask: How can that be, if a requirement of having this salvation of Ephesians 2:8-9 is acquired through faith? I thought that there were no requirements for General Salvation. Are you sure it is referring to General Salvation?

Response: Oh, I see. It can't be referring to General Salvation, so it must be referring to Conditional/Individual Salvation.

Ask: Is it true that in order to acquire Conditional Salvation you have to earn it based on your good deeds?

Response: Yes, that is true.

Ask: Well, how could Ephesians 2:8-9 be referring to Conditional Salvation when Paul says, "Not of works, lest any man should boast"?

Response: I don't know

Ask: Doesn't it seem like the Salvation that Paul is referring to here is not General Salvation or Individual Salvation? It seems like Paul is describing something entirely different than either of your definitions of salvation.

Ask: Can you read Galatians 1:8-9?

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." –Galatians 1:8-9

Ask: Because of Ephesians 2:8-9, doesn't it seem that the Gospel that Paul preached is not the same as the Gospel of Mormonism? If that is the case, wouldn't the LDS doctrines of Salvation fall into the category of a different Gospel and be accursed according to Galatians 1:8-9?

SHARE THE TRUE GOSPEL WITH THEM.

Witnessing Approach: The Impossible Gospel

The Impossible Gospel

Our Objective: to show your Mormon friend that the demands of Mormonism are impossible and that the Grace of God through Jesus' death on the cross for us is the only way we can be saved.

To keep in mind: The goal for Mormons is exaltation/to become gods themselves.

Question to ask: If you were to die right now, are you sure that all of your sins are forgiven and that you would get the best your religion has to offer?

Typical response: Yes, if I repent and keep the commandments.

Ask: "How many sins do you have to repent of? How many commandments do you have to keep? Where in your scriptures does it teach these kinds of things?"

Typical response: Doctrines and Covenants 58:42-43 *"Behold, he who has repented of his sins, the same is forgiven, and I, the Lord, remember them no more. By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins-behold, he will **confess** them and **forsake** them."*

Ask: "How often do you repent?"

Typical Response: "All of the time"

Ask: "Do you ever repent of the same sin?"

Typical Response: "Yes"

Ask: "Have you really repented of certain sins if you repeat them? If forsaking is a part of repenting, then you would not be able to repeat certain sins."

This is what Doctrines and Covenants 82:7 says about repeating sins *"And now, verily I say unto you, I the Lord, will not lay any sin to your charge; go your ways and sin no more; but unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return, saith the Lord your God."*

2 Nephi 25:23 *"For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do."*

Ask: "What does it mean 'After all we can do'?" Have you done all that you can do?

Moroni 10:32 *"Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness and love God with all your might, mind and strength, **then** is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God."*

This is not merely "do your best and then God does the rest". This passage demands perfection before his grace is sufficient for you.

Doctrine & Covenants 25:15 *"Keep my commandments continually, and the crown of righteousness thou shalt receive. And except thou do this, where I am you cannot come."*

Typical response: "You just need to do your best"

"To 'try' is weak. To 'do the best I can' is not strong. We must always do better than we can." Pg. 163 of *The Miracle of Forgiveness* by Spencer W. Kimball (Mormon Prophet)

Doctrine and Covenants 1:31 *"For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance."*

What are the requirements for Exaltation?

Gospel Principles lists 21 requirements for Exaltation.

1. We must be baptized and confirmed a member of the Church of Jesus Christ.
2. We must receive the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.
3. We must receive the temple endowment.
4. We must be married for time and eternity.

In addition to receiving the required ordinances, the Lord commands all of us to:

1. Love and worship God.
2. Love our neighbor.
3. Repent of our wrongdoings.
4. Live the law of chastity.
5. Pay honest tithes and offerings.
6. Be honest in our dealings with others and the Lord.
7. Speak the truth always.
8. Obey the Word of Wisdom.
9. Search out our kindred dead and perform the saving ordinances of the gospel for them.
10. Keep the Sabbath day holy.
11. Attend our Church meetings as regularly as possible so we can renew our baptismal covenants by partaking of the sacrament.
12. Love our family members and strengthen them in the ways of the Lord.
13. Have family and individual prayers every day.
14. Honor our parents.
15. Teach the gospel to others by word and example.
16. Study the scriptures.
17. Listen to and obey the inspired words of the prophets of the Lord.

Perfection is required for Mormons. This is the same thing that the God of the Bible requires. Moral perfection is required from Scripture.

Romans 3:10-12 "as it is written,

"THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;
THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,
THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;
ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;
THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,
THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."

Romans 3:19-20 "Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin."

But there is good news in the true Gospel of Grace!

“But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; 25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This* was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;” Romans 3:21-25

“For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.” 4 Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. 5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness” Romans 4:2-5

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it* is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” – Ephesians 2:8-9

Witnessing Approach: True Prophet?

Was Joseph Smith a True Prophet

Our Objective: to show your Mormon friend the requirements of a true prophet in Scripture and that Joseph Smith does not meet these requirements

To keep in mind: Mormons base most of their theology on what Joseph Smith has taught. They believe Joseph Smith to be such an important person that they include in their “testimony” that Joseph Smith is a true prophet of God.

Question to ask: What is the requirements from God to know if a person who claims to be a prophet is actually a prophet of God?

Typical response: I don’t know

Ask: Can I show you in the Bible a place where God gives us requirements for true prophets?

- **Deuteronomy 18:20-22** *'But the prophet who speaks a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.'*
"You may say in your heart, 'How will we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' "When a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him."

Question to ask: Does God give us a difficult test or an easy test to see if a prophet is truly from Him?

Typical Response: "An easy test"

Ask: "Is it fair to say that God's test of a true prophet, according to Deuteronomy 18:20-22, is that if a man prophesies about something in the future and the thing he prophesies about does not come true, then that man is not a true prophet of God?"

Typical Response: "Yes"

Ask: "Is it fair to say that the test of a prophet, according to Deuteronomy 18:20-22, is not that he gets some prophecies right, but that he gets all of them right?"

Typical Response: "Yes"

Ask: "Will you look at some of the prophecies that Joseph Smith made and apply this test of a true prophet to him?"

1. **Prophecy that the temple would be built in Missouri within Smith's Generation:** Doctrines and Covenants 84:2-5, 31 "Yea, the word of the Lord concerning his church, established in the last days for the restoration of his people, as he has spoken by the mouth of his prophets, and for the gathering of his saints to stand upon Mount Zion, which shall be the city of New Jerusalem. Which city shall be built, beginning at the temple lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith, and others with whom the

Lord was well pleased. **Verily this is the word of the Lord**, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, which temples shall be reared **in this generation**. For verily this generation shall not pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord, and a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill this house... Therefore, as I said concerning the sons of Moses-for the sons of Moses and also the sons of Aaron shall offer an acceptable offering and sacrifice in the house of the Lord, which house **shall be built unto the Lord in this generation**, upon the consecrated spot as I have appointed."

- a. Mormon Prophet Orson Pratt 38 years later said this regarding this prophecy *"We have just as much confidence in returning to Jackson County and the building of a great city that will remain there a thousand years before the earth passes away, as the Jews have in returning to Jerusalem and re-building the waste places of Palestine. In fact, we have more faith than they have; for they have been so many generations cast out of their land that their descendants have almost lost their faith in returning. But, the Latter-day Saints are fresh, as it were. There are many of the old stock, who passed through all those tribulations I have named, still living, whose faith in returning to Jackson County, and the things that are coming, is as firm and fixed as the throne of the Almighty." (Elder Orson Pratt, in a discourse delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, April 10, 1870. Journal of Discourses, Vol. 13, p. 138).*
- b. *"God promised in the year 1832 that we should, before this generation then living had passed away, return and build up the City of Zion in Jackson County; that we should return and build up the temple of the Most High where we formerly laid the corner stone. He promised us that He would manifest Himself on that temple, that the glory of God should be upon it; and not only upon the temple, but within it, even a cloud by day and a flaming fire by night. We believe in these promises as much as we believe in any promise ever uttered by the mouth of Jehovah. The Latter-day Saints just as much expect to receive a fulfillment of that promise during the generation that was in existence in 1832 as they expect that the sun will rise and set to-morrow. Why? Because God cannot lie. He will fulfill*

all His promises. He has spoken, it must come to pass. This is our faith." (Elder Orson Pratt, Journal of Discourses, Vol. 13, p. 362, May 5, 1870).

- c. To this day, there is still not an LDS Temple built in Independence Missouri. You can visit the temple sight in Independence and it is an empty field.

Prophecy of Jesus

1. *"As He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples *said to Him, "Teacher, behold what wonderful stones and what wonderful buildings!" And Jesus said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left upon another which will not be torn down." –Mark 13:1-2*
 - a. Jesus made this prediction before his death in 30-33AD.
 - b. The temple was completely destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans who came in and destroyed Jerusalem.
 - i. To this day, you can go to Jerusalem and see these "stones" that were thrown off the temple mount in 70 A.D.
 - ii. Jesus' prophecy came true and has archeological evidence.

Ask: Does Joseph Smith succeed as a prophet according to Deut. 18:20-22?

The last portion of this Deuteronomy passage says that you do not have to be afraid of a false prophet. There is no need to fear Joseph Smith since he is a false prophet.

For Further Study See:

BOOKS:

Mormonism 101 by Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson

*Sharing the Good News with Mormons: Practical Strategies for Getting
the*

Conversation Started Edited by Eric Johnson and Sean McDowell

Witness To Mormons in Love: The Mormon Scrapbook Revised Edition
by Daniel G. Thompson

The Ambassador's Guide to Mormonism by Brett Kunkle

Answering Mormons' Questions by Bill McKeever and Eric Johnson

WEBSITES

Mrm.org (Mormonism Research Ministry)

Trigrace.org

Utlm.org (Utah Lighthouse Ministry: run by Brigham Young's great great
granddaughter)

STR.org