

Witnessing to Mormons with the Power of the Gospel

by Bruce F. Levi, ICARE Ministries

THIS IS NOT A HANDOUT TO GIVE TO MORMONS!

This is to help Christians express genuine love and compassion (Jude 22) *for a Mormon's soul while telling the truth* (Ephesians 4:15) *of the Biblical Gospel* (1 Cor. 15:1-4) *the power of God for salvation* (Romans 1:16). It addresses key obstacles to the Mormon's salvation, especially the false idea of the intrinsic goodness of humankind.

Use this to help the Mormon begin to understand:

- A) God is Holy and His standard for salvation is perfection now (Matthew 5:48; Habakkuk 1:13).
- B) He/she is by nature a sinner who continually violates God's commands (Romans 3:9-18).
- C) It is impossible to earn salvation by "good works" (Titus 3:5).
- D) Jesus, God the Son (John 5:18), made full payment for the sins of those He will save (Hebrews 10:10-12).
- E) Jesus freely gives (Romans 6:23) full forgiveness (1 John 1:9), completed eternal salvation (Hebrews 7:25), justification (Romans 3:24), and perfection (Hebrews 10:14) to sinners who trust solely in Him (Acts 4:12).
- F) God holds him accountable (John 12:48).

In addition, this non-argumentative way allows for further conversations (Colossians 4:6).

We cannot argue or reason someone into salvation (1 Cor. 2:14). Our role is to plant and water the "seed" of the gospel (1 Cor. 3:6). We are the messengers (Romans 10:14-17) of Truth. The Holy Spirit does the work of salvation (John 3:6-8; 6:44; 16:8-11). It is highly unlikely that a Mormon will believe unto salvation the first time you present the gospel. It will likely take months, perhaps years, during which you will cover much beyond this first dialogue.

1. Establish a relationship based on genuine Christian compassion for the Mormon.

Proceed only if your motive and tone are of genuine compassion and love. You are not trying to win a debate or use humanistic reasoning (1 Cor. 2:1-2,14). Pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the Mormon, and in you. Genuinely ask: *May I ask you a question about Mormonism?* With his/her permission, proceed as follows.

2. Move to the very heart - also the central weakness - of Mormonism: self-perfectionism.

Ask: I understand there are many things you have to do to earn Eternal Life and Exaltation with Heavenly Father – would you tell me about them? (Use the terms that Mormons use: Eternal Life and Exaltation, not heaven; and Heavenly Father, not Jesus.)

If he does not mention them, be sure to ask: *What about the Ten Commandments – are they part of what you must do?* If needed, ask about a few things from the list below.

Let him freely talk, for he needs to feel the huge burden of Mormonism's requirement of self-righteous perfection in Keeping the Sabbath Day; Praying and Fasting; Sacrifice of time for the Mormon church; Adhering to high standards of Work and Responsibility in all areas of life; Service to others; Abstaining from coffee, tea, tobacco and alcohol; Pure Love of one's fellowman; Complete Honesty at all times; Paying all Tithes and Offerings that the LDS Church requires; Doing Missionary Work;

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Using Personal Talents correctly; Temple attendance; Temple Marriage; Chastity; Genealogy Work; Obedience to all Mormon Church rules and requirements; and daily application of the 7-step Mormon repentance process. (See the official LDS book, Gospel Principles.)

3. Turn the conversation to God's Holiness and His requirement of perfection for salvation.

Ask: This reminds me of Matthew 5:48. You are probably familiar with it: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is in heaven is perfect." (Probably the most-quoted Bible verse in Mormonism. Mormons use only the KJV.)

Then quickly ask, *Have you fulfilled this command?* He will reply similar to: "not yet," "I am still working on it," "I hope to be perfect someday."

4. Quickly point out that God's standard for salvation is perfection now - in the present.

Because only humble sinners will come to Jesus for salvation (Mark 2:17), your goal is to help the Mormon understand he is a sinner by nature, who is continually breaking God's laws/commands. (Mormonism teaches that people are good by nature.)

Say: You have probably noticed that the tense of the verb in Matthew 5:48 is the present tense: be perfect. It's like when you're on the phone and ask people to please be quiet so you can hear. You want them to be quiet now, not an hour later, right?

If he does not immediately seem to understand, add, *I understand that the footnote for Matthew 5:48 in LDS-printed Bibles, shows Joseph Smith used the present tense in his translation: "Ye are therefore commanded to be perfect." Do you suppose Joseph Smith made a mistake when he used the present tense?*

If he objects to the concept of perfection, say: *As you know, God cannot look on sin with the least degree of allowance.* (See LDS Scripture, Doctrine & Covenants 1:31. God wants us to be perfect like Job and Noah. (See Job 1:1, Genesis 6:9, Habakkuk 1:13, Deuteronomy 27:26, James 2:10, Galatians 3:10.)

Do not move on until he indicates an understanding that God's standard for heaven is perfection now, and that he is not now meeting it. As needed, use Appendix A. When he is beginning to understand perfection now, he will ask you, "Are you perfect?" (If you encounter a Mormon who truly realizes the depth of his sin, move on to point #6.)

5. Tell the Good News of how Jesus, God the Son, has already completed your salvation.

Answer with a confident, *Yes, I am!* Wait a few seconds to let it sink in.

Say: You're probably wondering how I can say I am perfect. Let's look at Hebrews, chapter 10, verse 14. Have him read it, or follow along. Say: Hath perfected is in the past tense. Jesus has already perfected me.

Quickly add: *Let's look at verses 10, 11, and 12 for context. Have him read, or follow along. Say: Because Jesus is God the Son, and He made a one-time offering on the cross for sins, I am sanctified now. I have eternal life right now. Here in verse 17, we see that God doesn't even remember my sins.*

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6. Express your compassion for his/her soul and warn of God's judgment.

Say: *You told me that you are not yet perfect, that you're still working on it. But, we saw that God's requirement is perfection now. I really do not want you to spend eternity damned in outer darkness.* ("Outer darkness" is Mormonism's equivalent for hell, or the complete eternal damnation. It is also biblical terminology: Matthew 8:12; 22:13.)

7. Appeal to him/her to make a decision and express your desire to continue the conversation.

Ask: *Would you like to have assurance of completed eternal salvation now?* If he agrees, make a presentation of the Gospel (Use Appendix B as needed). Or, arrange a specific time and place to meet to have a Bible study.

Appendix A - All men are Sinners and are Accountable to the Only Perfect and Holy God.

Your primary goal is to help the Mormon realize he is a continual violator of God's law, by nature a continual sinner and not inherently good. This is vital because Mormonism teaches that people are good by nature and can even become gods.

He must understand the truth of his sinfulness (Luke 18:13) before he will realize his need to trust in Jesus for His grace and mercy (Titus 3:5) of salvation. You can get his attention by showing him that Job (Job 1:1) and Noah (Genesis 6:9) were declared perfect. Show him that God commands all people to be perfect (Genesis 17:1; Deuteronomy 27:26; Habakkuk 1:13; Mathew 5:48).

Since the purpose of the Law is to show men they are sinners (Romans 3:20; 1 Timothy 1:8-15), discuss each of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-17) and Jesus' comments on the Law in Matthew 5:22 & 28 and Luke 10:27 to help him see that he continually violates them. Use James 2:10, Galatians 3:10, and Titus 3:5 to show that anyone trying to earn salvation by keeping commandments must keep all of them.

Use LDS books Gospel Principles and The Miracle of Forgiveness to show him Mormonism's heavy and impossible demand for self-perfection in all areas of life. All this is to help him then see his need for mercy and grace, which only Jesus, God the Son, can give him.

Appendix B. Bible Passages that are useful in teaching Mormons the Gospel.

1. God is the One and Only God, created everything, is perfectly holy, and His standard is perfection. Isaiah 43:11; 44:6-8, 24; 45:5, 6, 18; 46:6; 48:11, 12; Numbers 28:19; Colossians 1:16; Habakkuk 1:13; Matthew 5:48; Luke 10:27; Genesis 17:1; Deuteronomy 18:13.

2. In contrast to God, all humans are continual sinners by nature and cannot keep God's laws. Isaiah 64:6-7; Jeremiah 17:9; Matthew 9:12-13; Romans 3:10-18, 23; Galatians 2:16, 21; 3:1-13; 21-26; 5:4-6, 18; Ephesians 2:1-3.

3. Trying to keep laws or rules for salvation is impossible to do, cannot save, and is an affront to God. Jeremiah 17:5-8; John 3:18; 15:7-11; Acts 15:7-11; Romans 3:20-28; 4:1-14; 9:11-16, 30-10:14; 11:5-6; Galatians 1:6-9; James 2:10; 1 Timothy 1:9-11.

4. Jesus is Eternally God the Son, the second person of the Holy Trinity.

Isaiah 41:4, 14; 42:5, 8; 43:11, 25; 44:6, 8; 45:5-6; Jeremiah 10:10; Mark 10:17-18; John 1:1-4; 5:26; 8:58-59; 10:30; 14:6-10; Colossians 1:15-16; Revelation 1:8.

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5. By virtue of His Eternal Nature, Jesus Christ is the Only Way to salvation and is able to save us completely. John 19:30; Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:25; 10:12-17; 1 Peter 1:2-5.

6. Jesus loves sinners, paid for their sins, and gives salvation only as a free gift that cannot be earned by so-called good works. Genesis 15:6; John 6:28, 29; Acts 13:38-39; 16:31; Romans 5:8-21; 10:3-5; Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 1:1-4; Ephesians 2:8-10; Titus 3:5.

7. Sinners must repent (turn) to God and believe (trust) in God the Son, Jesus, for forgiveness of sins and salvation. Psalm 34:18; 51:16-17; Mark 1:15; 6:12; Luke 18:13-14; Acts 17:30; 20:20-21; Hebrews 11:6; 1 John 5:4-5, 11-13.

8. The Bible, the Church, and salvation will not pass away or become corrupted.

Matthew 5:18; 16:18; 28:20; John 6:37; 12:48; Ephesians 3:21; 1 Peter 1:3-5.

To understand how Mormons think and learn to effectively witness to them, get the book, Speaking the Truth in Love to Mormons by Mark Cares (\$16, plus P&H). For general evangelism training, we recommend; Tell the Truth: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person by Whole People, by Will Metzger, and Share Jesus Without Fear, by William Fay, (\$10, plus P&H). For an effective Bible study, use The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus, by John R. Cross – with workbook (\$20, plus P&H).