

# Witnessing to Mormons

## WRONG IDEAS ABOUT WITNESSING TO MORMONS

(from Herb Stoneman, Watchman Fellowship)

1. **Avoidance** Syndrome. Avoid them if you can't win them.
2. **Attack** Syndrome. Beat 'em to death when you can. In other words, winning arguments but not winning souls.
3. Pick on a **Jack** Mormon. "The weak can be picked off more easily." The truth: Lousy Mormons generally make lousy Christians. Committed Mormons generally make committed Christians.
4. **Shipwrecked** Syndrome. Go after the women and children first. The truth: If you win a Mormon man, his wife and kids will follow.

## WHAT YOU MUST DO TO WITNESS EFFECTIVELY TO MORMONS

1. Explain and defend who **God** is biblically (John 4:24; Isa 43:10-11).
2. Explain and defend the **Trinity** (Matt 28:18-20; John 1:1; Titus 2:13).
3. Explain and defend the nature of the true **Gospel**—salvation by grace through faith not works (1 Cor 15:1-4; Eph. 2:8-10).

## HOW TO WITNESS (CASUALLY) TO MORMONS

**Christian:** "I'd love to accept you as a Christian, but your God is not my God."

**LDS:** Yes, he is.

**Christian:** Well, I wouldn't want to be wrong. Please help me at this point. My understanding is that your God has a body of flesh and bones. My God is a Spirit. Your God is an exalted man. My God has always been God. Your Jesus is . . . Mine is . . . Your plan of salvation is . . . Mine is . . .

## THINGS TO AVOID

1. **Rabbit** hunts. Jesus did not call us to hunt rabbits, but to fish for men.

# Witnessing to Mormons

2. **Testimony** Swamps. Don't get into "dueling testimonies."
3. **Arguments.**
4. Over-focusing on the **problem(s)**. Get to the **solution—Jesus**—and salvation by grace by faith in Him alone.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

1. The goal when witnessing to a Mormon is to win the **person**, not an **argument**. So, ask **questions** rather than making **assertions**.
2. Nobody comes to salvation apart from the convicting and regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. (John 6:44, 65) So Pray!
3. In witnessing to a Mormon you are not trying to lead someone from **unbelief** to faith, but out of a faith that is **faulty** and **misplaced** to a saving faith in a trustworthy Lord.
4. For a Mormon to leave the LDS church is a **traumatic** decision. It will not be made lightly or quickly.
5. There are several kinds of Mormons. (1) Committed Mormons who were born into LDS families; (2) cultural Mormons, who either don't believe in Mormonism or think they are saved because they are Mormons; and (3) converted Mormons, who are generally deeply committed.
6. Your terms must be carefully **defined**.
7. Be bold. Mormons are trained to respect **authority**.
8. Help them realize that they are **sinners** and that they are **lost**. **BEFORE YOU CAN RECEIVE THE GOOD NEWS, YOU MUST BELIEVE THE BAD NEWS!**
9. There must be some theological **preparation** beforehand. Be prepared to **invest** some time and money to witness effectively to Mormons.
10. Seize the **initiative**, but also be prepared to answer their questions.
11. When possible, choose your **method** of presenting the Gospel in advance. It is best to know more than one method.

# Witnessing to Mormons

12. Close the back door of **escape**. Agree at the beginning that Scripture is our authority.
13. Always use the **King James Version** Bible.
14. Treat the Mormon with **respect** and **courtesy**—the way you want to be treated!
15. Focus on **major** doctrinal issues: (1) the nature of God the Father, (2) Jesus Christ, (3) salvation by grace through faith.
16. Don't be **discouraged** if you don't see an **immediate** response.
17. The **genuineness** of your faith will play a role in the effectiveness of your witness.

## ANSWERING COMMON LDS QUESTIONS



**Bible basics in dialoguing with Mormons.** Always make certain that any biblical passages to which they may refer are read fully and in **context**. Never remove a biblical text from its **historical** or **cultural** setting. Remember that a text without a context is a **pretext**.

1. Doesn't Ezekiel 37:16-17 speak of the Book of Mormon?

There are different Hebrew words for **stick** and **scroll**. The Hebrew word for stick is *aits*, while the Hebrew word for scroll is *saipher*. After a parchment was wrapped around a stick it was referred to as a scroll, not a stick. The context of this passage, (be certain to read from verse 15-23), is that Ezekiel is to prophesy that Judah and Israel will again be one nation. In its historical context this passage refers to the southern and northern kingdoms of divided **Israel**. This passage cannot refer to the Book of Mormon.

2. Doesn't John 10:16 speak of the Nephites and Lamanites?

Read in context John 10:16 is speaking of **Gentiles** in contrast to Jews, not two specific groups of Jewish descendants. (Is there anything in the verse that would limit it to these two groups?)

# Witnessing to Mormons

3. Doesn't 1 Corinthians 15:29 prove that the early church baptized for the dead?

Paul uses the **third** person plural personal pronoun in this verse: What shall **they** do who are baptized for the dead? The context of this passage is one of resurrection. Paul is neither agreeing with this practice nor endorsing it. He does stress, however, that there is a reason for it—there will be a resurrection. Also point out that the Book of Mormon, (Alma 34:34-35), does not support the idea of a second chance for salvation after death.

They will also support baptism for the dead by appealing to 1 Peter 3:19-20 which speaks of preaching to the spirits now in prison. This is a difficult passage. There are several interpretations. The one which makes the most sense to me is that this passage refers to Christ preaching through the power of the Spirit to the men of Noah's day while the ark was under construction and that the spirits now in prison were once men living on the earth. There is no universally accepted interpretation of this verse. (For a useful brief discussion, see the appendix of Wayne Grudem's commentary on 1 Peter in the Tyndale series.) For witnessing purposes or refutation the key is that you must have a reasonable answer to this question if confronted by it.

4. Doesn't Genesis 1:26 speak of more than one god?

There are several **possible** explanations for this verse. One, that we are seeing here a use of the **plural** of **majesty**, as evidenced by the imperial "we." Second, that this is verse with **Trinitarian** implications. Third, that God is speaking to the angels. Note that verse 27 says God created them in HIS image (singular), not THEIR image (plural). Ask how it is that Jews take this to be **monotheistic** in character. Not only would apostolic **Christianity** have to apostatize, but also Judaism at a primary level. The question is not "is it possible" that this refers to polytheism, but is it probable.

5. Doesn't Jesus infer that men can become like Gods in John 10:34 and 1 John 3:2?

In John 10:34 Jesus is referring to an Old Testament passage, (Exodus 22:28), which refers to **human** rulers appointed by God. Notice also that it is in **present** tense: "Ye **are** gods." Not even Mormons believe that men *presently* are gods. 1 John 3:2, which says we shall be like him, is primarily speaking of our becoming immortal—like him in the sense of never dying—not in every sense. Notice also that the basis of this future transformation is seeing Jesus, not obedience to Mormon temple ordinances. It is transformation, not evolution.

# Witnessing to Mormons

6. Doesn't the persecution of the LDS church indicate that it is the true church?

If persecution is the barometer of truth then one must apply it **universally** to the truth claims of *all* persecuted groups. One must also admit that Jehovah's Witnesses are the true church, or adherents of Bahai in Iran, or any number of other religious groups. The difficulty is that the truth claims of different persecuted groups are contradictory to one another. Clearly persecution is not a sure marker of a true church.

7. How can the Bible be God's inerrant word and contain so many contradictions?

Ask them if they believe it is *incorrectly translated*? Ask **where** these incorrect translations occur, and on what **basis** they have determined their incorrectness. (Ask them on what basis they question a translation, if not on a **linguistic** basis.) Also remember that Mormons at least give lip service to the authority and inspiration of the Bible. Ask them if they believe that a person should pattern his or her life according to a book of scripture that can be proven to be inaccurate. You might then ask for help in resolving some problems (changes, historical inaccuracies, and theological contradictions) in the Book of Mormon.

8. Why doesn't your church have apostles, priests, and prophets like our church?

Ask them why they do not take the **high priesthood** of Jesus more seriously. Point out that in Hebrews 1:1 we are told that in these last days God has spoken to us through his Son. We have no need for human intercessors. You might also point out that the last days began with the ascension of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost according to the New Testament (Acts 2, Hebrews 1). We can go directly to God. Also, the Christian church has **apostles**, Peter, Paul, John, etc., and their words are our guide and our authority.

9. Have you prayed concerning the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon?

Ask if **feelings** are an accurate barometer of truth.

Ask if their feelings have ever **misled** them.

Ask how they know that they have a testimony of the **Holy** Spirit. They may respond that they know it is of God because it doesn't feel evil or make them

# Witnessing to Mormons

feel bad. Ask them how a deceiving spirit would feel. Finally ask them how they biblically support the idea of asking God to give one a spiritual testimony on demand. (They may appeal to James 1:5-8. Show them that *in context* it refers to understanding about a trial that one is going through—not the nature of a book or a group.)

Understand that their aim is two-fold. First, they wish to convert you to Mormonism and hope that you will pray about the Book of Mormon and receive a "burning in the bosom." Second, they will use it as a defense if you are pressing them. "How can you criticize the Book of Mormon if you haven't prayed about it?"

Ask them if they believe that the Koran is true. When they say, no—and they will—ask them if they have read it and prayed about it? Ask if they believe that they have to read all of the Koran (or any other sacred text of any other religion) to know that it isn't true? It is also good to ask the Mormon, "Other than your personal testimony, what sort of evidence do you have for the truthfulness of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon?" Ask them if there were evidence that indicated that the Book of Mormon was not true, would they want to examine it for themselves? (Ask them how many changes there have been to the Book of Mormon.)

If all else fails, a response such as, "Yes, I have prayed about the Book of Mormon and I bear you my testimony, which I have received from the Lord, that it is a false book and that Joseph Smith is a false prophet, and that Mormonism is a false gospel, such as that which Paul refers to in Galatians chapter 1," will do the trick.

10. What about all the fruits of Mormonism? ("But we're such good people.")

Ask if ethical **conduct** is an accurate barometer of truth. Ask if they know any honest, moral, and ethically upright people who are non-Mormons, people who don't smoke, drink alcohol, tithe, and are very family oriented. Are such practices valid measures of truth? If you also observe "the word of wisdom" and tithe you may respond "neither do I." When they bring up the subject of church growth, remind them that there are other groups that are growing as rapidly percentage-wise as the LDS church and evidence the same sort of commitment, e.g., mention that the Jehovah's Witnesses have even more people going door to door regularly than they do.