



10 | 5 Tools For Conversing With Mormons



For additional guidance, please refer to these resources in Section II

That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; - Ephesians 4:14

In a mix similar to other religions that are based upon multiple authorities, the Mormon Church relies heavily upon a blend of Bible teaching and additional revelations unique to its own group. No modern group has worked harder to develop a tradition and a “sacred” history. Additionally, deeply devoted LDS are intensely evangelistic and are quick to showcase their good works and family values. At the same time, there is no modern religion whose founders have worked harder at employing *blatant deception* than Mormonism. Therein lies the difficulty we face when conversing with Mormons. As saddened as we are by the cloud of deception under which the Mormon lives, Mormons remain without excuse for refusing the knowledge of God in favor of the secure and warm world of Mormonism.

1.) Mormons Need to Hear About the True God.

A. The knowledge of God the Father. Points A and B were covered briefly in Section I, but are expanded here. Please understand that, first, last, and always, spiritual battles must be engaged upon the knowledge of God. When we reject the knowledge of God, the rest of our belief systems fall like a house of cards and we become creation worshipers. It is a given that Mormons reject the Trinity, because they reason from the creation upwards toward God. However, instead of beginning with the trinitarian debate, it is helpful to understand just how far the Mormon view deviates from the Bible.

In the words of Bill McKeever, founder of Mormon Research Ministry: “For centuries Christians have professed their belief in a God who is God alone (Is. 44:8), self-existent (Is. 43:10; 48:12), transcendent (Num. 23:19; Ps. 50:21), immutable (Ps. 102:27; Is. 46:10; Mal. 3:6), eternal (Ps. 90:2; 93:2), omnipresent (1 Kings 8:27; Prov. 15:3; Is. 66:1; Jer. 23: 23, 24), and incorporeal (John 4:24; Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17). He is also a God who dwells in the believer (Eph. 3:17; 4:6; Rom. 8:9) and is omnipotent

(Job 42:2; Ps. 115:3; Matt. 19:26). Mormons insist that their God, the one they call Elohim, is the Christian God. Why then are his attributes so different from the God who is declared in the Bible? ¹.”

Not ready for all the detail? Be sure to see the one page supplement from Dennis Wright entitled “Is Mormonism Christian.?”

Bill McKeever goes on to list the differences between the Mormon Elohim and the biblical Elohim.

The god of Mormonism is one of many gods.
The god of Mormonism is not self-existent.
The god of Mormonism is not transcendent.
The god of Mormonism is not immutable.
The god of Mormonism is not eternally God.
The god of Mormonism is not incorporeal.
The god of Mormonism is not omnipresent.
The god of Mormonism cannot dwell in the believer.
The god of Mormonism is not omnipotent.
The god of Mormonism does not forgive completely.

To believe that such a God is the God of the Bible is idolatry.

B. The knowledge of God the Son. Please understand that every one of the above statements applies equally to Jesus Christ in Mormon teaching. This is not the Christ of the Bible. Although our Lord laid aside the independent expression of His attributes while on earth, Jesus Christ is God, not just a god (Hebrews 1:8). Jesus Christ is eternal (John 1:1-3, 14-18). He claimed to be self existent (John 8:58) and He is transcendent as well as omnipresent (Matthew 18:20). He indwells every believer (Colossians 1:27), He is omnipotent (Colossians 1:16,17).

C. The knowledge of the Holy Spirit. Again, it takes very little effort to show that the Holy Spirit, like the Son, has the same *attributes* of deity. And herein lies a great Mormon dilemma and the head of a pin upon which Mormonism has long tried to dance. True Mormons know that the Holy Spirit is *not omniscient* because He is *not omnipresent*. Yet, Mormons continually claim that the impressions they receive are from the Holy Spirit who is continually with them, guiding them day and night ². The Bible teaches of those who are in Christ, that the Holy Spirit dwells within us, and, in fact, if He does not, we are none of His (Romans 8:9-11, 1 John 4:13.) It is one thing to claim that there is some sort of (creation based) spirit which emanates throughout the creation as a gift from the gods, blessing the LDS. It is quite another to claim that the Holy Spirit is omnipresent, because, according to Joseph Smith, He simply is not³.

2.) Mormons Need to Understand the Sinfulness of Sin and Their Need for God's Imputed Righteousness

It stands to reason that a flawed belief in God must, inevitably, lead to a flawed understanding of sin and its consequences. For this reason, it is very important to have a clear understanding of sin when talking with a Mormon. When the Bible says that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3) it is teaching us that we need a redeemer. We need someone to save us from the consequences of our sin (Romans 6:23). Christ took the penalty for our

sin in His own body on the cross (1 Peter 2:24). He died in our place before we were ever born (Romans 5:8). He made peace with God on our behalf and removed the separation that had come between us and God as a result of our sin (Ephesians 2:15-16). We can enjoy this peace with God personally simply by accepting the work of Christ on our behalf in simple faith (Romans 5:1).

At first blush, a Mormon elder may have us think he agrees in essence with the above statements, but in reality, Mormonism does not. Mormons do not believe that Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, but rather, transgressed the law (Note 1 John 3:4). The Mormon book of Moses teaches that the Son of God atoned for the *guilt* of that original *transgression* (Moses 6:53-54) - thus freeing all mankind from the guilt of Adam's transgression, leaving us with the task of atoning for our own sin (better understood as guilt) through obedience to the Mormon gospel and its laws.

Now, notice this discrepancy. The Bible says that Christ died for our sins (not transgressions or guilt, but sins) according to the scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3, and Galatians 1:4). This salvation is a free gift, not of works, lest any man should boast (Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:8-10). The Mormon will quickly respond by reminding us that faith without works is dead, and it surely is. This is because the free gift of salvation makes us a new creation in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:17), created unto good works (not by good works.)

Bible students should be aware that the LDS are very aware of Ephesians 2:8-9, and Titus 3:5 and are somewhat satisfied with the circular response they have been given in their seminaries. This Bible teacher prefers to engage Mormons with the arguments of Romans 4:1-16. Individual Mormons are less familiar with this passage because the seminaries have not been able to provide a palpable response. Most generally, an elder will try to deflect the discussion to Moses' law, but if the laws of Moses could not save neither can the laws of Mormonism save. It is important, when possible, to have the Mormon read these verses aloud, and then to ask him, what *he* thinks these verses say.

For additional background on the subject of the Mormon's need for God's righteousness, be sure to read [Section II article, number 9](#) on what the Catholic needs to hear about God's righteousness. For additional help explaining why our works cannot save, read our Section II Article entitled [Five Things Our Works Based Friends Need to Understand](#).

3.) Mormons Need to Understand their Additional Revelations are Not Aligned with the Bible and are Therefore False.

God and His Word are unchanging. The biblical God exists outside the creation. While filling the creation, God is not a part of it in any way. Unlike the changing creation, He is unchanging. The Mormon

Again, see our supplemental chart by Dr. Dennis Wright entitled Is Mormonism Christian for a quick refresher regarding how wide these differences are.

god is part of his creation and is subject to change. Because the biblical God is unchanging, His Word is also unchanging. This sheds light on an important truth. The Bible simply cannot be contradicted. It is either one hundred percent correct or it is not correct at all.

The Book of Mormon moves men away from the unchanging Bible. Beginning with the Book of Mormon, and each subsequent LDS revelation, the beliefs of Mormonism move further away from the biblical expression of truth.

Mormons are not forthright in their confessed respect for the Bible. One of the most frustrating challenges the biblical witness faces when talking with Mormons is their unwillingness to face this myriad of discrepancies openly and honestly. Your Mormon friend will inevitably revert to one or two defenses when challenged with these outright contradictions. First, he will openly declare (in the words of Joseph Smith) that he believes the Bible to be the word of God *insofar as it is correctly translated*. The implication is that the Bible is no longer reliable because it has gone through so many translations and revisions. Yet, here is the salient point. Essentially all translations and revisions (with the exception of the Watchtower Bible) stand in total agreement against the aberrations of the Mormon scriptures. Further, there is not one shred of evidence that any of the supporting passages for historic biblical doctrine has, in any way been changed. When it comes to comparing virtually any known Bible translation or manuscript with LDS revelations, these Bibles always agree.

At this point, the Mormon elder will likely reply that the issue is not translation, but interpretation, an initially plausible thought. The problem is, that the Bible clearly quotes itself and interprets itself so many times, that there can be no question regarding its intent.

Why then, are there variant Christian views? Not all Christians interpret the Bible in its simple, literal form. Virtually all Christian views are the result of not taking simple Bible statements literally.

Bible students agree that many have tried to twist and pervert the scriptures, but they have always failed, because the Bible may be taken literally and trusted. It needs no other defense, and is self-interpreting. The additional LDS revelations must dovetail with the Bible and they do not. Keep in mind that the Mormon will try to stage his argument on *canonicity*. The issue is *consistency* with what God has already revealed.

The Book of Mormon contains a long list of statements which are in direct contradiction to the Bible⁵. There is not one shred of DNA evidence for the Mormon claim that the Navajo is Jewish. There is not one shred of external historical, palaeontological, or archaeological evidence that any of the great civilizations discussed in the book ever existed. Horses, wheat, barley, steel, and similar items did not exist in the Americas.

4.) Mormons Need to Understand That Their Prophet is False.

While we do not *approach* Mormons with this issue, every believer should be ready to stand behind this fact. Matt Slick names just a few of Smith's false prophecies, prophecy about Jesus' return within 56 years, prophecy that the temple would be built in Missouri within Smith's generation, prophecy that all nations would be involved in the American Civil War, and that Isaiah 11 was about to be fulfilled, etc.⁶ These, and similar failures remind us that we should not even

listen to such a false prophet (Deut. 18:10-22).

5.) Mormons need to Understand that God Loves Them and Bible Believers Do Too.

Resources for confronting Mormonism can be found in our libraries, bookstores, and all over the Internet. This blessing can also be a trap. We are not in this discussion to win battles, we are in it to win souls, and not to disrespect Mormons. We must keep the gospel invitation and the love of Christ in the forefront, and respond to Mormon error only when it is placed in front of us as an *obstacle* to talking about Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ loves those who have been deceived and wants them won to Himself.

More and more Mormons are evaluating their roots and many are coming to Christ. At the same time, Mormon growth in the U.S. is virtually limited to its biological growth. These are good days to reach out to Mormon friends.

A Final Word. Any hope the Mormon has for stepping out of the false “light” of gnosticism and stepping into the glorious gospel light will be found in his willingness to listen to and read the Bible for himself⁴. The final goal of the believer when witnessing to Mormons is to encourage them to remind the Mormon that man does not live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matthew 4:4).

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Be aware that most witnesses to Mormons will be asked to read the Book of Mormon and to pray and ask God whether it is true. Remember, this is not a *biblical* test. Nowhere in the Bible are we commanded to do such a thing. Rather, we are to test all things and *search the scriptures* to see whether the teachings we hear are of God (1 Thessalonians 5:21, John 5:39, Acts 17:11). The Bible is our standard.

As an aside, Mormons do not feel *you* have a priesthood or the *authority* to preach the gospel. You know that you are a priest (1 Peter 2:5,9), but remind your listener that you, along with all true believers in Christ, have been given *authority* to preach and minister the gospel (Matthew 28:18-20).

Finally, a Mormon elder, in particular, may ask if he can give you his “testimony” before ending the conversation. As noted earlier, it will likely include a reference to the burning in his bosom which confirmed the Book of Mormon to him. This pastor’s preference is to say, “Of course you are free to share it, and I’ll be happy to share mine after you!” Your testimony should include your absolute confidence in *the Word of God*, quoting a Bible verse or two that are apropos (such as 1 John 5:10-11). Remember, this whole discussion is about authority. Your authority comes from the Word of God, not an impression you have received.

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¹ <http://www.mrm.org/god-of-mormonism> This article is an absolute must for serious students of Mormonism.

² Mormons and the Holy Ghost. <http://mit.irr.org/mormonism-and-holy-ghost> . Mutually contradictory remarks of Joseph Smith and Joseph Fielding Smith's explanation of the difference between the Holy Ghost and the "other spirit" "This man here, another one over there, and a man over in England, are confirmed members of the Church. The question arises, 'How can the Holy Ghost be with them all at the same time?' He does not have to be, but the power of the Holy Ghost is such that it can be manifest in every place at the same moment of time.... Thus when it becomes necessary to speak to us, he is able to do so by acting through the other Spirit, that is, through the Light of Christ" (Doctrines of Salvation, 1:38, 40).

³ <http://www.mrm.org/god-of-mormonism> As BYU professor David Paulson once put it, "God does not have absolute power... but rather the power to maximally utilize natural laws to bring about His purposes."

⁴It is important to see how closely the LDS doctrine of light corresponds to the same expression in gnosticism. This is how the Mormon differentiates between the non-omnipresent "personage" of the Holy Spirit and the gift of the Holy Spirit which obedient Mormons claim to possess. The following is a quote from LDS apologist Greg Trimble.

"We are spiritual beings and we're filled with light. Light is something that can carry information. That is a scientific truth and it is used everyday through the use of fiber optics. Our spirits came from God and we were sent to this earth filled with light and intelligence. John 1:9 talks about the "light of Christ" that is given to every human being that comes to this earth. That light is either enlarged or diminished by the decisions we make. Joseph Fielding Smith's favorite scripture was D&C 50:24 wherein it says that "he that receiveth light, and continueth in God receiveth more light." Our spirits crave light because that is what they were used to in the presence of our Heavenly Father. We were cut off from the presence of our Father. That means no communication with Him...so how can we ever know and recognize truth with so much confusion around us? Jesus Christ's role was to come and redeem us and to show us the way back to Heavenly Father. The role of the Holy Ghost was to communicate light and intelligence and to guide us in the direction that Christ pointed us." <http://www.gregtrimble.com/science-behind-feeling-the-holy-ghost/>

⁵ See a typical list of contradictions from LDS convert Sandra Tanner: <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/bibleandbomcontradictions.htm>

⁶ <https://carm.org/false-prophecies-of-joseph-smith>

Additional Resources (not carte blanc recommendations.)

Videos: The Mormon Dilemma (a critique of the earlier released *Godmakers*, and *Temple of the Godmakers* videos by Jeremiah Films. Difficult to locate, but valuable. Also, *DNA vs the Book of Mormon* and *The Bible and the Book of Mormon*, by Living Hope Ministries.

Any of the writings of Ira T. Ransom such as *Ask Your Bishop*, *Is Mormonism Based on the Bible*, *The Pillars of Mormonism*, etc.