

A Biblical Response to Mormons

by Matt Slick

Matt Slick provides a comprehensive framework for witnessing to Mormons by addressing key doctrinal differences and emphasizing the importance of understanding biblical truth.

Topics: "Mormonism", "Apologetics"

Description

Matt Slick delivers a sermon on effectively witnessing to Mormons by understanding their beliefs and terminology, emphasizing the importance of knowing the true Jesus for eternal life and the need to study Mormonism's definitions. He highlights the significance of teaching and understanding to effectively share the Gospel, pointing out the differences in beliefs regarding the Trinity, God, and salvation. Slick also addresses the Mormon practice of praying about the Book of Mormon and the errors in their teachings, such as the plurality of gods and the concept of salvation by grace after all you can do.

Transcript

Witnessing to a Mormon is like trying to climb Jell-O: it's hard to get a foothold. But, if you know what Mormonism teaches then you are already well on your way. Following are basic approaches that should aid you in witnessing to a Mormon. Though none of these approaches are fool proof, they will provide you with the basic framework you need to be able to witness to a Mormon. It will be up to you to use what you have learned, develop more skill in witnessing, and perfect your method as you go. Remember, the best way to learn to witness is to witness.

There are two important things to know before you begin evangelizing Mormons. First, you need to understand their definitions to the same biblical words that you use: Trinity, Jesus, Salvation, Heaven, etc. Second, you must be able to show them that they believe in a wrong Jesus. This is important because only the true Jesus gives eternal life (John 10:28), reveals the Father (Matt. 11:27), and sends the Holy Spirit (John 15:26).

For the first part you really need to study the Terminology of Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. Once you understand what it is that they are saying, you will be much more able to witness.

To witness means you must teach. To teach means you must understand. To understand means you must know not only what you believe, but also what they believe.

Terminology When a Mormon says he believes in the Trinity he does not mean the historical orthodox Trinity of one God who exists in three persons. To a Mormon, the Trinity is a position held by three separate gods: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Remember, the correct doctrine of the Trinity is that there is only one God who has existed for eternity. This one God exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are not three separate gods, but only one God.

When a Mormon says he believes in God he does not mean in the one true God, the creator of all things, the One who has always existed from all time. He means he believes in a god who used to be a man on another planet, who followed the laws and ordinances of that god on that planet and became exalted to godhood. And, to top it all off, he has a wife who is a goddess. If you are in a witnessing situation with a Mormon you might be using the same words, but you won't be speaking the same language.

So, it is a very good idea to study Terminology Differences where the definitions of Mormon terms (and Jehovah's Witnesses) are explained and contrasted with true definitions. They Have a Testimony Mormons will bear their testimony to you and tell you that they know the Mormon church is true and that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God. There are two basic approaches you can take. Ask them where their testimony is. "In my heart." They'll say. You say, "Did you know that the Bible says not to trust your heart because it is deceitful?"

"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jer. 17:9). Second, you can ask them how they get their testimony. They will say by the Holy Spirit. Ask, "Who bears witness of the truth?" They will say that the Holy Spirit does. Correct him gently by showing him that the Holy Spirit Bears witness of Jesus (John 15:26) and that Jesus sends the Holy Spirit (John 15:26). Once you've shown them that the Holy Spirit is sent from Jesus, ask them if a false Jesus will send the true Spirit of God.

The answer, of course, is no. The point is that only the Jesus of the Bible will send the Holy Spirit. If they don't have the right Jesus they can't have the true Holy Spirit, and their testimony is invalid. Praying about the Book of Mormon Mormons believe that if you read the Book of Mormon and then pray and ask God whether or not it is true, you will receive a testimony from the Holy Spirit verifying its truth. If it is true, then Joseph Smith is true and so is Mormonism. Many Mormons claim to have this testimony.

First of all, God never says to pray about truth. He says to search the Scriptures to find truth (Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 3:16). So, what the Mormon is doing is unbiblical. Second, it doesn't matter what you feel. If what you feel contradicts the Bible, then what you feel is wrong. Third, ask them if they ever had to pray about the Bible to see if it is true. Of course they haven't. So why are they supposed to pray about the B.O.M.? Their answer will be that the B.O.M. says to pray about it.

Still, the Bible says to study God's word for truth, not pray about it. A common verse that Mormons use to support their belief that you can pray about the B. O. M. is found in James 1:5: "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." They say that because since they believe they're sincere, God will answer them. First of all, the problem with sincerity is that it becomes works righteousness because the person is saying "Because of my sincerity, God will listen to me."

In other words, because of what's in the person God will look favorably upon him. God does not look into a person and find something good because there is no good in anyone (Rom. 3:10-12; Eph. 2:3). Second, this verse is about wisdom, not about praying to see if the Book of Mormon is true. In James 1:1 it says,

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings." So, the book of James was written to those who were believers and already had the truth.

That is why James calls them "brothers" in verse 2. Third, wisdom is the proper use of knowledge, not the acquisition of knowledge. You acquire true spiritual knowledge from the Bible, not your heart. You don't pray about the B.O.M., you pray about the truth you've learned from the Bible and ask God to teach you more, and how to apply properly what He's already shown you. What is the Gospel? The following approach is direct and hard hitting. Sometimes it is necessary to be blunt in order to get their attention.

Ask a Mormon "What is the gospel?". He will say something like, "The gospel is the laws and the ordinances of the Mormon church." Ask again what it is and listen closely for any hint of the free forgiveness of sins through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. You usually hear an answer dealing with works, obedience, doing something, etc. After the person has answered, explain that according to the Bible, the gospel is what saves us, what cleanses us of our sins, and enables us to stand in the presence of God the Father.

Explain that the Bible specifically defines the gospel and that the gospel is what makes you a Christian and then ask again, "What is the gospel?" After you've heard a works-righteousness-type answer, turn in your Bible to 1 Cor 15:1-4 and read: "Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." Explain that the gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus...for sins! Then turn to 2 Cor. 4:3-4 and read again. "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

Say something like, "You clearly did not understand the gospel message of Jesus the Savior and the Bible clearly shows you why. It is because your mind has been blinded." The Apostasy Mormonism maintains that the true gospel message was lost from the earth shortly after the apostles died. The Mormon Apostle Orson Prat said, "Jesus...established his kingdom on earth...the kingdoms of this world made war against the kingdom of God, established eighteen centuries ago, and they prevailed against it, and the kingdom ceased to exist." (Journal of Discourses.

Vol. 13, page 125). But Jesus said, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18, KJV). As you can see, Mormonism contradicts what Jesus said. That is why they must say that the Bible is not trustworthy. That is, it isn't trustworthy wherever it disagrees with Mormonism. Authority and The Mormon Priesthoods Since Mormonism claims to be the restoration of the gospel, it also claims to have the authority to perform priestly duties and, therefore, properly represent God here on earth.

All offices of the Mormon church grow out of the priesthoods. Melchizedek - This is the greater priesthood. It consists of several offices: Elder, seventy, high priest, patriarch or evangelist, and apostle. Aaronic - a part of the greater Melchizedek priesthood. Aaronic priesthood - This is the lesser priesthood Is synonymous with the Levitical Priesthood (D.&C. 107:1,6,10) Performs the administration of the ordinances (D.&C. 107:13-14) Deacon, teacher, then priest. Quite simply, the Bible contradicts what

Mormons believe concerning the priesthood.

Jesus is the only high priest after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 3:1; 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:11,15,17,21,24,26; 8:1; 9:11). "Where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek" (Hebrews 6:20). "And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life" (Heb. 7:15-16).

The Melchizedek Priesthood is unchangeable and untransferable "but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood" (Heb. 7:24). Many Gods One of the truly dividing lines between Christianity and Mormonism is their doctrine of the plurality of Gods. Mormonism teaches that there are many many gods. (Mormon Doctrine by Bruce McConkie, page 163; Teachings pages 348-349). In their desire for legitimacy they will even quote 1 Cor. 8:5 to say that the Bible also teaches many gods. 1 Cor. 8:5 says, "For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many 'gods' and many 'lords')."

They will say, "see even the Bible says there are many gods." You can say, "It says there are many that are called gods. It doesn't say they really are gods. It is saying that they only called gods. The Scriptures recognize that there are false gods (Gal. 4:8). Besides, the Bible flatly denies the existence of any other gods. "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "...Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me" (Isaiah 43:10). "This is what the LORD says -- ...I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God...Is there any God besides me?

No, there is no other Rock; I know not one" (Isaiah 44:6,8). "I am the LORD, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God" (Isaiah 45:5). Errors in the Book of Mormon Saved by grace after all you can do? (2 Nephi 25:23) How could Moroni "read" Heb. 13:8 and James 1:17 when the N.T. never reached America? (Mormon 9:9). Helaman 12:25-26, written 6 B.C. says, "we read," quoting 2 Thess. 1:9 and John 5:29. That is 90 years too early. Jesus, a son of God (Alma 36:17). Mosiah 21:28 says King Mosiah had a gift from God, but the original Book of Mormon manuscript reads "King Benjamin". Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:1-2; Matt. 2:1). In the Book of Mormon (Alma 7:9,10) it says it was Jerusalem.

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