

5 minutes for Mormon missionaries

“...and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you....” —See 1 Peter 3:15

Mormons, including their missionaries, ask questions. You can answer confidently, focusing on essentials of true Christian faith. You can avoid common misconceptions about Mormons and unintentional insults or accusations about their religion.

Take the initiative; give them five minutes. But never waste time arguing with Mormons about “foolish questions,” or nit-picking details of their religion, “for they are unprofitable and vain.” At best, Mormon religion is heresy, and followers, not to mention propagators, of its false doctrines condemn themselves. (See Titus 3:9-11.)

Mormons Ask. Mormons often say they are misunderstood. They think it is obvious that they are Christians, and they ask:

1. We believe in One God, the Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost. How can anyone say we are not Christians?

2. We believe the Bible. Isn't it wonderful that we have today the Book of Mormon and living prophets to supplement the Bible and tes-

tify of Jesus Christ?

3. We believe that God has provided salvation for all, and eternal life to those who strive earnestly to be worthy of that gift. Don't you agree?

Always giving an answer.

Mormons are not likely to ask directly about “the hope that is in you,” the question suggested by the Apostle Peter, but every Christian can

“...being justified by his grace” I have “hope [confident expectation] of eternal life.” —See Titus 3:7

say anyway, as suggested by the Apostle Paul: “I have a confident expectation of

eternal life. I am justified, I am clean, not because I have proved worthy, but because of Jesus Christ.”

But there's more in a useful five-minute answer.

More for Mormons. You can be straightforward without giving unnecessary offense when speaking about the Mormon desire to be considered Christian. (See “Suggestion” on page 2.)

Overcoming obstacles.

•Mormons actively seek to convert Christians, fielding 50,000 full-time missionaries, and encouraging 13 million members to refer family

members, neighbors, and friends to the missionaries. Through decades of missionary activity, untold thousands of Mormons have gained experience arguing with Christians. (*Solution: Don't argue. Give focused, brief comments to Mormons.*)

•Mormons often have been treated rudely, with crude, inaccurate, and irrelevant arguments against their religion. They are not inclined to heed more of the same. (*Solution: Be kind, but uncompromising, accurate, and clear.*)

“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous [harsh] words stir up anger.”
—Proverbs 15:1

•Mormon missionaries want to teach you—to meet with you repeatedly to lay out the fullness of their “restored gospel.” (*Solution: Deny them the opportunity. Instead use a few minutes to address elemental truths of Christian faith.*)

•Many Christians bone up on Mormonism only sporadically, overload on obscure details of its history and doctrines, and use “anti-Mormon” resources, often unaware of modern-day realities of Mormon life. (*Solution: Don't try to tell Mormons what they believe or dwell on their church's past. Recognize that there are vast generational and doctrinal differences among Mormons, and for many their history is irrelevant.*)

•Many Christians have never tried to speak about faith with Mormons and their missionaries, or have tried and sensed frustration or failure. (*Well—try, or try again. Consider this: Even the apostles had mixed results. To the end, Paul preached the gospel to visitors, “And some believed..., and some believed not.” (See Acts 28:23-31.) The missionaries at the door and Mormons you know are your opportunities to serve Christ. They all need soft answers and hard doctrinal truths.*)

Preparing your answer. Consider the example below, and prepare your own brief response for missionaries at your door or other Mormons you know. Take the initiative. Say it. End it.

Suggestion.

I am a Christian. I have received God's free gift of eternal life. I know you may want to be Christian, too. Unfortunately your church's modern-day scriptures violate even elemental truths of Christian faith. They say that “the Gods” formed man in their own image from the dust of the ground.* Christians in all churches and throughout time have known there is only one God, the Creator. I cannot accept your church and its teachings; nor should you. I hope you will study the Bible and believe in the only true God and Jesus Christ as revealed there.

*Abraham 4:27; 5:7