



The Evangelical Mormon Outreach Quarterly  
Supporting Christian Witness to Mormons

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## JUSTIFIED!

Why Christians want to share the Gospel with Mormons.

**Justification:** God's declaration, received by faith, that an unrighteous, guilty person is guiltless in His sight, fully pardoned, and credited with Christ's own righteousness.

EVERYONE'S PROBLEM is that there is "none righteous, no not one." And **the solution?** A person "is justified by faith," and, in fact, "perfected forever" by God.<sup>1</sup>

Mormons have the same problem you have, but a different solution. You can speak to them about the problem and the solution: the Bible's Good News.

A UNIQUE OBSTACLE FOR MORMONS: Their leaders teach that salvation and justification depend in large measure on personal

efforts. For example—

A Mormon leader wrote that a person's "compliance with this basic doctrine of the gospel, the law of justification," is required for salvation.

He described the unique Mormon law and the required compliance this way, quoting Mormon scripture: "All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, in which men must abide to be saved and exalted, must be entered into and performed in righteousness so that the Holy Ghost can justify the candidate for salvation in what has been done."<sup>2</sup>

Even Mormons don't know exactly what their church expects them to do to earn justification. But they obey, hoping their faith, works, and desires will suffice.<sup>3</sup>

**The Christian responsibility** in witnessing to Mormons is to present in unmistakable terms the Good News known through the centuries—and to live appropriately, consistently. That requires commitment to biblical truth about God, man, sin and salvation.

**Suggestion:** To avoid unproductive, endless, frustrating arguments, don't start with, and resist drifting into, a critique of Mormon teachings. Start with—and stick with—the Gospel.

**What do you want for a Mormon friend?** Mormons need justification; they seek exaltation.

Jesus said, "*I tell you, this man went down to his house justified...exalted*" (Luke 18:14).

•Who was "this man"? •What did he do? •Tell a Mormon.

## How can you start a conversation with a Mormon?

Consider this. Family to family, if possible, or with a close friend. Express in general terms your gratitude for the Gospel. Ask what it is about the Gospel that the Mormon is thankful for.

Although you might hear unusual concepts of the Gospel, it might be best to avoid directly critiquing each item, each error.

Instead, give Mormons an alternative. Express your thanks for the undeserved gift of eternal life entirely through the merits of Christ, and by faith alone—a sinner saved by grace, justified and exalted, as was the man in Jesus' narrative (Luke 18:9-14).

**Mormons might say** about their religion—

•The gospel is all of the truths restored through the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I know the gospel and the Church are true. We are Christians, and we want to obey the laws and ordinances of the gospel as Jesus commanded.

•We are saved by faith, yes, but not faith *alone*.

•We are saved by grace after we do everything possible ourselves, as taught in the Book of Mormon.<sup>4</sup>

•Jesus said those who love Him should keep the commandments.<sup>5</sup>

•Jesus commanded, "be ye perfect," and told an adulteress to "sin no more." He requires only what is possible for us to do. And we try.<sup>6</sup>

As you listen to Mormons, you will notice the drift: They intend to be major players in their own salvation. Each will express it differently, but to the same end: a religion full of Christian terminology and Bible references but lacking understanding of true saving faith.

**Note their misrepresentation of biblical faith,** and the emphasis on works in a Mormon's life.

**Mormons might say** about your faith—

•That's too simple. God doesn't save a person just because they say they believe.

•It's just not right that a person should say I'm forgiven, so now I can live any way I want to.

•Why do you follow Paul (faith) and not James (works)?<sup>7</sup> Our Prophet Joseph Smith learned that we are saved by faith *and* works.

•You "erroneously suppose Paul taught" that "men are justified by faith alone, without works" (as one Mormon authority wrote).<sup>2</sup>

**Notes:** 1. Romans 2:10; 3:28; Hebrews 10:10,14. 2. Apostle, prophet, seer, and revelator Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, page 408. 3. *Gospel Principles*, 2009, page 99. 4. 2 Nephi 25:23. 5. John 14:15. 6. Matthew 5:48; John 8:11. 7. Romans 3:28 and James 2:24.

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