

What about Mormonism?

Mormonism was founded by Joseph Smith who claims to have received revelations from God in the 1800s. Mormons, or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, insist they are part of the Christian orthodoxy (mainstream Christian churches that share the same foundational doctrines). Others disagree because the "revelations" of Joseph Smith, recorded in the Book of Mormon, are highly suspect. This book claims to reveal the history of ancient civilizations in America that had Hebrew and Christian beliefs.

No ancient copies of this book exist. No persons, places, or nations it lists have been found. There is absolutely zero historical or archaeological evidence to support Smith's writings and there have been 3913 changes in the book since its first printing. Smith, who claimed to be a prophet of God, made 64 specific prophecies. Only six were correct. Some of his prophecies included Jesus would return to earth by 1890 and the moon would be found to be inhabited by sixfoot tall people. Should not a true "prophet of God" be 100% correct? In fact, Deuteronomy 18:21-22 provides that very test: If what the prophet says does not come to pass, he is not a prophet. Sounds like common sense.

Perhaps we should remember the biblical mandate "Test everything. Hold on to the good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). We are also warned about being taken in by deceitful teachings (1 John 4:1), human traditions (Colossians 2:8; Isaiah 29:13), emotions (Proverbs 28:26) and believing in myths (1 Timothy 1:4; 2 Timothy 4:3-4; Titus 1:14).

- by Derrick Dean (edited)

When the Mormons Call

If it has not happened already, it is certain to happen sometime soon - the Mormons, will come knocking at your door. These visitors will likely fit a very common description. They will be young men, riding bicycles, neatly dressed wearing white shirts and ties, and calling themselves "elders". They will politely express an interest in studying spiritual matters with you. Do not hesitate to engage in such a discussion. In fact, you should "be ready always to give an answer" (1 Peter 3:15).

Let us offer a suggestion in dealing with these young men. They are, despite their obvious sincerity, false teachers. They will acknowledge that the Bible is the Word of God. They feel, however, that it has been hopelessly perverted in the process of its transmission and translation through the centuries. They believe that God has now chosen to speak through a man named Joseph Smith, to whom he gave a latter day revelation (contained in the Book of Mormon and some other writings).

Since these books serve as the basis of their religion, we believe that the only fruitful study with the Mormons will center on their claims that these writings are, in fact, from God. You should insist that they prove these assertions with evidence.

Past experience has shown that they will want you to pray for a sign. They teach, that God will give you an answer; a "warm feeling in your heart". Tell them that you do NOT accept that approach. After all, you would not expect an atheist to "pray for a sign" about the Bible. Instead, you would offer a powerful case based upon solid evidence. You would build your case and lead to the inescapable conclusion that the Bible is inspired of God.

And so, when the Mormons call, demand evidence - the same kind of evidence that you could offer to prove that the Bible is from God. If they will not engage in this type of study, then time spent with them will be wasted.

- by Greg Gwin

Breaking Bad Worship Habits

A habit is, by definition, a "tendency, constantly shown, to act in a certain way, acquired by frequent repetition." Of course, some habits are good - bathing, brushing your teeth, etc. But, unfortunately, some habits are bad. These are the ones we need to change. We call it "breaking a habit." It's not always easy, but it is necessary.

Some folks have developed certain bad habits in regards to worship and Bible study assemblies. They "constantly show" certain "tendencies" that they have "acquired by frequent repetition." Consider some of these bad habits that folks need to break:

- Being late: Everyone will be late occasionally. Things may happen that cannot be anticipated and these can result in one's being late. However, some folks are always late. This is nothing more than a habit - and it can be broken. Make up your mind to leave home earlier and arrive before the services begin. You really need to be here at least 15 minutes early. Doing so will allow you to meet and greet visitors, encourage your brethren, and take your seat without a frantic rush. These are not trivial matters. What if everyone followed the habit of these perennial late-comers. Our services would be in total chaos. If you have this habit of being late, you need to think about the seriousness of it.

- Sleeping: Again, anyone can get drowsy in the course of a service -- we've all done that. But some people do it all the time. Unless there's some physical condition you can't control, or some medication that you must take that has this side-effect, you need to break this habit. Be well rested before you come. Taking notes will help keep you alert. Follow along in your Bible. Do what it takes to stay awake.

- Talking: We often think of the young people when it comes to whispering, passing notes, etc. Certainly, they need to pay attention and not engage in such distractive activities. But, we've seen older folks - some who don't even realize that their whispering is so loud it can be heard by everyone - who talk and chatter right through the service. This needs to stop.

- Playing with the babies: We love babies. They are cute and fun and a pure joy to be around. However, during the worship services and Bible studies is no time to be playing with them. Your close attention and participation is needed in the service. And, the little ones need to be taught to sit quietly on Mom or Dad's lap and not be a distraction. Some folks need a "time out" for such misbehavior.

- Parading to the restroom: Again, we know that some people may have medical conditions, and others may have an unexpected emergency that requires them to go out during the services. But, we are sure that some are in the simple habit of doing so. We recommend that you take care of such matters before services begin. There should be only a few who, if they will do this, cannot sit through an entire service without going out to the restroom. And, parents, we especially urge you to coach your kids in this regard. Too many young folks are steadily streaming out and in. When they do so, they get nothing out of the service themselves, and they produce an annoying distraction for others who are trying to concentrate.

- Rushing out at the end of services: There are certain members who are in the habit of almost running out the doors as soon as the final "amen" is spoken. A few others won't even wait that long, and leave before the service is even dismissed. What's the hurry? When you hurry out you miss out on the opportunity to associate with your brethren. You can draw strength from them and be an encouragement in return. Sadly, some people hardly know anyone else in the local church. This is not only a bad habit; it directly circumvents a part of God's plan for the local church. Hang around!

A good rule in regards to all of these "bad worship habits" is to ask yourself: What if everyone did as I do? Sadly, if we all followed the practices of certain members, we'd never get started on time, you wouldn't be able to hear anything over the talking, snoring, and giggling babies, there would be a line waiting to enter the restrooms, and there would be a stampede to get out at the end of services. Think!

- by Greg Gwin