

Reflection Guide

Lesson One: Introduction

1. It's easy to become discouraged with witnessing because we sometimes don't see the end result. Reflect on the following Bible passages and the comfort they give.

➤ *Isaiah 55:10-11*

Comparing the effect of God's Word with the effect of rain is quite comforting. Picture the amazing change after a rain shower has drenched a parched landscape. Although the effect of God's Word is usually not this apparent, it is just as real! We know this because we right here have God's own statement to that effect.

What are God's purposes for his Word? His main purpose is that it works positively on people: making unbelievers alive in Christ and strengthening believers in their faith. Another purpose is to harden those who consistently reject him. See, for example, how Paul describes his own ministry in 2 Corinthians 2:15-16.

➤ *Romans 1:16*

The gospel is the specific message of our salvation based on Christ's work. Note that it is the power "for the salvation of *everyone who believes*." This means no one is saved without contact with the gospel. It is the only means or tool God uses to bring people to faith.

It is a very powerful tool. Our word "dynamite" is derived from the Greek word for power. Whenever you share the gospel with someone, you place a stick of dynamite against their stony heart of unbelief—dynamite powerful enough to break through their unbelief. Again, it is the only thing powerful enough to do this. Human logic, reason, argumentation can't do it. See 1 Corinthians 1:18-25.

➤ *Hebrews 4:12*

God's Word is *living*. It pulsates with the life-giving energy of the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 6:17 talks about "the sword *of the Spirit*, which is the word of God." Because it is alive with the power of the Holy Spirit, it is also a *creative* word; it can create the very faith which it commands people to have. See 2 Corinthians 4:6 where Paul compares it to God's creative word at creation.

God's Word is also compared to a "*double-edged sword*." Many apply this to the two main teachings of the Bible: God's law (his commands) and God's gospel (his promises). Both are necessary—both are powerful.

2. Mormons don't like it when Mormonism is called a "work-righteousness" religion. However, they don't mind the label of "grace plus." Think of how being sensitive to this distinction will help as you talk with Mormons.

When witnessing, our goal is to always find the path of least resistance without denying any truth. Even though any reliance on works ruins grace (Romans 11:6) and thus is work righteousness, it is not necessary to label Mormonism as that. We get to the same place—and usually much more quickly and easily—by identifying it as "grace plus." Mormons are not bothered by this label and thus don't become defensive and argumentative. By referring to it as "grace plus," you can spend more time on the topic which matters, namely, the biblical truth that any works ruins grace.

3. List specific things that might hinder you from witnessing. For example,

- *You are angry at false beliefs and want to argue and defeat*
- *You don't want to risk damaging an important relationship*

- You might be afraid of being seen as too religious
- You think they will know much more than you
- You might hesitate because you don't know enough about Mormonism
- You might hesitate because you don't think you know the Bible good enough
- You don't think there is any chance Mormons will ever convert
- You don't make the time to witness
- You don't want to leave your comfort zone to witness
- You don't know how to start a spiritual conversation

4. List specific things that will help you witness. For example,

- *Praying regularly to adopt Paul's mission mindset*
- *Making a list of passages that talk about the power of the Word*

- Asking some friends to be your prayer support
- Asking someone to be your partner as you witness
- Writing out a simple witness/testimony to help you think through your witness
- Marking pertinent passages in your Bible and listing them in the front of your Bible
- Making a cheat sheet with a witnessing outline
- Remembering that eternal stakes are involved
- Seeing how much your witness will please the Lord

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Lesson Two: Build on Bedrock

1. It would be good to create a list of passages which emphasize Jesus' vicarious (substitutionary) work. You could begin with the four listed on the first page of this lesson. What others could you include?

- *Galatians 1:4 "who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father"*
- *Ephesians 5:2 "and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."*
- *Titus 2:14 "who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good."*
- *1 John 3:16 "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."*
- *Romans 5:6 "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly."*
- *2 Corinthians 5:15 "And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."*
- *Isaiah 53:4-5 "Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed."*
- *1 Peter 2:24 "He himself bore our sins' in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; 'by his wounds you have been healed.'"*

2. Besides Bible passages, examples and illustrations often help people understand. What are some examples and illustrations we could use to convey the idea of substitution? The more ways we can tell people this truth, the better the chance it will click for them. (i.e. what is the difference between a coach and a sub on a team?) As we do this, we also need to realize that people often think substitutes are inferior (subs on a team, substitute teachers).

There are three prominent examples of substitution in the Old Testament.

1. All the Old Testament sacrifices for sin. Placing their hands on the animal's head while confessing their sins symbolized the transfer of sins to the animal (Leviticus 16:21). Jesus is the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world (John 1:29).
2. The scapegoat used on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:8-10). Think of how we use the term scapegoat today. It emphasizes somebody taking the blame for something somebody else did.
3. The lamb God supplied as a substitute for Isaac (Genesis 22:13).

There are numerous stories of people sacrificing themselves for others. You can find examples by Googling "examples of substitution."

Here is a short poem, written by Anne Cousins, which emphasizes Jesus' substitution:

*Jehovah bade His sword awake.
O Christ, it woke gainst Thee.
Thy blood the flaming blade must slake,
Thy heart its sheath must be.
All for my sake—My peace to make!
Now sleeps that sword for me!*

3. Focusing on our status in Christ is a constant battle. Think of things that will help you focus on your wonderful status in Christ and make a list of them. For example, be more alert to the many exalted terms the Bible uses for believers.

- Talk about your status in Christ with your family and believing friends. There's something about verbalizing it which implants it deeper within us. This can also result in them, at times, reminding you of your wonderful status.
- As you read the Bible, underline the ways believers are described. You will be amazed at how exalted and positive the vast majority of those descriptions are.
- Take time each day to remember who you are in Christ. That can give you a whole new perspective on the problems, challenges, and, yes, even the joys you will experience that day.

4. Reflect on how you can illustrate the difference between a person's status and his state. For example, think of an immigrant the day before and the day after he receives his citizenship. His state (where he is living, etc.) has not changed. But his status is completely different. And that difference is very important.

- Think of the difference it makes when someone gets engaged to be married. Their state might not change, but their new status gives them great joy! "I'm wanted! I'm loved!"
- A foster child hears the family he is staying with is adopting him. Again, his state hasn't changed, however, his status surely has—with tremendous effect.
- A woman is informed she is listed as the primary heir in the will of a very wealthy person. Her state won't change until the person dies, even though her status already has. Think of all the people who will treat her differently!

5. Discuss the important role of prayer in witnessing. List all the various aspects we could be praying for.

- To see the opportunities the Lord gives us to witness and to take advantage of them.
- To witness with the right attitude
- To rely on the power of the gospel rather than on human reason
- To stick to the major points and not debate minor points
- To have the Lord give us the words to speak so we are his faithful ambassadors
- To work faith in those we are witnessing to
- To send other Christians to also witness to them
- Thankfulness for the opportunity to witness

6. What is a God-pleasing definition of success when it comes to witnessing?

Too often we define success only in terms of the bottom line or the harvest. We sometimes feel we are only successful if the person is brought to faith. A better definition of success is sharing God's Word, especially the gospel, in a way which addresses people's stress points and is shared with words they understand.

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Lesson Three: Pillar One

See Mormons as Victims, not Enemies

1. A Christian's default is to see Mormons as the enemy since they are proclaiming false teachings. The Christian's goal, then, becomes to defeat them by showing the errors of their ways. In this regard it is instructive to study Jesus' dialogue with Nicodemus, a Jewish teacher and Pharisee, recorded in John 3:1-21. Jesus' goal was not to defeat him by pointing out his false beliefs. Rather it was to win him by sharing the gospel with him. And after Jesus' death, Nicodemus reveals that he believed Jesus' message by giving Jesus a burial fit for a king.

Even though Nicodemus, as a Pharisee, belonged to a group which was highly critical of him, Jesus did not bring any of it up. This is striking because Nicodemus was a prominent person seeing he belonged to the Jewish ruling council. Neither did Jesus comment on Nicodemus' coming at night—something unusual in his culture. From this, we can glean two important points:

- Jesus didn't start the conversation with any remark which would make Nicodemus uneasy.
- Jesus didn't make any remark which might detour them off the main point.

Note Jesus' answer in verse 3. He guides the conversation to the subject he wants to talk about. We can do the same thing by thinking ahead of how we might answer some questions Mormons pose to us. For example, they like to talk about Joseph Smith being a prophet and they point to his life. You could respond by saying that the Bible tells us to judge the truthfulness of a prophet not by his life, but whether his teachings agree with the Bible. You could then ask how 2 Nephi 25:23 (*"by grace we are saved after all we can do"*) lines up with Ephesians 2:8-9. They wanted to talk about Joseph Smith. By your response you can guide the conversation away from Joseph Smith and to the major topic of salvation.

There is also a difference between proclaiming and explaining. The goal of proclaiming is simply to faithfully get the truth out. Explaining is teaching,

trying to get the person to understand. Here Jesus, as is often the case, proclaims more than explains. The benefit of proclaiming is that often it causes the person to ponder what you say.

In verses 3-8 Jesus speaks somewhat obliquely in order to get Nicodemus' attention. In verses 10-21 his words are much clearer. Note the topics he addresses: his divinity, salvation through faith, the high stakes involved. In other words, he talks about the essentials.

Finally, note how in verse 14 he uses an Old Testament illustration for the gospel—an illustration Nicodemus would be very familiar with as a Jewish teacher.

2. It's easy, at times, to make fun of some of Mormonism's teachings. But they aren't so funny when we see how they affect people. What are some things you can do to help you remember to empathize with Mormons rather than criticize or ridicule them?

Think of how you would feel if somebody ridiculed some of your cherished beliefs. For example, how would you feel if somebody mocked Jesus' death for us on the cross?

One of the best things you can do is get to know Mormons. There is no better way for you to see how such things are important to them.

3. Even though people often don't openly or freely admit to having no peace or hope, this is what the Bible states. Reflect on how it would be for you if you did not know Jesus as both your Savior and your Good Shepherd.

- Instead of looking forward to Judgment Day (since God has already told you his verdict: not guilty in Christ), you would dread it. The same goes for death.

- Instead of being released from the burden of trying to earn your salvation, the effort to earn salvation would direct, consciously or unconsciously, much of your life.
- Instead of seeing God as a loving Savior, you might picture him more as a stern judge—someone whom you would like to avoid.
- Instead of seeing Jesus as your Good Shepherd, blessing you abundantly and unconditionally, you would view him, at best, as someone who taught and showed you what to do. But you must still do it. Instead of Jesus being your active helper, he would be more like a distant coach.

4. Often Christians fail to see, and thus take advantage of, all the blessings only Christians enjoy. List some of those. Chapter 18 of the book, [*God—The Ultimate Humanitarian*](#), deals exclusively with this.

- Jesus rules the universe for believers—Ephesians 1:22
- The promise that God will work good for us in all situations—Romans 8:28
- Christ lives in us—Galatians 2:20
- Angels minister to us—Hebrews 1:14
- We have the privilege of prayer—Proverbs 28:9
- We are the temple of the Holy Spirit—1 Corinthians 6:19

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Lesson Four: Pillar Two

Treat Mormons with Genuine Love and Respect

1. A prominent characteristic of LDS culture is a persecution complex. Many Mormons immediately react to any comment about Mormonism as Mormon bashing. Think of ways to combat that.

- Don't assume they know you care for them. Tell them.
- Be proactive and talk about Mormon bashing. Admit that some Christians do it and you don't like it. Emphasize that although you want to discuss with them spiritual matters, your *motivation* is not to bash them.
- Be careful how you describe or react to the teachings of Mormonism. It only takes one thoughtless comment to construct a barrier.

2. It is sometimes difficult to correct a fellow-believer who is not speaking with sensitivity about Mormons. What are some ways you could tactfully talk to them about it?

- Don't assume they know their remark is insensitive or that they said it purposefully. If you can, point to an incident where you saw a Mormon hurt by a similar remark.
- Put it into a different context. Ask them to imagine how they would feel if somebody said something insensitive about a specific condition or situation—a condition or situation one of the members of their family struggles with.
- 2 Timothy 2:24 and Titus 3:2 are passages which could also be cited

3. Look over the [Profile of My Mormon Friend/Family Member](#) to see if it is something you could use or adapt.

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Lesson Five: Pillar Three

Focus on Mormon Stress Points

1. Many Christians are so bothered by Mormonism's false teachings that they feel guilty if they aren't immediately defending the truth. A look at Paul's actions in Athens (Acts 17:16-34) is instructive.

- Verse 18: What were the two topics of Paul's preaching?

- Good news of Jesus = gospel
- The resurrection. Some commentators think that the Greeks thought "Resurrection" was a god.

- Verse 22: Note how Paul begins.

It's very instructive that he begins, not with a criticism, but with a positive observation: that they were very religious. In many ways, we can say the same thing about Mormons.

- Verse 23: Paul identifies something unknown to them. For some, this was probably a stress point.

Unknowns, at the very least, spark people's curiosity. Other times, they give people stress. "What does the future hold for me?" "What happens after death?" "Am I right with God?"

- Verse 24: Note how Paul speaks positively. Instead of pointing out their errors, he proclaims the truth.

By talking about creation, he seeks common ground with the Athenians. One area of common ground we have with Mormons is that we both view the Bible as scripture. Although they see it as flawed, it is better to begin by saying we both view it as scripture. It is so much better if they (not us) bring into the conversation their belief that the Bible is flawed. If we bring it up first, it puts them on the defensive.

Another area of common ground is a high regard for the command to be perfect. As the discussion ensues, it will become evident that we view it differently. Again, however, it is good for this difference to become apparent during the conversation, rather than leading off with this thought.

- Verse 28: Paul quotes one of their own poets. This is an example of speaking their language—something which we will look at in connection with the fourth pillar.

Just a note about the quote. The Greek word translated “offspring” is different from “children.” Contrary to what Mormons think, we are not all children of God—only believers are. See John 1:12-13. It will be good for you to be alert to this distinction since some Mormons quote this verse as proof that we all are God’s children.

- Verse 31: Paul skillfully brings the focus on Jesus.

It is fascinating to study how the apostles always brought things back to Jesus. Paul starts with creation; proceeds to God giving us life and being his offspring; then to how God overlooked ignorance in the past but no longer. The proof? Jesus' resurrection!

One of the best things we can do is plan how we can take topics we anticipate will come up in our discussions and turn them to Jesus. For example, you could turn a discussion about temples to Jesus by pointing to the main aspect of Old Testament temples, namely, the substitutionary sacrifice of animals.

2. It is important to recognize the difference between sharing the truth and defending the truth. When is each appropriate? Which is to be our main focus (think of the Great Commission)?

Sharing the truth focuses on the person. You try to use the truth to bring the person to faith. Defending the truth focuses more on the truth. You want it to remain pure.

In his letters Paul frequently defends the truth against errorists. His audience, however, are Christians in danger of being swayed by the error. He often doesn't even directly address the errorists. When talking to non-Christians, however, Paul and others share the truth much more than defend it.

The Great Commission and other such verses emphasize the sharing of the truth.

3. Think about what it means that God sees you right now as perfect because of Jesus. What impact does that have on your self-esteem, your outlook on the future, your thoughts about God? Compare that to the stress many Mormons experience because of Mormonism's emphasis on becoming perfect.

Our new status in Christ affects all aspects of our lives and not just our eternal destiny. The fact that God sees us perfect in Christ means that right now we are pleasing to him.

- We are Christ's beautiful bride. See Isaiah 61:10
- We are God's beloved child. When we pray, we are not like a nameless citizen bowing before the king asking him for a favor; we are like the king's beloved child crawling up into his lap to ask for something.

This new status fills us with love for God because we know we don't deserve it. Daily we have the thrill of being homeless orphans now living in the palace.

This new status gives us, not self-esteem, but Christ-esteem which is even better because it is perfect.

Mormons are filled with uncertainty and stress, wondering if they are worthy enough in God's sight, if they have done enough to merit his favor, if they are good enough to live with him in eternity. When they fail, they can become devastated and despair over ever being acceptable to him.

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Lesson Six: Pillar Three

Focus on Mormon Stress Points

A Look at Some Common Mormon Stress Points

1. How would you answer if a Mormon asked you about your purpose for being on earth? Think especially how your answer can lead into a discussion focusing on their stress points.

Before we are brought to faith, we are dead in sin and have no good purpose. After we have been brought to faith, our main purpose is to praise God by telling others about him.

- Matthew 5:13-14—Believers are the salt and light of the world
- Matthew 28:18-20—Make disciples of all nations
- Acts 1:8—You are my witnesses
- 1 Peter 2:9—A royal priesthood to declare God’s praises
- 1 Peter 3:15—Always be ready to give an answer

Closely connected is the thought we are to do good works so people glorify God.

- Ephesians 2:8-10—Created to do good works
- Matthew 5:16—Do good deeds so people glorify God
- Stressing this purpose easily leads into talking about the importance of salvation

2. There are two types of covenants in the Bible: conditional and unconditional. What is the difference between the two? Jeremiah 31:31-34 talks about the “new covenant.” Note that it is unconditional (no ifs) and unilateral. God is the active party; humans are the passive party.

Deuteronomy 28 is a good example of a conditional or bilateral covenant. Note how God’s blessings depend on the Israelites’ obedience. Note the “ifs.” It is vitally important to note that these covenants do not deal with salvation. Even the Ten Commandments were given after God had rescued them from Egypt. Their rescue did not depend on their keeping the commandments.

As noted above, Jeremiah 31:31-34 has no “ifs”—neither does it call for any human action. It states what God will do. Period. This is always how salvation is described. See Ephesians 2:1-10. Note that the first time people can do good works (and keeping the commandments is a good work) is after they are saved. Salvation is a unilateral, unconditional covenant.

It will be important to be clear on this distinction. You can share it with Mormons. Most, however, won’t understand. Don’t worry about it. Here is a situation where we need to proclaim, more than explain, the truth.

3. Make a list of passages about forgiveness. Keep it handy in your Bibles.

Here are some passages to get you started. There are many others.

Psalm 32:1-2

Psalm 103

Micah 7:9

Acts 13:38

2 Corinthians 5:19

Ephesians 1:7

Hebrews 10:17-18

Here is also a good quote: “Forgiveness is not a question mark but a divine exclamation point in the shape of the cross.” (Mark Zarling)

4. Read the article [“What is repentance?”](#) on [beyeperfect.org](#)

Note how the article defines biblical repentance. The key thought is shifting the object of your trust from your works to Jesus’ works. This is a helpful concept to keep in mind when talking with Mormons.

It also states, “Repentance is not about abandoning sin. It’s about abandoning any trust in our own works.” This explanation hopefully will make some Mormons stop and think since Mormonism emphasizes the abandonment of sin as a crucial aspect of repentance.

Note how Zacchaeus is an example of the *joy* repentance can bring. Associating joy with repentance is an alien thought for many people. Therefore, it is a good idea to introduce it and see how people react.

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Lesson Seven: Pillar Four

Speak the Mormon Language

1. The parable of the wedding garment recorded in Matthew 22:1-14 is often effective to show Mormons the seriousness of refusing the free gift of salvation. Think of the different points you could make with it.

The key verses are 11 and 12 about the importance of the wedding garment. Both from ancient culture and also from the parable itself we know the guests did not supply their own wedding garments. Rather, according to the custom of the day, they were supplied by the king. But even from the parable it is obvious they did not have the time or probably the means to provide their own wedding garment (see v. 10) *Therefore, it was the refusal of a free gift which got them into trouble!*

It got them into big trouble. They were cast into outer darkness. This is one of only three places where the Bible talks about outer darkness. It is an important expression since it is the term Mormonism uses to describe a permanent and eternal place of punishment. The point which needs to be stressed is that the only thing qualifying the person for outer darkness is the refusal of a free gift.

You could also point to the fact that the servants gathered both “good and bad” in v. 10.

The parable is not about our worthiness, but about God’s amazing love and the deadly consequences of spurning his love.

2. “Bearing your testimony” is very common in Mormonism. We encourage you to think through, even write out your testimony. Be sure that it is Christ-centered but also personal.

Make sure it includes a confession of both the extent and seriousness of your sin. Also talk about the inevitableness of continuing to sin. Maybe talk about how, no matter what, you can’t stop worrying. Or how your temper flares at other drivers. Don’t shy away from talking about the sins you personally struggle with and your frustration over them.

Think of your favorite biblical picture or passage which describes salvation. For example, I really like the idea of justification and how it emphasizes the legal nature of salvation. Then take time to write down how the knowledge of salvation has affected you personally. You could include how you don’t worry about your status with God even when you sin. Or your eagerness for Judgment Day. Or the wonder of being God’s beloved child.

3. How would you talk about the following words without using them?

➤ Gospel

The word gospel literally means good news. It takes us more into the newsroom than the classroom. Instead of picturing the Bible as a textbook setting out God’s teaching, talk about it as a newscast breaking good news.

In Mormonism, “gospel” means Mormonism with all its rules and regulations. When Mormons hear the word “gospel,” they usually don’t think of good news. It is better, therefore, not to use the word “gospel” but stick with the idea of breaking news.

➤ Repentance

We looked at repentance in lesson six. Since it is such an important concept in Mormonism, we are touching on it again. If you didn’t look at the [article on repentance](http://beyepperfect.org) on beyepperfect.org, it would be good to do so. Instead of talking about repentance, talk about a change of paradigm—about switching from relying on our own works to being acceptable to God because of Jesus’ works.

Reflection Guide

Lesson Eight: Pillar Five

Witness Christ Rather than Debate Mormonism Part One

1. Witnessing takes preparation. Think of how—if you must tackle a doctrine—you can turn it back to the major theme. For example, temples or the priesthood.

When the topic is the temple, you need to watch out that you don't get distracted either by 1) spending too much time on biblical details about the temple; or 2) talking about the false practices associated with LDS temples. You will want to use the temple to talk about man's sin and God's love.

The biblical temple powerfully and vividly taught that sin separates man from God. Nobody but priests could enter the temple. Even priests felt the separation because they couldn't go behind the veil into the Holy of Holies which symbolized God's presence. Only the high priest could enter it and he could only do so once a year on the Day of Atonement. All this emphasized how much sin separates man from God.

This background makes the tearing of the temple veil at Jesus' death (Matthew 27:51) all the more significant. The book of Hebrews expands on its significance in 10:19-22.

The biblical temple, however, did not just emphasize the serious nature of sin. It also daily taught the principle of substitutionary sacrifice for sin in its endless animal sacrifices. Each pointed to Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

Sometimes Christians want to share the biblical doctrine that believers are now the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19). Although this is a wonderful truth, it doesn't lend itself as well to sticking to the main topics of sin and salvation.

It's a little trickier turning the topic of the priesthood to the primary focus on sin and salvation. One way to do this is to highlight 1 Peter 2:9. Not only does it say all believers are priests; it also says what we are to do, namely, "declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful

light.” By talking about this purpose, we will naturally emphasize our sin and God’s grace.

Another tactic might be to talk about Jesus being and remaining our priest. The book of Hebrews expands on this especially in chapters 7-10. The two main functions of Old Testament priests were to sacrifice for the people and intercede for them. Jesus accomplished both. He is our one and only priest.

2. Think of ways to remember to focus on witnessing. Maybe making a list of passages about the power of God’s Word and posting in a prominent place. Or forming a small group to remind each other.

It is so easy to get distracted when witnessing. We need to realize that the devil tries his hardest to keep us from wielding the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. Therefore, we encourage you to construct a list of passages reassuring you of the power of God’s Word.

A “witnessing support group” can be extremely helpful. Such a group could study a section of Scripture about witnessing, then share with each other their witnessing efforts, and pray for both the witness and those being witnessed to.

You could also begin each day with the prayer—not only to see witnessing opportunities, but also that you don’t get sidetracked.

Many Christians like to study the problems in Mormonism. Although this can be helpful for their understanding, it often causes them to talk about these problems with Mormons—something which usually is not helpful. We would caution spending too much time studying such topics.

3. List some reasons why it is so difficult to proclaim the law.

Some fear they are being judgmental. You need to remember that the law is a declaration of God's judgment and not your personal judgment. You are only God's messenger.

Others feel they are not qualified to talk about sin seeing how much they themselves sin. They feel hypocritical addressing the sins of others.

It is always difficult to point out a person's sin. This is why we suggest starting with your sins. Hopefully they will identify and agree with you. Then it's not a "you—me" setting but a "we" setting.

Many Mormons don't think they sin much. Therefore, talking about both the extent and seriousness of sin will startle, even shock, some. This is why the law needs to be spoken in a context of love. We are pointing out sin to help them and not to hurt them.

4. It's important to point to specific sins. What sins might we point out that Mormons aren't aware of (i.e. worrying).

You can point to many sins of thought. Most Mormons don't consider them sins unless you dwell on them. For example:

- Anger at another driver
- An unintentional lustful thought
- Lack of contentment
- Putting their will before God's will
- Not always paying attention in church

You can also point them to sins of omission—not doing the positive things God commands. For example:

- Love of enemies
- Praising God in all situations
- Casting every care on God in prayer
- Sacrificial love for all
- Being perfect
- Honoring the government

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Lesson Nine: Pillar Five

Witness Christ Rather than Debate Mormonism Part Two

1. On the cross Jesus proclaimed, “It is finished” (John 19:30). In the Greek (the language in which the New Testament was written), this is one word—a word often written across bills to mark them “paid in full.” It serves as proof that you don’t owe anything. Think of the joy and relief this brings. Think about ways and illustrations you could use to convey this to your Mormon friend.

The joy and relief correspond to the size of the bill. Sometimes we hear of people paying for the meal of a stranger in a restaurant. The person benefited is pleasantly surprised. It makes their day. Now think of the greater joy and relief when a family member pays off the crushing debt of a loved one. They are more than pleasantly surprised. They are overwhelmed with gratitude. Take it one step further. Imagine the joy of the hostage whose family pays millions to get him released. The greater the bill, the greater the joy. Jesus has paid our greatest debt—the debt of our sins. Our joy corresponds with the greatest of the debt.

Now think of the pain or even anger the person who paid the debt would feel if the recipient of their generosity was still focused on paying off the debt. The hostage still thinks he has to escape; the person with the crushing debt still sits at his kitchen table depressed, with his head in his hands, staring at the paid bill. In either case, the person paying the debt would be dumbfounded and then upset.

This is how God feels when we are still focused on paying the debt—something Mormons do. It is not only unnecessary for people to try to pay the debt; it is actually disrespectful and dishonoring. Instead of putting an exclamation mark after Jesus’ salvation, it places a question mark after it.

2. One of the best-known parables Jesus told was of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15). When did the Father forgive the son? This is a wonderful illustration of the truth of 2 Corinthians 5:19. Practice telling the story, especially paying attention to ways that you could emphasize that the Father's forgiveness was not dependent on anything the son did.

Obviously, he had forgiven the son much earlier than when he first saw his son returning. Even when the son wants to confess, the father cuts him off short, embracing him and celebrating his return. The father had forgiven him long ago. The son, however, did not benefit from it until he came to his senses.

Pastor Tim Keller has written a wonderful little book on this parable entitled *The Prodigal God*. It would be a great book to read as you plan on using this parable as one of your witnessing linchpins.

3. One way to combat a Mormon's criticism that salvation without works will give people a license to sin is to emphasize that **love is stronger than law**. This means that people will be motivated even more by love than by law (commandments) to do good. Think of examples illustrating this. A common one would be how one spouse does a lot, even lives sacrificially, for the other spouse.

What Mormons don't see, and something many Christians don't emphasize, is the fact that when the Holy Spirit creates faith in us, he creates a new nature within us which loves God (Romans 8:5-7). A person who loves another doesn't need laws commanding them to be nice to the loved one, not to hurt them, to give them gifts, etc. Trying to please a loved one is a natural outgrowth of love.

This holds true especially if you were saved by the person. You would want to do anything for the family of the man who died saving you from a fire. It would be totally unnatural for you to run roughshod over the family. Once again, you wouldn't need a law commanding you to honor and help his family.

Love is stronger than law! You will need to repeatedly stress this in your witnessing.

4. Become familiar with James 2:18-26.

- The setting and context are so important. According to verse 18, what is the point under discussion?

It is all about how we can see true faith in others. Since faith is invisible, we need to look at its fruit, its deeds. *The context is not about how God sees faith, but how we can see faith.*

- James uses Abraham as an example. It is critical to see chronologically the two events he mentions from Abraham's life. When did the event related in verse 21 occur in relationship to the one in verse 23? How does being "credited with righteousness" (v. 23) differ from being "considered righteous" (v. 21)? When was Abraham saved?

James first talks about Abraham's sacrifice of his son Isaac—something which occurred decades after the event mentioned in verse 23. In v. 23 James quotes Genesis 15:6—the significant verse telling us when God justified Abraham (declared him righteous). By quoting Genesis 15:6, James emphasizes that God had already declared Abraham righteous decades before his sacrifice of Isaac. In other words, God didn't wait until Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac before he declared him righteous. He justified Abraham when he first believed decades before. Because God can see faith and because faith alone saves, God could do that. We, however, can't see faith. Therefore, Abraham's subsequent sacrifice of Isaac made his faith complete in the sense that now Abraham himself, his contemporaries, and even we today, have this wonderful evidence of his faith in God.