

LDS Explanation of Christ's Atonement

*From: Approaching Mormons in Love
by Wilbur Lingle*

*From: Speaking the Truth in Love to
Mormons
by Mark J. Cares*

TEJIN

Mormon Doctrine Basics

- Adam & Eve, in the Garden, were not yet mortal and could not have children
- Eating the forbidden fruit allowed them to have children

Mormon Doctrine Basics

- The fall is part of God's plan & Mormonism commends, Adam & Eve not condemns
- They wisely used “**free agency**” and broke the first commandment to fulfill the second

Mormon Doctrine Basics

- The Fall made man mortal and able to be tested and therefore progress
- One major characteristic of being mortal is the capacity to have children

Mormon Doctrine Basics

- Spirit children need bodies to progress; therefore, it is essential to have children
- Adam's Fall, by giving mankind this capacity, was a **blessing**

The Mormon View On Sin

- As the Mormon view of the Fall is softened, “sin” rarely surfaces in literature or dialogue
- Instead, they speak of mistakes, bad judgments, inadequacies, and imperfections

Mormon Sin # 1

The **Five Major Sins** in Mormonism are:

1. **Apostasy** is the worst sin Mormons can commit. It is the **sin against the Holy Ghost**. It qualifies a person as **a son of perdition** and why it is hard to leave the Mormon Church.

Mormon Sin # 2

2. **Taking another life.** Murderers are forgiven after they pay for their deeds in spirit prison. Their eternity is in the Telestial Kingdom. Atonement happens when his own blood is spilt on the ground. One option of capital punishment in Utah is by firing squad.

Mormon Sin # 3

3. **Sexual immorality** trails closely behind murder and apostasy. Parents send their kids on mission trips stating “I would rather have you return in a pine box with your virtue, than return alive, without it.”

Mormon Sin # 4

4. Breaking the **Word of Wisdom (tobacco & drinking)** is up there with sexual immorality. Sex is seen as utilizing natural feelings God gave, just a little bit early – before marriage, but breaking the **Word of Wisdom** is against the Church, holding much more weight and bearing.

Mormon Sin # 5

5. **Refusal to bear children** is the fifth major sin. It is serious because providing bodies for God's spirit children is so important and our parents had us so we could come to earth.

Atonement and Salvation

- With a diluted view of sin, Mormonism diminishes the role Jesus plays in salvation.
- The LDS Church applies Jesus' atonement primarily to **Adam's fall**.

Atonement and Salvation

- His suffering wiped out its effect, namely, **permanent physical death.**
- When asking what Jesus has done for them, they respond, “Jesus conquered death.”

Atonement and Salvation

- Rarely do Mormons talk about being **justified** or **reconciled** and they seldom mention grace.
- Without resurrected bodies, they cannot become gods because they could not propagate spirit children.

Atonement and Salvation

- The *Book of Mormon* states: without the resurrection, we would have become devils.
- Lucifer & his demons are eternally condemned as spirits, never to experience **the life of a growing family.**

Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 9:8-9

“For behold, if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil. And our spirits must have become like unto him, and we become devils, angels to a devil, to be shut out from the presence of our God...”

Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 9:8-9

“to remain with the father of lies, who transformeth himself nigh unto an angel of light, and stirreth up the children of men unto secret combinations of murder and all manner of secret works of darkness.”

THE
BOOK
OF
MORMON
Another Testament
of Jesus Christ

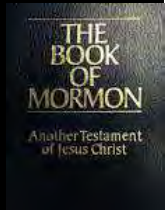
Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 9:8-9

- Seeing that Mormons limit Jesus' atonement to *just conquering death* is a **key insight**.
- The main role Jesus played was making **resurrection** possible for all.

THE
BOOK
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Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 9:8-9

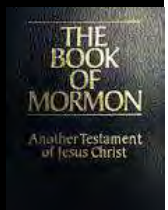
- Once we grasp that, much of what they say about Jesus falls into place.
- LDS become **defensive** when the subject of salvation by grace surfaces.



Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 9:8-9

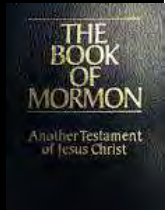
They eagerly move to one of two conclusions:

- 1) The word **salvation refers only to**
resurrection, to deliverance from the grave
- 2) Exaltation or **eternal life** is something which must be wholly merited or **earned**



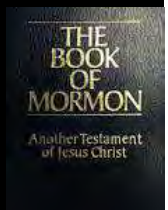
Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 9:8-9

- Many LDS don't realize Christians equate salvation with eternal life.
- They're taught that Jesus, through his bodily resurrection, made resurrection available to us
- This is why they call him "**the Savior,**" and we call him "**Lord**" as we belong to Him.



Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 9:8-9

- There is no mention of heaven or eternal life or salvation from sin.
- LDS believe Jesus saved them only from **physical death.**
- This shows how desperately Mormons need to hear what Jesus has done for them!



Jesus as Our Creditor

The story of Jesus goes like this:

- \$ A man desperately wanted a certain item & incurred a great debt to secure this object
- \$ He signed a contract but failed to pay off the debt

Jesus as Our Creditor

- \$ The creditor came to collect but the man could not pay
- \$ By law the creditor had the right to repossess the item and to cast the man into prison
- \$ He pleaded for mercy and more time

Jesus as Our Creditor

\$ The creditor replied that mercy is always one-sided and he wanted justice

\$ The debtor had a friend (Jesus) who paid the creditor in full

Jesus as Our Creditor

\$ The friend now became the creditor and extended more time to pay off the debt

\$ Justice was satisfied, mercy shown, & the new benefactor sets up his own terms

\$ What Jesus did for us was **assume our loan**, refinance it, and spread out the payments!

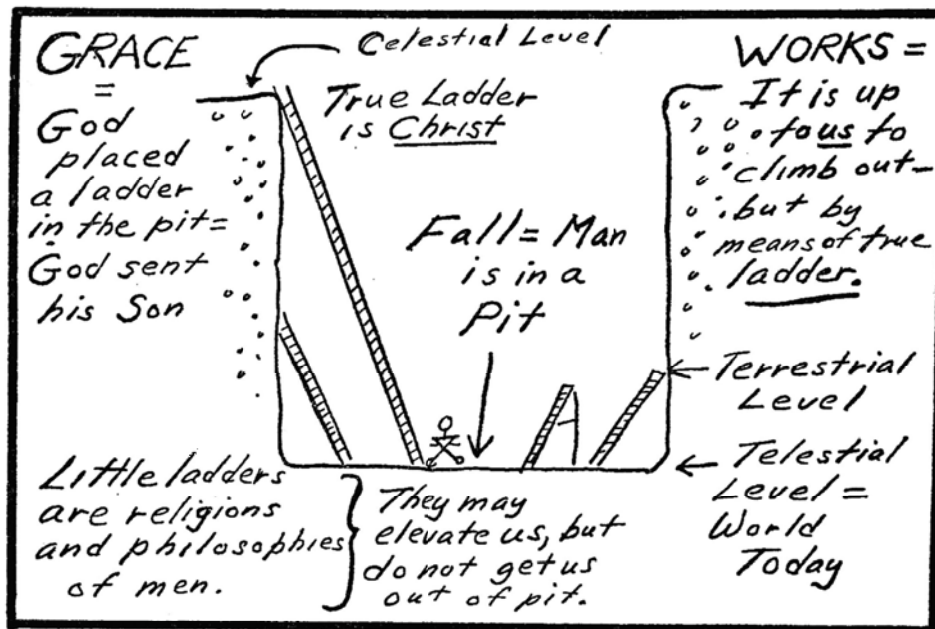
Jesus as Our Creditor

- \$ Jesus our mediator becomes Jesus our creditor!
- \$ We now owe him, but because he conquered death, we have all eternity to pay him back.
- \$ Still, pay him back we must. Mormons consider this a great act of love on Jesus' part.

Jesus as Our Creditor

- \$ Without his assuming the role of creditor, they wouldn't have a chance of being exalted.
- \$ Therefore, they can, with all sincerity, call him their Savior
- \$ Rarely, if at all – do they call Jesus their Lord

Jesus with a Ladder



Jesus with a Ladder

The Mormon concept of salvation follows another line of thought:

- ☰ Because of Adam's transgression, we are all placed in a pit with him.

Jesus with a Ladder

- ≡ The Savior is not subject to the pit, and lowers a ladder.
- ≡ The ladder is not given to individuals, it is committed to the Mormon Church, and they give it only to their followers.

Jesus with a Ladder

- ≡ Getting out is by climbing rungs made of certain **conditions for exaltation** imposed by the Mormon Church.
- ≡ The first rung is baptism into Mormonism
- ≡ A person can climb up but he falls back when he is disobedient.

Jesus with a Ladder

- ≡ If he doesn't reach the top (godhood), he can go to the Terrestrial or Telestial Kingdom.
- ≡ No one has to stay at the bottom, which is the place of the **second death**.

The Second Death

- ❖ Satan will enter the “second death” with 1/3 of the spirit children, those who followed him in his rebellion against God (the sons of perdition).
- ❖ LDS say there will be very few humans who will go into the second death.

The Second Death

- ❖ Those who go to 2nd death have either **blasphemed** the Holy Spirit (left Mormonism) or **murderers** who did not shed their own blood to atone for their sins.
- ❖ Yes, Mormons have a distinct doctrine known as “**blood atonement.**”

The Second Death

- ❖ They teach that **Christ only died for some sins**, and murder is not one of them.
- ❖ If a person commits murder, he becomes a “son of perdition.”

The Second Death

- ❖ He goes to the 2nd death, unless his own blood is shed, which allows him to move to the “Telestial kingdom.”
- ❖ What about Moses the murderer found on the Mount of Transfiguration with Christ & Elijah?



All Saved Except Sons of Perdition

*“The Lord will save all of his children, excepting **the very few** who willfully rebel against him. When his children have paid the penalty of their transgressions, they shall come forth from the clutches of the second death”*

All Saved Except Sons of Perdition

*“It is the purpose of the Almighty to save all mankind, and all will enter into his kingdoms in some degree of glory, **except sons of perdition** who sin beyond the power of repentance and redemption, and therefore cannot receive forgiveness of sins.”*

All Saved Except Sons of Perdition

- ❖ **The Bible**, doesn't say God just made it possible for us to escape from the pit.
- ❖ It says that **He took us out of the pit.**
- ❖ **Colossians 1:13-14** “For he has rescued us from the **dominion of darkness** and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”

All Saved Except Sons of Perdition

- ✧ **Colossians 2:13-14** “He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, **nailing it to the cross.**”
- ✧ **KJV** “Blotting out the hand-writing of **ordinances...nailing it to the cross**”

All Saved Except Sons of Perdition

- ✧ Mormons talk about Christ, but in reality, he plays no part in their personal salvation.
- ✧ One only gets Celestial glory (godhood) **IF** he is a member of the LDS Church.
- ✧ **Only 5 – 10% of Mormons** take part in the many necessary steps to become a god.

Jesus as Our Example

3 ways Mormons believe Jesus helps them:

1. He paid for their sin, but they **must pay him back**
2. He overcame death for them (atonement), thus **buying more time to pay their debt**
3. He is their example and the Sermon on the Mount is the blueprint for perfection.

Jesus as Our Example

*“Christ came not **to make atonement for the sins** of mankind **but** to set an example of the standard of perfection of God’s law and of obedience to the Father... Jesus kept the law of God, and remained without sin, showing thereby that it is in the power of man to keep the law and remain also **without sin.**”*

Jesus as Our Example

1 John 1:8 *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us”*



MISSION:
IMPOSSIBLE

Beginning the Conversation with 1 Timothy 1:15

- © **When witnessing to Mormons, begin by saying,** “The Biblical way of salvation is very hard and too difficult for you to ever enter into.”
- © **They will ask,** “Why is it too hard for me to enter into?”

Beginning the Conversation with 1 Timothy 1:15

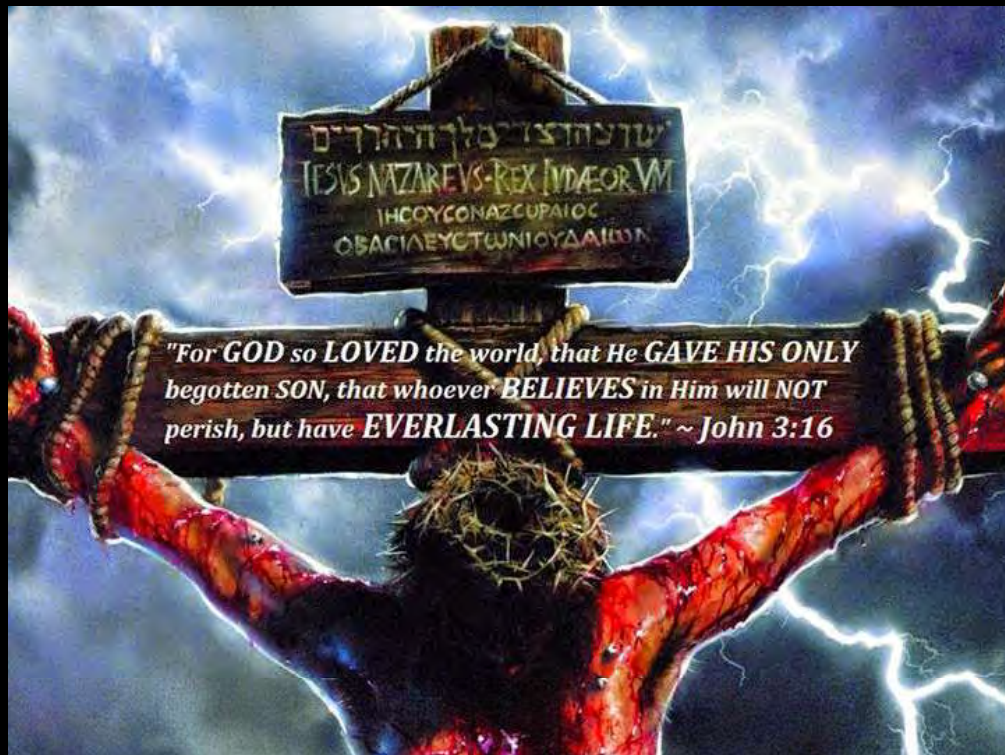
- ◎ **You say**, “There is no use explaining it, I know it is too difficult for you.”
- ◎ **They ask**, “Why is it too difficult?”

Beginning the Conversation with 1 Timothy 1:15

- ◎ **You insist**, “in 1 Timothy 1:15 Paul said he was ***‘the chief of sinners.’***”
- ◎ Will you right now make the same confession as Paul, that you too are the chief of sinners?”
- ◎ **The usual response is “No!”**

Beginning the Conversation with 1 Timothy 1:15

- © **Then say,** “See, I told you. In order to be saved the Biblical way you must admit the awful sinfulness of your heart.
- © Only as one is willing to admit his sinfulness & confess it to God, asking for the salvation provided by the blood of the Lord Jesus, shed on the cross, can one be born into the family of God.”



Beginning the Conversation with 1 Timothy 1:15

Mormonism teaches faith in Jesus Christ is necessary to exaltation, but many other things are also just as important:

1. Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God
2. Only the Mormon Church has “the truth”

Beginning the Conversation with 1 Timothy 1:15

3. Their living prophet receives “**revelations**” from God = Scripture
4. A 100% submission to the LDS Church
5. The Book of Mormon is from God

Beginning the Conversation with 1 Timothy 1:15

6. Baptism is essential to salvation
7. Continual **“repentance” (a work)**
8. That one must **endure to the end (more works)**

Beginning the Conversation with 1 Timothy 1:15

9. God has a human body and was once a sinful man who lived on another planet
10. It is possible for men to become gods
11. You will stand before God & be judged on works in this life

Beginning the Conversation with 1 Timothy 1:15

This concept is like **building a car**. A chassis is essential to build a car, but a chassis is not the car. You need an engine, transmission, tires, body, etc.

Beginning the Conversation with 1 Timothy 1:15

Don't be deceived when Mormons tell you Jesus Christ is essential to salvation.

Jesus Christ is **merely the chassis** and only one of the many necessary beliefs of the LDS Church.

Beginning the Conversation with 1 Timothy 1:15

Ask: “What is necessary to get into the Celestial Kingdom? Is this all that is necessary just to believe in Jesus, or is there more like getting baptized... This sounds awfully complicated.

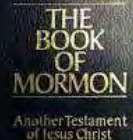
Proclaim the Way of Salvation

LDS must realize they're sinners by nature & need Jesus as their personal Savior. *The Book of Mormon* has verses you can use to present this:

1. **Mosiah 16:15.** “Teach them that redemption cometh through Christ the Lord, **who is the very Eternal Father.** Amen.”

Proclaim the Way of Salvation

2. **Mosiah 3:18.** “Salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atoning **blood of Christ**, the Lord Omnipotent.”
3. **Alma 5:14.** “And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenance? Have ye experienced this **mighty change in your hearts?**”



THE
BOOK
OF
MORMON
Another Testament
of Jesus Christ

Proclaim the Way of Salvation

Jesus' role in the “plan of salvation” is summed up as that of a big brother or partner.

He played his part; now we must play ours.

Our responsibility, permeates LDS literature.

Proclaim the Way of Salvation

- *“He became our Savior and has done his part to help us return to our heavenly home.*
- *It’s up to each of us to do our part and to prove ourselves worthy of exaltation.”*

Proclaim the Way of Salvation

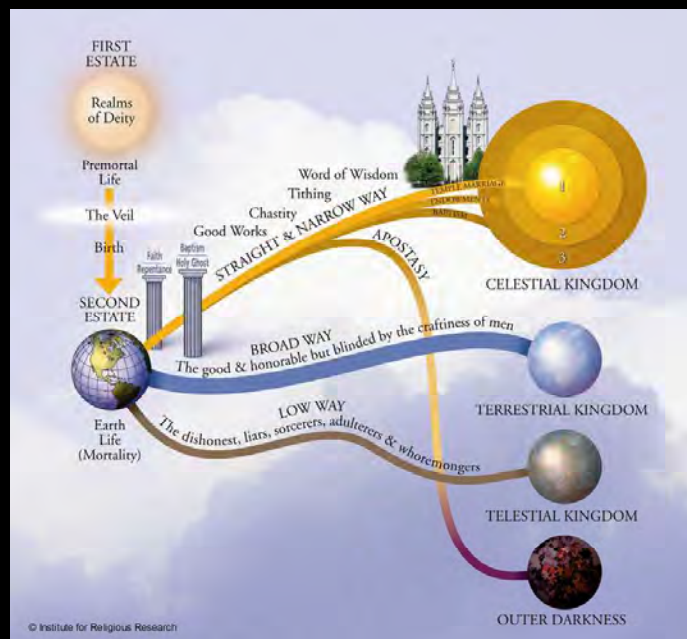
- *“The Lord has told us how we may get to heaven.*
- *We must obey all the commandments of God.*
- *Only those who live the commandments of God will ever see heaven.”*

ON WITH THE SHOW



Speaking The Truth to Mormons

Six places to go after death



Speaking the Truth to Mormons

- Mormons are drowning in their sins and don't know it.
- Reaching the Celestial Kingdom won't be easy, but achievable, if they follow the LDS plan of salvation.
- The laws are a heavy but a manageable burden.
- How well they succeed depends on where they are on the following scale.

Speaking the Truth to Mormons



Speaking the Truth to Mormons

Self-Righteous don't think they're in danger & need **a heavy dose of God's law** to convict them otherwise.

The Gospel is God's promises, the law is God's orders exposing our sinfulness (Rom. 3:20)

The law demands the impossible of us.

Speaking the Truth to Mormons

Mormonism teaches:

*“Although God's laws are given to mankind for one specific purpose, to bring to pass their ultimate joy; God gives commandments to provide the only possible means whereby **they may become like him.**”*

Speaking the Truth to Mormons

The Bible teaches:

*“All who rely on observing the law is **under a curse**, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do **everything** written in the book of the law.” (Gal. 3:10)*

*“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and **yet offend in one point**, he is guilty of all.” (James 2:10)*

Speaking the Truth to Mormons

- No matter how good people think they are, if **NOT PERFECT**, they are under God's curse; guilty of breaking the whole law, earning **eternal death of outer darkness.**
- *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Romans 6:23)*

Speaking the Truth to Mormons

- **Mormonism teaches:** the danger of **OUTER DARKNESS** (**hell**) is only for **apostates** (those leaving Mormonism)
- Everyone else, no matter how evil, go to one of three heavens or degrees of glory.

Speaking the Truth to Mormons

- Joseph Smith said “If we could get one little glimpse into the Telestial glory ...that **we would be tempted to commit suicide to get there**” (Telestial is the lowest glory)
- Patriarch Eldred G. Smith speech on Exaltation, March 10, 1964 BYU Press

Speaking the Truth to Mormons

- We mistakenly focus on the Gospel before the law has done its work
- We must impale LDS on the spear of God's law
- If they don't see the seriousness of their sin, they won't be interested in seeing their Savior
- The self-righteous need a hefty dose of God's law before being ready to focus on the Gospel

Speaking the Truth to Mormons

Rather than approaching Mormons with preconceived notions, we need to listen & observe, then we will know if they need the *Hammer of God's law* or the *Soothing Balm of His Gospel*.



42.3 lbs. (Thor's Hammer)

Their eternal destiny is at risk and they need to struggle with eternal punishment

Speaking the Truth to Mormons

- They believe 99.99% of all people go to some degree of heaven – each degree is better than this earth.
- We need to **SHAKE THEIR CONFIDENCE** by quoting **Matthew 7:13-14...**

Speaking the Truth to Mormons

*“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and **many** there be which go in there at: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and **few** there be that find it.”*

Speaking the Truth to Mormons

- Mormons are not familiar with this passage and cannot explain it away.
- Destruction for many is foreign to their thinking as only Sons Of Perdition face outer darkness
- This is less than 1% of all mankind.

Speaking the Truth to Mormons

- When questioned about this passage, LDS concluded it referred to *the destruction of the family.*
- This shows how important “family” is in their theology.
- To them, eternal life means having an ever-expanding family in heaven as a god.

Speaking the Truth to Mormons

- It is not enough to show that the Bible says many will experience eternal destruction.
- We need to state clearly **we know** they face destruction remaining in Mormonism.
- Until they understand this, they will not have the same sense of urgency as we do.

Speaking the Truth to Mormons

- At best, they might view the difference between Mormonism and Christianity as serious but not as catastrophic.
- For their sakes, we need to **speak plainly** and tell them that they are on **the road to**

OUTER DARKNESS



Speaking the Truth to Mormons

- This is shocking news. They expect to be “bashed” for their beliefs so don’t see we are coming to them out of concern. We need to convince them of this.
- One way is to **talk about your feelings.** That you don’t expect them to believe you immediately and what you say will shock & anger them.

Speaking the Truth to Mormons

- Say “even if you disagree with me please don’t doubt my motives. I am not here to **bash** you but to **help** you.”
- Illustrate the doctor who doesn’t want to share bad news so withholds that the patient needs life saving surgery. Is this showing love?





Hold Up God's Law by Emphasizing Matthew 5:48

- Mormons react to being told they are on the road to outer darkness by asking:
“Why do you say that?”
- Say; “Because I take seriously what God says in **Matthew 5:48**:
- *“Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”*

Why Emphasize Matthew 5:48?

Discussing this passage is very effective because:

- 1) It is the most quoted Bible passage in Mormonism. Mormons know it and respect it.

This is one of the few passages that provide common ground for discussion.

Why Emphasize Matthew 5:48?

- 2) Trying to be perfect is the **greatest point of stress** for most Mormons.

By talking about perfection, there is a much greater chance they will listen to our offer.

Many are looking for all the help they can get

Why Emphasize Matthew 5:48?

3) It summarizes God's law as few passages do. Fewer things reveal our sinfulness more than being commanded to be as perfect as our Heavenly Father.

Why Emphasize Matthew 5:48?

4) It leads easily into a discussion of **Hebrews 10:14** which points to the perfection of Christ for us, and thus is one of the best passages to bring the Gospel to a Mormon.

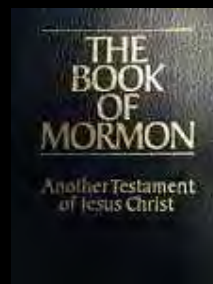
How to Emphasize Matthew 5:48

- More important than seeing why to use **Matthew 5:48** is seeing how to use it.
- Everything hinges on the little word “be” and the fact that it is a “present tense.”
- The point: Jesus commands us to “be” perfect, not to “become perfect” as Mormonism teaches.

How to Emphasize Matthew 5:48

3 Nephi 12:48 in *The Book of Mormon* says:

“Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect.”

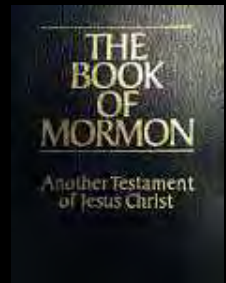


How to Emphasize Matthew 5:48

2 Nephi 25:23 in *The Book of Mormon* says:

“For we know that it is by grace we are saved, **after all we can do**”

**Ask the Mormon:
Are you doing all you can do?**



How to Emphasize Matthew 5:48

The Joseph Smith translation of the Bible, says the same thing. **James 2:10:** “*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all,*” shows the Mormon that his plan of salvation is:



as he is expected to be perfect **right now!**

How to Emphasize Matthew 5:48

One way you know they are beginning to understand is when they ask:

“Well are you perfect?”

You must answer **YES!**

This usually is met with quite a dubious look!

How to Emphasize Matthew 5:48

They ask: *“Are you telling me you never do anything wrong?”* You have tweaked their curiosity & attention. Now you tell them how **God has declared you,** a person who sins constantly, **“perfect”** because Jesus was perfect for you & wiped away your sins through his **blood shed on the cross**



How to Emphasize Matthew 5:48

- They respond by saying, *“I just can’t believe we don’t have to do anything to be saved.”*
- At this point, you must confront them again with **“be ye perfect – right now!”**

How to Emphasize Matthew 5:48

- Show them God hasn’t lowered his entrance requirements for heaven.
- “Be perfect,” **NOT** “become perfect” is clearly what He requires.
- **Ask:** “If you were to die right now – would you stand before God perfect?”

How to Emphasize Matthew 5:48

- **Matthew 19:21** Jesus told the rich young man: “*If thou wilt ‘be perfect,’ go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.*”
- Notice Jesus **did not say** – **if you are striving for perfection**
- He demanded perfection **then and there!**

How to Emphasize Matthew 5:48

1 Nephi 3:7: “*I know the Lord giveth no commandments unto the children of men, save he shall prepare a way for them that they may accomplish the thing which he commandeth them.*”

This is cited to spur them onto greater deeds, but also paints them into a corner.



How to Emphasize Matthew 5:48

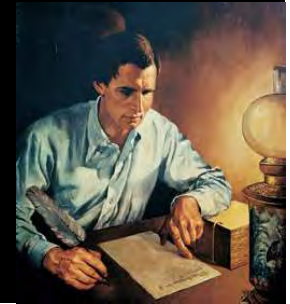
- They may argue the word “**perfect**” means to be “mature, complete, or fully developed”
- This is the intent of the word **BUT** our focus is not on “**perfect**” but on the word “be ye!”

How to Emphasize Matthew 5:48

- Instead of arguing, simply ask if they, right now, are as complete, and mature as Heavenly Father, or are they still a god in embryo?
- What is important is “be,” not “**become.**”

How to Emphasize Matthew 5:48

If they insist this is a future and not present tense then ask “**did Joseph Smith err in his translation of this verse, as he did not use a future tense in his Inspired Version?**”



How to Emphasize Matthew 5:48

- We must be a **broken record** on perfection.



- Persistently & repeatedly tell them God demands perfection now!
- After losing sleep & an appetite over this, **then** they will be ready to look to Jesus for salvation.

Talk About Already Being
Perfect using Hebrews
10:10-18

1. It deals with perfection, a point of great stress and emphasis in Mormonism
2. It does not employ many words that are defined differently by Mormons

Talk About Already Being
Perfect using Hebrews
10:10-18

3. Joseph Smith did not alter it in his Joseph Smith Translation or JST
4. Most Mormons have never heard it. Neither has it been cited in Church manuals. Their unfamiliarity means there are no canned responses.

Hebrews 10:10-18

*“By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all.** And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man, after he had **offered one sacrifice for sins for ever,** sat down on the right hand of God;*

Hebrews 10:10-18

*From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by **one offering** he hath **perfected for ever them** that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,*

Hebrews 10:10-18

This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

Talk About Already Being Perfect using Hebrews 10:10-18

- **3 X** Jesus' one sacrifice, sufficient for all man, is emphasized (Vs. 10, 12, & 14).
- Verses 17 & 18 describes beautifully the result of this one sacrifice.
- The entire section shows no more needs to be done because no more can be done.

Talk About Already Being Perfect using Hebrews

10:10-18

- Verse 14 hits home. **“Hath perfected”** indicates **a completed, not a future, action.** It expresses the continuance of a completed action. In other words, **we have already been perfected** by Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross.
- Jesus hit a home run for us!

