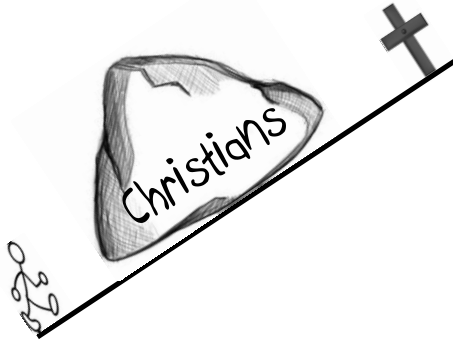


Sharing with Latter-day Saints— Rock 1



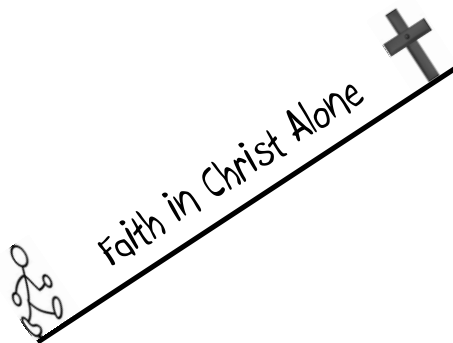
***Biblical Christians** become obstacles when we don't ask the right questions, don't give the right answers, and don't mind our behaviors.*

Clearing Rocks from the Road to Redemption

The above diagram depicts one of the common obstacles or “Rocks” that Latter-day Saints (LDS) frequently encounter when discussing matters of faith with biblical Christians.

The below diagram represents the ideal sharing scenario—the Rock has been cleared from the road to redemption. In other words, the only thing standing between LDS and being forgiven of ALL their sins is faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ ALONE to freely secure their salvation.

Note that the road to redemption is NOT on level ground, but is an uphill climb. This is because many LDS risk incredible loss (e.g. family, friends, social status, financial security, etc.) when contemplating leaving the LDS Church for a saving relationship with the Jesus Christ of the Bible.



Shooting Ourselves in the Foot

1. Biblical Christians are often times our own worst enemy when it comes to discussing matters of faith with Latter-day Saints (LDS). Our motives are misguided; our judgments are clouded; our perceptions are jaded; our priorities are out of whack; and our tactics are terrible. In short, we are in desperate need of a Holy Spirit-sponsored attitude adjustment!

What's on Your Mind?

2. How might we apply the underlying spiritual principles in the below passages to our discussions and relationships with LDS?
 - a. **Matthew 10:16 (NIV2011)**

¹⁶ "I am sending you [the Twelve] out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.
 - b. **1 Corinthians 9:19-22 (NIV2011)**

¹⁹ Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.

²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.

²¹ To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.

²² To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some.
 - c. **1 Peter 3:15-16 (NIV2011)**

¹⁵ But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.
 - d. **Ephesians 4:29 (NIV2011)**

²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Correcting 15 Common Mistakes Christians Make

3. MISTAKE #1

- a. Don't assume or tell Latter-day Saints (aka "Mormons") what they believe. Generalizations like, "Mormons believe" or "you/they believe" this or that are taboo.
 - Why should biblical Christians avoid making this MISTAKE?
- b. Do ask Latter-day Saints what THEY believe. The fact of the matter is that many Mormons believe different things about the LDS faith. Gain an accurate understanding of their beliefs and even repeat what you've heard back to them for verification. Miscommunication is a death knell to solving problems and building relationships.
 - Consider mentioning any differences of opinion among LDS and even ask them to comment on these differences. Note especially any differences between their beliefs and the published teachings of the LDS Church and its prophets and apostles (i.e. General Authorities).
 - Why might mentioning these differences and asking LDS to comment on them be a good strategy? (Enter "cognitive dissonance.")

4. MISTAKE #2

- a. Don't tell Latter-day Saints they are NOT Christians.
 - Why should biblical Christians avoid making this MISTAKE?
- b. Do explain (if asked) that in this day and age the term "Christian" can mean virtually anything to anyone. Point out that Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs), who call themselves Christians, reject the physical resurrection of Jesus.
 - Why might pointing out this peculiar JW belief be a good strategy? (Enter common ground.)
- c. Do explain that what matters most TO YOU is how our sins can be forgiven so we can live forever ("dwell eternally") with our Heavenly Father ("in the celestial kingdom").
 - Give three reasons why the above response might be a good strategy.

5. MISTAKE #3

- a. Don't passively allow LDS to direct your doctrinal discussions and don't impulsively attempt to answer their questions.
 - Why should biblical Christians avoid making this MISTAKE?
- b. Do recognize that with each passing minute of each doctrinal discussion the potential for problems rises precipitously.
 - What are some reasons the window to witness to LDS is likely to shrink during discussions?
- c. Do be intentional about guiding your conversations to the LDS and biblical gospels of salvation and avoiding "rabbit trails."
 - Why is this intentional "guiding" and "avoiding" a good strategy?
 - If LDS are bent on running down a particular rabbit trail, it may be necessary to follow them (i.e. NOT doing so could create an obstacle/"Rock" for them). Look for any opportunity to use the subject matter as a springboard to the LDS and biblical gospels.
 - If rabbit-trail type questions are posed by LDS, politely ask to table them. Acknowledge their value and consider creating a list of questions/topics that can be addressed AFTER all gospel doctrine has been thoroughly discussed.

6. MISTAKE #4

- a. Don't make WHO Jesus is in relation to the Trinity, rather than WHAT Jesus did in relation to the Gospel, your witnessing priority.
 - Why should biblical Christians avoid making this MISTAKE?
- b. Do recognize that faithful LDS are constantly concerned about being forgiven and being found worthy—the metaphysical implications of Christ's divine nature and the Godhead (at least in the minds of most LDS) pale by comparison.
 - Why else might tabling the Trinity be a good strategy?
 - What are some common doctrinal rabbit trails created by LDS and biblical Christians?

7. MISTAKE #5

- a. Don't make LDS feel as if THEY are on trial when contrasting Mormon doctrine with the Bible.
- b. Do put on trial the LDS Church and its General Authorities via their publications when contrasting Mormon doctrine with the Bible. (Say, for example, "The LDS Church teaches ..." or "LDS prophet so and so teaches ...")
 - Why is scrutinizing the LDS Church and its General Authorities rather than Mormons a good strategy?
- c. Do scrutinize the personal beliefs of LDS when they contradict the published teachings of the LDS Church and its General Authorities. Even consider defending the LDS Church and its General Authorities (from the standpoint of correct LDS doctrine only, of course).
 - What are some reasons these might be good strategies?
 - Many LDS lack sophistication with LDS doctrine, which makes demonstrating contradictions to the Bible more difficult. This is NOT the case, however, when we expose the clear teachings of the LDS Church and its General Authorities. (Enter "contrast brings clarity.")

8. MISTAKE #6

- a. Don't tell LDS what your church, denomination, pastor, or what biblical scholars teach to validate your doctrinal beliefs.
 - Why should biblical Christians avoid making this MISTAKE?
- b. Do demonstrate that your doctrinal beliefs are rooted in the authority of the Bible. (Say, for example, "The Bible teaches ..." or "My understanding of the Bible is ...")
- c. The biblical Christian says to the Latter-day Saint, "Mormons believe Jesus is Satan's brother, but that's ridiculous. Jesus created Satan!"
 - What are three (unfortunately common) mistakes made by the biblical Christian in the above declarations?

9. MISTAKE #7

- a. Don't assume that LDS mean/ believe the same things as you when they (1) cite the Bible as Scripture and (2) use biblical terminology to explain LDS doctrine.
 - **Why should biblical Christians avoid making this MISTAKE?**
- b. Do investigate key biblical terms as used and defined by the LDS Church and contrast them with those of biblical Christianity.
 - What are some common Bible terms and concepts used by both LDS and biblical Christians that have mutually exclusive meanings?

10. MISTAKE #8

- a. Don't monopolize the conversation with LDS (unless, of course, you have been invited to "take the floor" so to speak).
 - Why should biblical Christians avoid making this MISTAKE?
 - What are some of the reasons biblical Christians make this MISTAKE?
- b. Do remember the 50/50 rule. By speaking only half of the time you help to ensure that LDS are speaking the other half.
 - Why is the 50/50 rule a good strategy? (Enter "conversational debt.")
 - Early on, consider being intentional about having LDS TEACH YOU LDS doctrine (one topic at a time). Frequently ask clarifying questions and take notes on which to reflect later. Avoid interrupting, debating, and creating rabbit trails.

When the time comes for you to share your thoughts and opinions and explain what THE BIBLE TEACHES on the topic, the tacit assumption is that the same courtesy will be extended to you. The alternative is a type of "verbal ping-pong" that typically results in much LESS listening and learning and much MORE defensiveness and miscommunication.

11. MISTAKE #9

- a. Don't insist on using your modern translation of the Bible or disparage the King James Version (KJV) when sharing with LDS.
 - Why should biblical Christians avoid making this MISTAKE?
- b. Do understand the KJV is the only Bible translation that the LDS Church recognizes as authoritative Scripture—notwithstanding quotations of it in other unique LDS Scriptures.
 - Consider asking LDS if you may use your modern translation alongside their KJV and read both versions aloud as you learn together.
 - Why might this be a good strategy?
 - Many LDS have read relatively little of the Bible, let alone studied it beyond key passages that are interpreted in the context of other unique LDS Scriptures. Moreover, the KJV is a 400-year-old translation that scarcely reflects modern-day English vernacular. In other words, it is relatively less understandable for many of us today. Reading a reputable modern translation of the Bible with the KJV may help LDS realize what the text actually says and means.

12. MISTAKE #10

- a. Don't allow discussions to become overly argumentative thereby giving LDS a reason to end them.
 - "I don't feel the Spirit here anymore" is a common LDS response in these situations and they are well within their rights to "call it quits" (see **Acts 18:6** and **2 Tim. 2:23**).
 - What are some of the reasons biblical Christians make this MISTAKE?
- b. Do agree beforehand to hold each other accountable to prevent this from happening. (Say, for example, "The last thing I want is for our discussions to become argumentative and dishonoring to the Spirit. If either one of us senses this may be happening, let's agree to stop, take a deep breath, and even pray, if necessary. Is that okay with you?")
 - What other strategies might biblical Christians use to head off hostility?

13. MISTAKE #11

- a. Don't decline an invitation, or squelch an opportunity, to pray with LDS before or after a doctrinal discussion.
 - What are some of the reasons biblical Christians don't pray with LDS?
 - Note: Biblical Christians should NOT pray with LDS if doing so violates the conscience of any believers present or involved (see **1 Cor. 8:9, 12** and **10:23-24**).
 - Note: It is our opinion that praying with LDS in this context is NOT tantamount to having "fellowship with demons" (KJV)—by way of example, participating in the LDS sacrament IS, particularly for former LDS (see **1 Cor. 10:14-22**).
 - If biblical Christians have concerns that praying with LDS will communicate we approve of their unique LDS beliefs, fear not—the very nature of the doctrinal discussions to follow should put them to rest. (Recall "contrast brings clarity.")
- b. Do pray with LDS if invited—better yet, suggest it yourself.
 - When biblical Christians pray with LDS in this context it is with our thoughts directed toward the LORD God of the Bible, NOT that of the LDS Church.
 - Why might praying with LDS before or after a doctrinal discussion be a good strategy?

14. MISTAKE #12

- a. Don't haphazardly enter conversations with LDS when another biblical Christian is already engaged.
 - Why should biblical Christians avoid making this MISTAKE?
- b. Do proactively identify one biblical Christian who will take the "on point" position when two or more believers are involved.
 - Why might appointing a lead speaker be a good strategy? (Recall the 50/50 rule and "conversational debt" principle.)
 - How might those who are NOT on point assist the leader in a sharing scenario?

15. MISTAKE #13

a. Don't necessarily restrict discussions with LDS missionaries to your doorstep.

- Some biblical Christians interpret **2 John 10** as a modern day mandate, particularly as it relates to LDS and JW missionaries.

2 John 10-11 (NIV2011)

¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching [“Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh” (v. 7)], do not take them into your house or welcome them.

¹¹ Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work.

- The historical context is as follows: First, early Christians met in “household churches” to fellowship and worship (see **Ro. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15** and **Philem. 1:2**). Second, welcoming itinerant preachers into one’s home (which often included the provision of food and shelter) also implied welcoming their teachings (i.e. “sharing in their wicked work” if they were false teachers).
- Note: It is our opinion that welcoming false teachers into Christian homes in the first century was tantamount to (1) giving LDS missionaries and the like a platform to preach in our Christian churches today and (2) giving tacit approval of their mission work. This, the apostle John would NOT allow! Applying **2 John 10** to the typical Christian home today is an apparent misapplication of the text.

b. Do invite LDS missionaries into your home without reservation (but only when it is appropriate to do so).

- Why might this be a good strategy?
- When would it NOT be appropriate to invite LDS missionaries into our home?

16. MISTAKE #14

a. Don't think of meeting with LDS as either a one-time or must-win-the-battle-and-destroy-the-opposition endeavor.

- Why do some biblical Christians adopt these attitudes with LDS?
- On a personal note, I (Mike Ghiglia) believe one of the main reasons the LORD God called me to be a missionary to Mormons is because I was a relatively “blank slate” on which to write His wisdom and compassion. I had neither prior knowledge of nor associations with

the LDS Church and Mormons, respectively. As a result, I carried no “emotional baggage” with me into my dealings with LDS. I find this NOT to be the case with many non-LDS residents of predominantly LDS communities and former Mormons, especially.

- b. Do make it your goal to keep LDS interested, encouraged, and willing to meet with you again and again. (Enter the finance principle: “Increase your rate of return.”)
- Why might this be a good strategy?
 - How does the saying “People don’t care how much we know until they know how much we care” apply to this strategy?

17. MISTAKE #15

- a. Don’t gauge the success of your witnessing efforts by getting LDS to agree with you and so be saved!
- Why should biblical Christians avoid making this MISTAKE?
 - If biblical Christians take responsibility for that which the LORD God never made us responsible, we ultimately set ourselves up for frustration, discouragement, resignation, and guilt. The submission of LDS to the Holy Spirit is NOT in our job description and is therefore beyond our control (see **1 Cor. 3:5-7**).
 - What was and was NOT the responsibility of the “watchman” in **Ezekiel 33:1-9**?
 - What was and was NOT the responsibility of the apostle Paul in **Acts 18:4-6**?
- b. Do gauge the success of your witnessing efforts by getting LDS to understand your beliefs, NOT to believe them! (Recall **1 Peter 3:15-16**.)
- Why might this be a good strategy?
 - There is always room for improvement for biblical Christians in the areas of (1) deepening our understanding of essential Christian and LDS doctrine; (2) learning how to more effectively and strategically share our faith; and (3) being willing to be more Christ-like when we do it.
 - That over which we have a measure of control is that for which we take responsibility.