



STATEMENT DM-501

WITNESSING TIPS

Witnessing to Mormons - Some First Principles

by Marian Bodine

When witnessing to the Mormon it is vital to select and concentrate on an isolated topic for discussion. Otherwise you will likely find yourself being taken down "rabbit trails" which rarely lead to anything productive. You will find that you cannot satisfactorily respond to one statement before another is made. Make every effort to avoid this pitfall as the discussion can become meaningless unless you can stay "on track" long enough to make your point.

Not infrequently the Mormon will interrupt your presentation with a questions prefaced with, "Well, what about...?" Usually this leads to an entire change of subject. Calmly remind the Mormon that for clarity's sake it is important that he or she allow you to finish your point. Likewise, be courteous and allow him or her to respond without interruption.

Sometimes the Mormon will interrupt you with his/her testimony, which is: "I testify to you that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, the Mormon church is true, Jesus is the Christ, Ezra Taft Benson is a prophet on the earth today, and I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen." You might reply: "Your personal testimony is actually invalid because I testify to you that Joseph Smith was a false prophet, the Mormon church is not true, Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior, and Ezra Taft Benson is not a prophet on the earth today, and I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, amen." With the force of the Mormon's testimony effectively neutralized, chances are that you will not be interrupted with that tactic again.

Mormon missionaries urge the non-Mormon to pray about the Book of Mormon and ask God if it is true. When the Christian refuses to do this, the missionaries can become insistent, even trying to lay a "guilt trip" on those who are reluctant to agree to their challenge.

It is important to give some reasons why you will not pray about the Book of Mormon. The following illustrates how such a dialogue might proceed:

Mormon: I'd like you to read and pray about the Book of Mormon, asking God if it's true.

Christian: Can you show me in the Bible where we are told to pray about a book or a prophet to find out the truth?

Mormon: James 1:5 says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

Christian: That passage is not speaking about praying about a book, or a prophet. The context is testings and trials and temptations. (vv. 2,3, 12).

Mormon: That is your interpretation!

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Christian: That is what the passage says in context. It is up to you to demonstrate that the passage applies to praying about a book in order to discover whether it is true or not.

Mormon: I *know* the Book of Mormon is true because I prayed about it.

Christian: Acts 17:11-12 gives us an example of how to test a teaching or a doctrine, which would include a religious book. Paul and Silas went to the synagogue of the Jews in Berea and preached the gospel of Jesus Christ. The passage states that the Bereans received the word with all readiness of mind, which means that they were open to accept the word which was preached to them, but they first searched the Scriptures daily to determine if what they were being told was scriptural and therefore true. The Scripture calls them noble for responding in this way. You will notice that it wasn't through prayer that the new teaching was proven but by putting it to the test of Scripture. When they saw that the teaching accorded with Scripture, then many of them believed.

Mormon: But I prayed and I have a burning in my bosom that confirms my belief in the Book of Mormon. Don't you believe in prayer? Do you think our Heavenly Father would allow me to be deceived when I prayed to Him?

Christian: Let me ask you a question: Where did you get the idea to pray about the Book of Mormon?

Mormon: Well, we are exhorted to pray with a sincere heart and receive a testimony from the Holy Ghost in Moroni 10:4-5.

Christian: So the idea to pray about the Book of Mormon came from the Book of Mormon itself, right? Suppose for a moment that the Book of Mormon is not true. Now, I know that you believe that it is, but just for the sake of argument suppose that it is not an historical document, but rather a counterfeit not inspired by the God who inspired the Bible. Who then would be the real inspiration behind a counterfeit book that claims to be from God?

Mormon: Satan?

Christian: Right! Now, since the admonition to read and pray about the Book of Mormon comes from the Book of Mormon itself, if its author is in reality Satan, who do you think would give the answer that the Book of Mormon is true?

Mormon: Well, if Satan were the author, which he isn't, he would have to be the one who gives you the answer that the Book of Mormon is true.

Christian: That is correct, and that is why it is a spiritually dangerous thing to pray about whether the Book of Mormon is true. The Bible makes it clear that the Book of Mormon is false (e.g., Gal. 1:8-9). To pray for an answer about it is to ignore what God has already said, which is to dishonor Him. We have only ourselves to blame, then, if Satan comes and answers such an irresponsible prayer instead. You must rely on the authority of the Bible to prove all things.