

Abandoning Sin



Witnessing Window

"A priesthood leader was impressed by the 'gospel glow' he saw in a sister he was interviewing. When he asked her what the secret of her inner peace was, with moist eyes she replied simply, 'Repentance.'

She explained she had married young - and pregnant. Sorrow for her sin was followed by confession to the Lord and to priesthood authorities and an intense commitment to be obedient to the Lord's commandments.

'It was hard, and I certainly wouldn't recommend it to anyone' she explained. 'But Heavenly Father blessed us to make something good out of something bad. The more we struggled to be faithful, the stronger Heavenly Father made us. And the stronger Heavenly Father made us, the easier it was to be faithful.'" **(Ensign, March, 2001, p. 57)**

The above excerpt illustrates the classic LDS definition of repentance, namely, abandoning the sin. Note how painful the process was for this woman. She talks about how she had to have "intense commitment to be obedient to the Lord's commandments." Note also how she pictures Heavenly Father's help. "The more we struggled to be faithful, the stronger Heavenly Father made us." That agrees with the often-used verse from the Book of Mormon, "*For we know it is by grace we are saved, after all we can do.*" (2 Nephi 25:23)

Following is one example of how you could use this as a springboard to witness to your LDS friends.

"I have been reading some LDS literature in an attempt to better understand your beliefs. An article in the March 2001 issue of the **Ensign** caught my attention." (Show them the article.) "This article raises a couple of questions for me. Hopefully you can answer them. First, could you explain to me more fully what the LDS church means when it talks about repentance?" It is important to have them define words since you can't assume that they will define them like their church does. Always nail down definitions of terms so that you don't end up talking past each other. In this case, you want to discover if they describe repentance as the LDS church does, namely, the abandoning or forsaking of all sin. If they don't, you may want to point them to the **November, 2000** issue of the **Ensign** that contains the classic LDS definition on **p. 25-26**.

The next goal, after nailing down the definition, is to focus on how much stress the LDS concept of repentance can put on a person. In other words, **you will want to switch the conversation from the intellectual level to an emotional one**. One way to do that is by asking a series of questions. Ask if repentance is always as difficult and painful a process as is described in the article. Ask if this is a process that occurs quite often in a person's life. Ask what happens when a person doesn't abandon a sin but repeats it. Ask how a person knows when they are forgiven. If you know the person well enough, you could even ask them about times when they had to repent.



The final goal is to witness Christ to them. In your own words, joyfully and confidently, tell them about Christ's forgiveness. Make it very personal. Or in Mormon language, bear them your testimony about the free and full forgiveness you have in Jesus. Show them **Hebrews 10: 10-18 Contrast the "done" of Christianity with the "do" of Mormonism**. Because of what Jesus has done, *"their sins and iniquities will I remember no more"* (verse 17). Introduce them to **Psalm 103:12** with its past tense. *"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."* (KJV) Focus on the positives of what Jesus has done. Witness Christ to them. Don't debate Mormonism with them.

May the Lord bless our witness so that many LDS people experience the joy of the forgiveness Jesus earned for them!

Summary

1. Show the article from the **March 2001 Ensign**.
2. Ask them to explain more fully what the LDS church means when it talks about repentance.
3. Definition of repentance in **November 2000 Ensign** is "the abandoning or forsaking of all sin".
4. Switch to the emotional level by asking them the series of questions.
5. Witness Christ's forgiveness (**Hebrews 10:10-18, Psalms 103:12**).
6. Don't debate Mormonism

Hebrews 10:10-18 (NIV) And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

¹¹ Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. ¹² But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God. ¹³ Since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool, ¹⁴ because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

¹⁵ The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says:

¹⁶ "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds."

¹⁷ Then he adds:

"Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more."

¹⁸ And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

Hebrews 10:10-18 (KJV) By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*. ¹¹ And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: ¹² But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; ¹³ From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. ¹⁴ For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. ¹⁵ *Whereof* the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, ¹⁶ 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; ¹⁷ And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. ¹⁸ Now where remission of these *is*, *there is* no more offering for sin.

