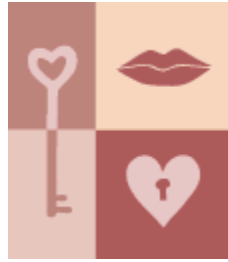


# Not by Words Alone



## Witnessing Window

In the November 2001 General Conference edition of the **Ensign**, the Second Counselor of the LDS church said, "Many people think they only need confess that Jesus is the Christ and then they are saved by grace alone." This statement and others by LDS church leaders project a false image of the biblical doctrine of "Saved by Faith Alone". Consequently, many Mormons think that Christians believe we can be saved through our words alone, that we can just say the words and spend the rest of our lives in sinful pursuits and still be saved.

Because of this misperception Mormons often misunderstand Christians when they present the message of saved by faith alone, and reject the message before it can even be completely presented. They equivocate "Faith alone" (a matter of the heart and Spirit) with "Words alone" (words which might only be lip service). We need to be highly aware of such misperceptions and lay them to rest as part of any discussion concerning our faith.

Mormons believe they must perform works, obey God's commandments, and perform required ordinances before they can gain eternal life. They have been taught that "Faith Alone" is the lazy way out. They think that because Christians do not believe they have to do works to gain eternal life, they have no motivation to follow God's will. It is not hard for them to see people who profess Christian faith but do not appear to be trying to follow God's will. Just as there are many Mormons "in name only"; there are also many who call themselves Christian but do not have Christ living in their hearts and the Spirit is not with them. Mormons often perceive all who profess belief in "Faith Alone" in this light.

The message we want to portray is that while Christians believe we are saved by faith alone, we do not believe everyone who says they have faith actually does. A hypocrite who merely says he or she has faith cannot be saved by a faith he or she does not really have. A hypocrite does not have the Spirit of God living in him, no matter what his words. **Romans 8:9.**

**Romans 8:9** You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

**Romans 8:9** But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

True believers have Christ living in them. It is their faith that saves them. The mere use of words, which may be false, cannot save. Faith is a matter of the heart, not the lips. An analogy can be made with the words "I love you." Just because someone says these words does not mean they are sincere. If one truly loves someone, there will be actions that flow from that love. No action demonstrates that there is no love,



only empty words. One might say "Love without action is dead!" This analogy can be used to illustrate James intent when he wrote **James 2:26**

<b>James 2:26 (NIV)</b> As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.	<b>James 2:26 (KJV)</b> For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.
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The problem is that Mormons do not understand conversion. In particular, they don't grasp the fact that when the Holy Spirit brings people to faith, granting them eternal life, the unavoidable consequence is a natural desire to follow God's will. (As Paul says, they are controlled by the Spirit.) The strength of this desire is proportional to each person's faith. As each person's faith grows, his or her response to God (in the form of faithful works) grows as well. The Thessalonians exemplify this connection between faith and works. See **1 Thessalonians 1:3**:

<b>1 Thessalonians 1:3 (NIV)</b> We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.	<b>1 Thessalonians 1:3 (KJV)</b> Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;
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When Mormons question *Faith Alone* we must make it clear that it is not synonymous with *Words Alone*. As James declares in **James 2:17**; faith without any action is dead. As Jesus declares in **Matthew 7:21**; not everyone who calls on him will be saved, but only those who do the Father's will. Mormons take these passages to mean that works are required **before** eternal life is granted. Christians know that works always **follow** God's gifts of faith and eternal life. This is the point that needs to be emphasized.

<b>James 2:17 (NIV)</b> In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.	<b>James 2:17 (KJV)</b> Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone
<b>Matthew 7:21 (NIV)</b> Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.	<b>Matthew 7:21 (KJV)</b> Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Once we have explained that "Saved by Faith Alone" is not the same as "Saved by Words Alone", we need to get back to the critical message of "**Saved by Faith Alone – Not by Works**". A good way to do this is to continue with the analogy of good fruit. A good place to pick up is **Colossians 1:9-14**:

<b>Colossians 1:9-14 (NIV)</b> For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. <sup>10</sup> And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, <sup>11</sup> being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully <sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. <sup>13</sup> For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.	<b>Colossians 1:9-14 (KJV)</b> For this cause we also, since the day we heard <i>it</i> , do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; <sup>10</sup> That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; <sup>11</sup> Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; <sup>12</sup> Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: <sup>13</sup> Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated <i>us</i> into the kingdom of his dear Son: <sup>14</sup> In whom we have redemption through his blood, <i>even</i> the forgiveness of sins
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Here Paul clearly shows that saving faith is the horse that draws the cart of good fruit. Paul does this in his use of both the **past tense** and the **future tense**.

He refers to our gifts of salvation and forgiveness in the **past tense** (Verses 12-14):

- '**has qualified** you to share in the inheritance of the saints' {**which hath made us meet** -KJV}
- '**has rescued** us from the dominion of darkness' {**hath delivered** - KJV}
- '**brought** us into the kingdom of the Son' {**hath translated** - KJV}
- 'in whom we **have** redemption, the forgiveness of sins'.

He refers to the object of his prayer in the **future tense** (Verse 9):

- 'asking God **to fill** you with the knowledge of his will through all wisdom and spiritual understanding" {**that ye might be filled** - KJV}

He refers to the result of his prayer in the **future tense** (Verse 10):

- 'that you **may live** a life worthy of the Lord' {**might walk** - KJV}
- '**may please** him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God' {**unto all pleasing** - KJV}

He continues in the **future tense** (Verses 11-12):

- '**being strengthened** with all power'
- '**that you may have** great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father' {**unto all** - KJV}

Paul gives us the picture of the horse of God's gifts of salvation and forgiveness pulling the cart of good fruit; works, growth in knowledge, patience, and thanksgiving.

