

Full Time Mission Message #24

Elder / Sister xxxxx,

We often hear people stand up in Testimony meeting and say they know the gospel is true. When I hear them say that I often wonder in my mind which part of the gospel do they know is true? The fact of the matter is, we have different degrees of testimony about different parts of the gospel. For example many members believe Joseph Smith was a prophet and the Book of Mormon is truly a second witness for Jesus Christ. Yet they don't pay their tithing or go to the temple. After we moved back to Utah we both worked at K-Mart for a while until I found a full time job. It was required of us to work on Sunday to keep that job. It always was amazing to me how I could tell when an LDS meeting had just let out. Especially a big meeting like Stake Conference. How could I tell? Because all of the sudden men in white shirts and ties and women in Sunday dresses would come in the store. Why were they there shopping on Sunday if they stood up in testimony meeting last Fast Sunday and said they knew the Gospel was true. So again have to ask, which part do you think is true? Obviously you do not believe in the 10 commandments or you would not be shopping on Sunday on the way home from Stake Conference. After years of observing my own actions and the actions of other members of the church I have concluded that we have different degrees of testimony about different doctrinal and spiritual beliefs of the Gospel. We may have a very strong testimony of tithing (and many less active members do) but no testimony at all that your Bishop was called of God. So until he is released you are not going back to church. Others may go to the Temple every week but then at night watch things on Television that are not in keeping with their temple covenants. When I was in the Branch Presidency of the Deaf Branch, I had a very unique experience. Because our Branch President was deaf he could not of course communicate with the Stake President without an interpreter. Because I was his 1st counselor it was my responsibility to go to meetings with him and interpret for him. That included the meeting the Stake President has with the Bishops the first Sunday of each month. In one of those meetings when I first started going the Stake President went to the black board and started making a list. Apparently a few weeks before I had started coming with our Branch President, he had asked all the Bishops to make a list of the 10 most serious problems they had in their ward. Unknown to me he had also asked them to make that same list 2 years before. So that night he wrote up on the blackboard the two lists he had compiled from the Bishops. The shocking thing was that 2 years before not one Bishop had listed pornography as a problem in their ward. Just 2 years later every Bishop and Branch President in the stake had listed it as their number one problem. I had to then again wonder who those people are. Are they the same people who are standing up in testimony meeting saying they know the Gospel is true? If so which part of the testimony excludes looking at pornography?

After years of observing this phenomena in the church I devised a chart that depicts a typical member of the church's testimony. I decided to use Oliver Cowdery as my example. This chart characterizes the degrees of testimony he had. He had a perfect testimony and witness of the Book of Mormon as one of the three witnesses but no testimony of Joseph Smith at all.

The testimony of Oliver Cowdery

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Know that Jesus is the Christ	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Know that Joseph Smith was a true prophet	█			█	█					
Know the Book of Mormon is true	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Believe in receiving answers to prayer	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Believe compassionate service is important	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	
Believe in doing missionary work	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	
Believe in being morally clean/pure in heart	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	
Testimony of the need to be a member	█	█	█	█	█					
Accept the doctrine of the Plan of Salvation	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	
Believe in the necessity of being baptized	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Believe in the being married in the temple	█	█	█	█	█					
Always keep the temple covenants	█	█	█	█	█					
Attend the temple at least once a month	█	█	█	█	█					
Believe in doing genealogical research	█	█	█	█	█					
Believe in paying a full tithing	█	█	█	█	█					
Believe in paying a generous fast offering	█	█	█	█	█					
Believe in attending church every week	█	█	█	█	█					
Believe in attending Stake Conference	█	█	█	█	█					
Believe in listening to General Conference	█	█	█	█	█					
Believe in keeping the Sabbathday holy	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Believe it is wrong to shop on Sunday	█	█	█	█	█					
Believe it is wrong to see movies on Sunday	█	█	█	█	█					
Believe it is wrong to watch TV on Sunday	█	█	█	█	█					
Believe in not working on Sunday	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Believe in not taking drugs of any kind	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	
Believe in keeping the Word of Wisdom	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	
Believe in having personal prayer daily	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Believe in having family prayer daily	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Believe in being totally honest in all dealings	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Believe in accepting any church calling	█			█	█					

This list could go on and on.....



1. You believe that the principle is false to the degree that you fight against it in total rebellion.
2. You believe that the principle is false but you do not fight against it.
3. You simply do not believe it is true and see no need for it in your life.
4. You have no knowledge of the principles so you don't have a testimony of it.
5. You know of the principles but you do not have a testimony one way or the other of it.
6. You know of the principles and hope it is true but are not sure to live it all the time.
7. You have faith that the principles is true to the point that you live it even though you wonder sometimes.
8. You have a firm testimony of the principle and live it no matter what.
9. You have received a witness of the principle and teach it to others.
10. You have received a "PERFECT KNOWLEDGE IN THAT THING".



As members, our testimony is constantly changing. We have a degree of testimony of each principle of the Gospel (Alm a 32:34). When we enter the highest degree of the Celestial Kingdom, we will have a perfect knowledge of every principle.

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