

From Human Doing to Human Being

Abiding in Jesus After Mormonism

Fred W. Anson
Faith After Mormonism Conference 2019

My Mormon Story

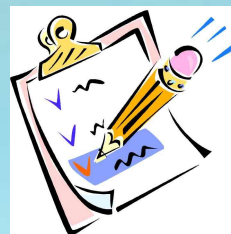
- Raised in the First Church of the Nazarene, Anaheim, CA
- A lifetime of Mormon Family and Friends
- Went Atheist
- Saved in 1976
- First entered Mormon Studies in 1978
- Spent 13-years in a Mind Control Cult
- Former Christian Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)
- Former Group Facilitator of Recovery Groups at Saddleback Community Church, Lake Forest and Mariners Church, Irvine, CA
- Member of Saddleback Covenant Church, Mission Viejo, CA
- Administrator on several Mormon Studies websites including two for Ex-Mormon Christians

Mormonism Creates Human *Doings*

President Thomas Monson's To Do List (for You)

From General Conference, Spring 2011

1. Go to the temple for themselves and the dead.
2. Pay their tithing.
3. Contribute to the missionary fund.
4. Be worthy of the priesthood if you already hold it.
5. Qualify for a temple recommend if you haven't already.
6. Make sacrifices elsewhere to make regular temple attendance a higher priority in your life.
7. Use the priesthood to bless lives.
8. Safeguard and treasure the priesthood.
9. Avoid pornography, bad language and addictions.
10. Do not watch movies and TV that portray bad behavior.
11. Read the Book of Mormon.
12. Gain a testimony.



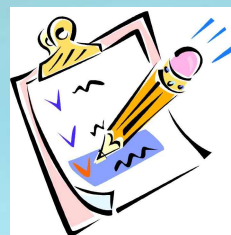
(compiled by Sharon Lindbloom lightly modified from original <http://blog.mrm.org/2011/05/mormon-trifle>)

Mormonism Creates Human *Doings*

President Thomas Monson's To Do List (for You)

From General Conference, Spring 2011

13. Obey the commandments.
14. Pray regularly.
15. Study scripture.
16. Attend church.
17. Attend seminary.
18. Repent.
19. Get married.
20. Be careful in the choice of a spouse.
21. Be loyal to spouses.
22. Respect and love wives.
23. Make any needed repairs to marriages.
24. Do not allow marriages to be in jeopardy.
25. Stand above the ways of the world.
26. Be honorable and decent.
27. Be above reproach.



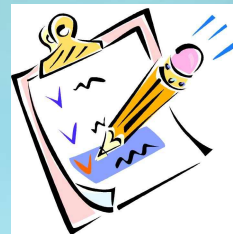
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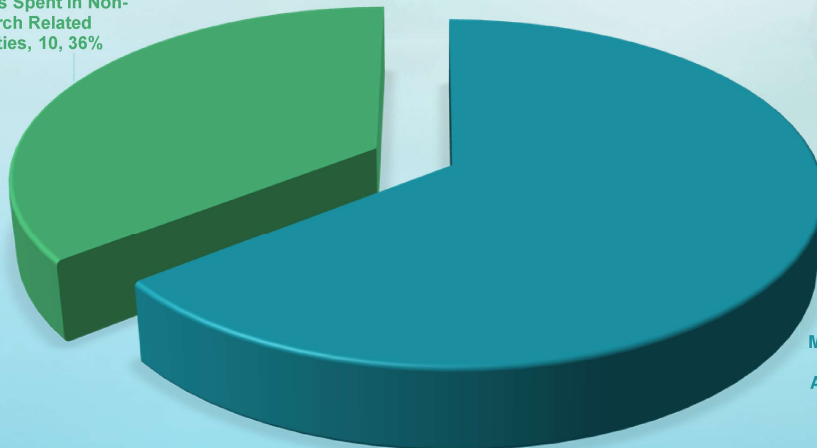
28. Go to the temple regularly
29. Keep temple ordinances as a goal
30. Put a picture of a temple in every bedroom
31. Teach children about the importance of the temple
32. Remember covenants made in the temple
33. Sacrifice whatever necessary to attend the temple
34. Follow in the footsteps of Christ
35. Remember the messages from General Conference
36. Read and study the Conference edition of Ensign magazine
37. Be good citizens and neighbors
38. Be examples of honesty and integrity



(compiled by Sharon Lindbloom lightly modified from original <http://blog.mrm.org/2011/05/mormon-trifile>)

Mormonism Creates Human *Doings*

Man Days Spent in Non-Church Related Activities, 10, 36%



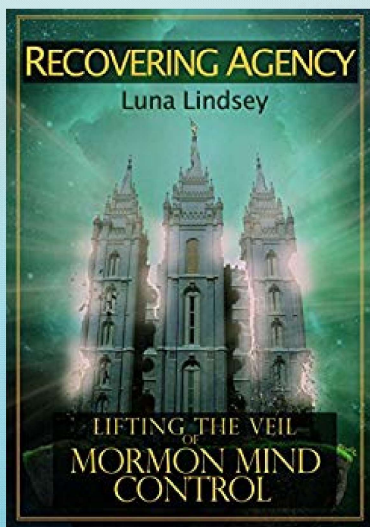
Man Days Spent in Church Related Activities, 18, 64%

"18 days out of 28. That means that 65 percent of your time is taken up by the Church."

-- John Larsen, Mormon Expression Host

(Mormon Expression Episode #249: The Time Commitment Required To Be A Good Mormon)

Mormonism Creates Human *Doings* ...

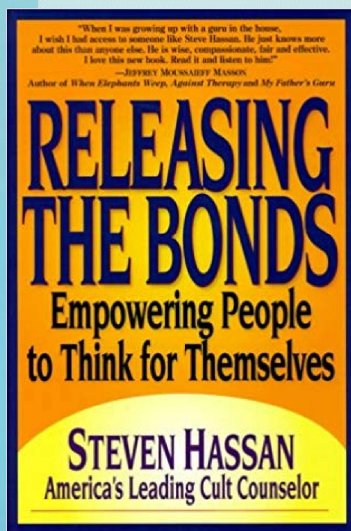


'Church members are busy "storing up treasures in heaven", and often have little time to enjoy this life that we most definitely, provably, possess. While many intangible goals are for good, such as spending time with family and doing charity work, most endeavors of the Church are make-work projects that have no lasting impact. Such demands on resources can be exhausting, and Church members are never allowed to relax or just "be."

... The member has little time or energy to question beliefs, associate with outsiders, or examine life too closely. Time spent on group-related activities is strongly encouraged or enforced, and usually fills every spare moment.'

— Luna Lindsey, *"Recovering Agency: Lifting the Veil of Mormon Mind Control"*, pp.34&80

... And Mormonism Isn't Unique in This



"Cults often impose an oppressive time schedule on their members' lives in order to control behavior. When members are not engaged in cult rituals and indoctrination activities, they are typically assigned to specific goals that restrict their free time and behavior—anything to keep them busy. In a destructive cult, there is always work to be done."

— Steven Hassan, *"Releasing the Bonds: Empowering People to Think for Themselves"*, p.46

God Creates Human *Beings*

Jesus Christ's To Do List (For You and For Him)

From the Bible

"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love."

(John 15:1-9 NKJV)

God Creates Human *Beings*

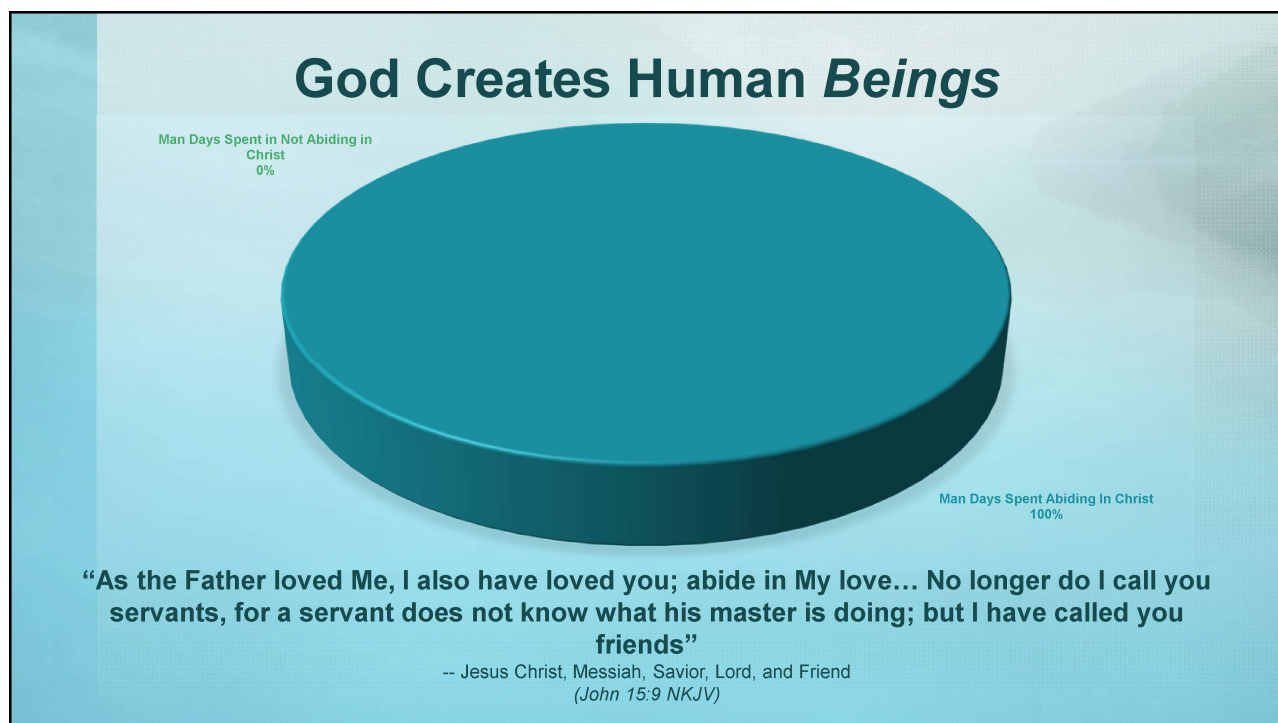
Jesus Christ's To Do List (For You and For Him)

From the Bible

"If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another."

(John 15:10-17 NKJV)



God Creates Human *Beings*

“Be still, and know that I *am* God”

-- Mr. God, Psalm 46:10 NKJV

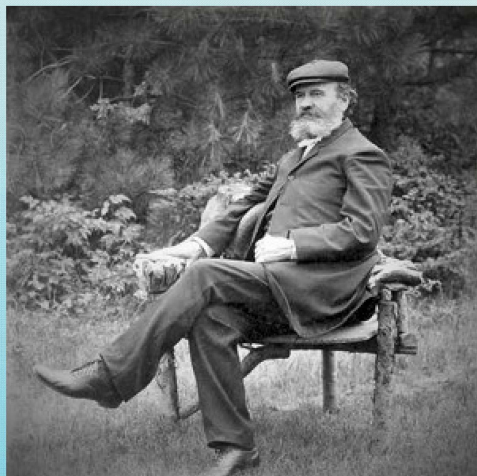
“If we compare our pace to the pace of Jesus’s life, there aren’t many similarities. Jesus was never rushed. He wasn’t overwhelmed by life, even though He had an enormous mission to complete in a very short period of time. Jesus never rushed, because He moved at God’s pace. You see, hurry isn’t from God. It’s the world’s pace. Culture’s obsession with busyness and hurriedness isn’t just a scheduling problem. It’s a heart problem.”

-- Frank Powell, [“6 Reasons You Seriously Need to Slow Down: How a hurried, busy life can destroy your relationship with God”](#),
Relevant Magazine, September 17, 2015

“My yoke is easy and my burden is Light”

-- Mr. Jesus, Matthew 11:30 NKJV

Pray to stay connected to the Vine



“Prayer is the link that connects us with God.”

- A. B. Simpson
Founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance

“Pray without ceasing.”
(1 Thessalonian 5:18 NKJV)

“As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”
(John 15:4 NKJV)

Abiding Prayer is Organic and Authentic



“The Pharisee and the Tax Collector” by James Tissot

‘He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”’

(Luke 18:9-14 NKJV)



To abide, let Christ's words abide in you



"Christ the Vine" by Tanja Butler

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples."

(John 15:7&8 NKJV)

"Until the Bible reads you, you haven't begun to read your Bible... The primary purpose of Bible reading is to interact not with a book, but with its Author, God."

-- Pastor Michael Anthony

Abide in Jesus and you *will* bear fruit

“The fruit of the Spirit
is love, joy, peace,
longsuffering,
kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, gentleness,
self-control.”

(Galatians 5:22&23 NKJV)



“Basket of Fruit” by Carvaggio

“I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing... By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.”

-- Jesus Christ
(John 15:5,8 NJKV)

You know that you're abiding in Christ when you can honestly say. . .



Ripe grapes ready to be harvested.

“I am living life at a comfortable, unfrenzied pace that is bearing fruit naturally, organically, and without exerting undue effort – like grapes grow on a vine. I’m slowly becoming more like Jesus.”

“He must increase, but I *must* decrease.”
(John 3:30 NKJV)

Now, about that pruning thing ...



"I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit."

(John 15:1&2 NKJV)

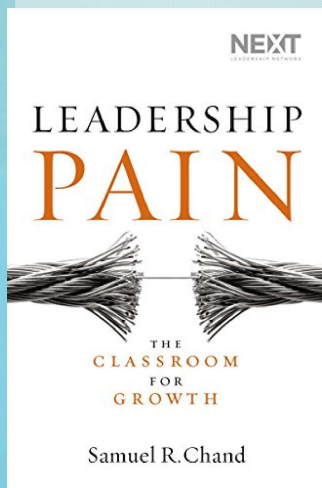
... it serves a purpose...



'The primary goal of pruning is to maximize the amount of one-year old wood on each grapevine without encouraging the plant to produce so many grape clusters that it lacks the energy and nutrients to fully ripen them. Left to its own devices, a grapevine grows to a dense mass of mostly older wood with relatively little "fruiting wood" each year. The dense growth leads to poor air circulation, which encourages fungal diseases. Expect to remove 70 to 90 percent of the previous year's growth each winter.'

-- Brian Barth, [*"Winter How-To: Tips for Pruning Grapevines"*](#), *Modern Farmer*, Feb 1, 2016

...it promotes growth...



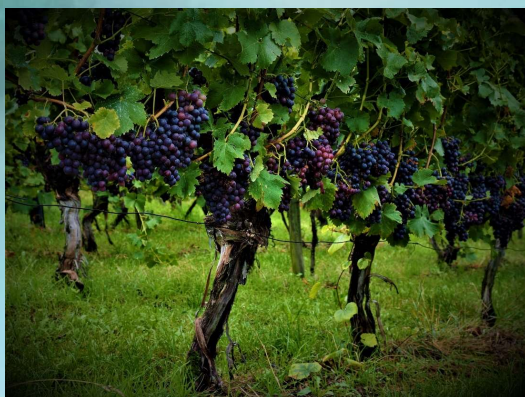
“Remember:
growth equals change; change
equals loss; loss equals pain; so
inevitably, growth equals pain.”

— Pastor Samuel Chand, "[Leadership Pain: The Classroom for Growth](#)", p.35

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God.”

— Romans 8:18&19 NKJV

...it causes us to abide in the Vine...



“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”
(John 15:4&5 NKJV)

...and not in our self.



"The first year of growth in a vine's life is meant to build up nutrient stores, just like when we're told as kids to eat our spinach so we grow up big and strong. Any flower clusters that grow are usually cut back, so that the vine can focus its energy on establishing a strong root system. Producing fruit so early on is a lofty goal, to the vine's detriment; as is said, we should learn to walk before we run. Usually by the third year of growth, a vine is ready to produce fruit of proper quality for winemaking. Broadly speaking, a grapevine matures over a period of up to 30 years..."

-- Haley Mercedes, "[Lifecycle of a Wine Grapevine](#)", *Wine Folly*, March 2017

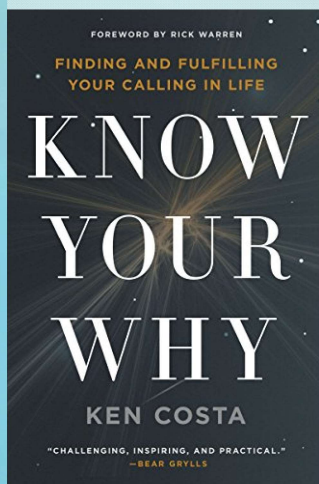
Examples from the Bible



'...there was a significant gap between when Paul became a Christian and when he became a missionary. Remember the Book of Acts covers events that occurred between around 30-62AD. That puts Paul's conversion (Acts 9:1-9) around 33AD and his first call to missions (Acts 13:2-3) at about 47AD. Folks that's a 14-year gap! ...Still not convinced? Then let's talk about this guy called Moses who spent 40-years exiled in the wilderness until God called him to his "ministry". Or how about Abraham who had to wait for 19-years from the promise of Isaac until his birth? Or, last but not least, how about Christ - God incarnate - who had to wait for 30-years for His "ministry" only to have it last 3-years? The way of the Master is not our way my friend - it's far better!'

-- Fred W. Anson & Jackie Davidson, "[Why You Don't Need a "Ministry"](#)", *Beggar's Bread*, Jan 22, 2017

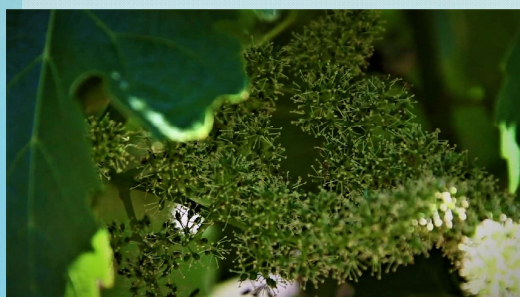
Ken Costa on "God's Waiting Room"



"While we are in the waiting room, there is no point stressing about the exit. It will come in its time. Just as Joseph had to go through time in prison, so we may well have to stay expectant in a trying and unsettling place. The timing belongs to God. It is noteworthy that Joseph was not idle in prison. In fact, he had the opportunity to exercise his gift of prophecy, which two years later resulted in his release from his very demanding waiting room and his promotion to prime minister of Egypt. Likewise, Joshua was required to march seven times around the city of Jericho before taking the city (Joshua 6). Our work of preparation may be of a spiritual or practical nature—it tends to be a mixture of both—but there is always plenty we can do as we wait."

-- Ken Costa, *"Know Your Why: Finding and Fulfilling Your Calling in Life"* p.70

You know that you've fully recovered from Mormonism and when you can honestly say . . .



New grape clusters flowering in a pruned grapevine.

"I am completely detached from Mormonism, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. I am able to see *both* the good and the bad in it and in my experience with it. I now rarely, if ever, get triggered by my Mormon family and friends. Mormonism is in my rearview mirror, I am now in my Post Mormon life."

In a nutshell...

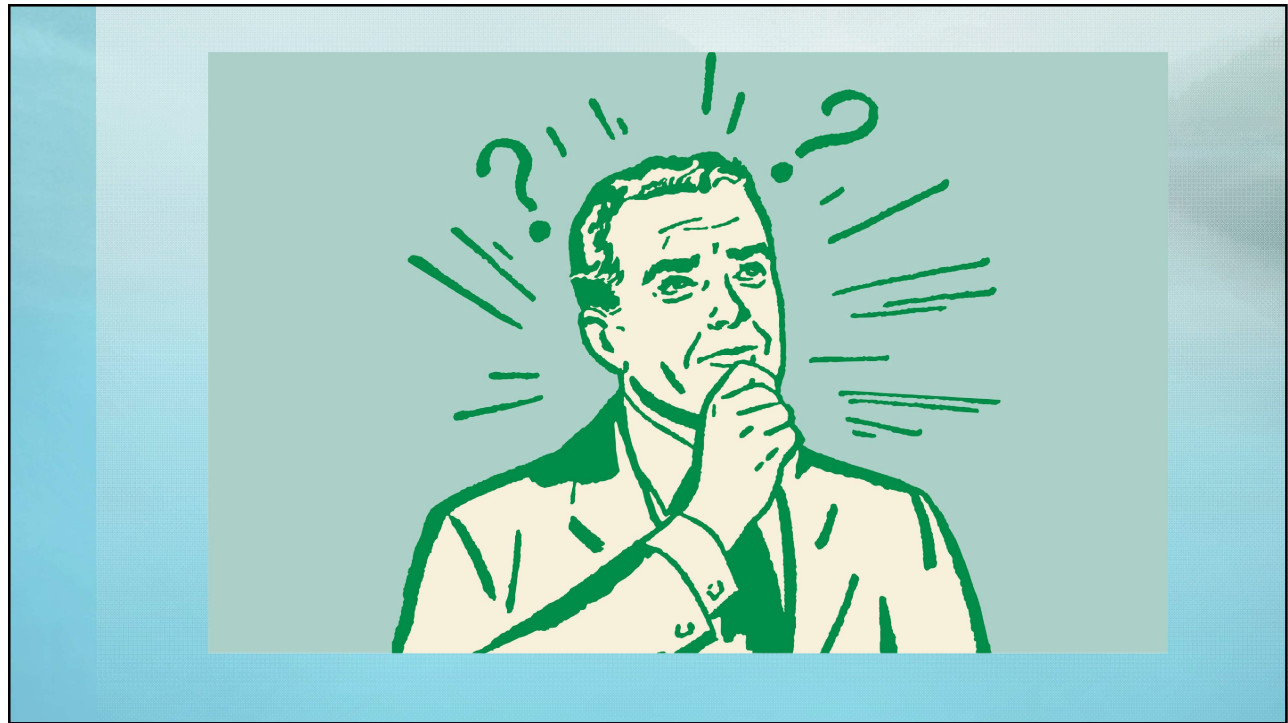
Mormonism Says...

Jesus Says...

"You've gotta do more!"	"Abide in Me." <small>(John 15:4)</small>
"You are what you do."	"I call you friend." <small>(John 15:15)</small>
"Your value is in what you produce."	"Abide in Me and you will produce fruit." <small>(John 15:16)</small>
"Give to get."	"My grace is sufficient." <small>(2 Corinthians 12:9)</small>
"Want more? Then give more!"	"Whoever drinks of the water that I give will never thirst." <small>(John 4:14)</small>
"When the Brethren have spoken, the thinking's been done."	"Come now, and let us reason together." <small>(Isaiah 1:18)</small>
"Image is everything."	"Image is deceitful." <small>(Luke 11:43&44)</small>
"Failure will be punished."	"Failure is how we learn." <small>(Romans 8:28)</small>
"You are a Savior on Mount Zion."	"You need a Savior." <small>(John 3:16-18)</small>

Or, simply stated, in the vernacular . . .





Bonus Content

Gaining Wisdom, Avoiding Bear Traps

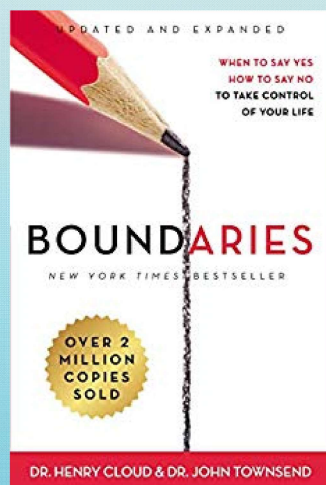


“Always learn from
experience,
preferably
someone else’s.”

— Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Lessons from Someone Else’s Experience

This book is essential reading!

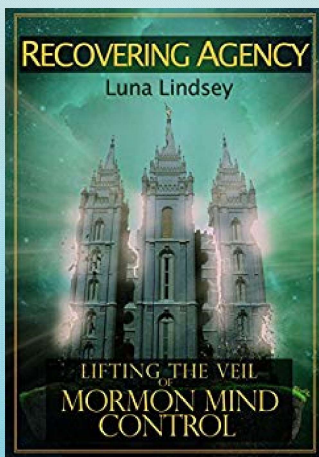


“Boundaries define us. They define what is me and what is not me. A boundary shows me where I end and someone else begins, leading me to a sense of ownership. Knowing what I am to own and take responsibility for, gives me freedom. If I know where my yard begins and ends, I am free to do with it what I like. Taking responsibility for my life opens up many different options. However, if I do not ‘own’ my life, my choices and options become very limited.”

— Henry Cloud and John Townsend, *“Boundaries: When To Say Yes, How to Say No”*, p.29

Lessons from Someone Else's Experience

Why that book is essential reading!



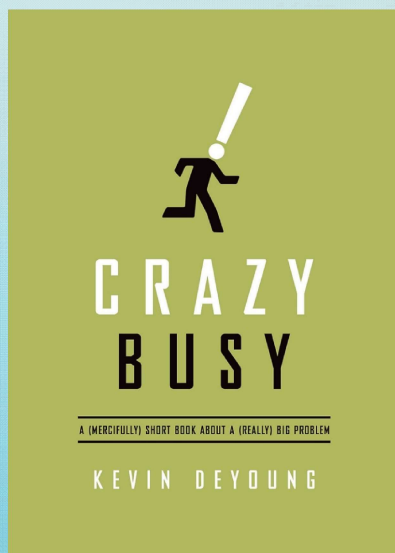
“Many Mormons lack an understanding about setting healthy boundaries. It is difficult for most Saints to say “No” to new callings, charitable requests, and demands for more time. Mormons are often meddling in each other’s business, judging one another and, for the sake of someone else’s spiritual welfare, offer unsolicited advice, drop in unannounced for visits, or simply don’t take no for an answer. Often members are pecked to death with good intentions.”

– Luna Lindsey, *“Recovering Agency: Lifting the Veil of Mormon Mind Control”*, p.34

Lessons from Someone Else's Experience

1. Learn how to set healthy boundaries.
2. Learn how to say, “No!”
3. Be teachable (not a know it all).
4. Be slow to speak and quick to listen.
5. Find and participate in a good Christian Ex-Mormon Recovery Group.
6. Find and engage a good Christian Therapist.
7. Get your questions about the reliability of the Bible answered to your satisfaction.
8. Find a Bible translation that speaks to and “reads” you.
9. Learn proper hermeneutics (the methodological principles of interpretation).
10. Learn the Essential and non-Essential Doctrines of the Christian Faith.
11. Learn Christian Church History.
12. Find your new Church home and get grafted in.
13. Pray organically (not ritualistically).
14. Develop a daily Bible reading and prayer habit.

Lessons from Someone Else's Experience



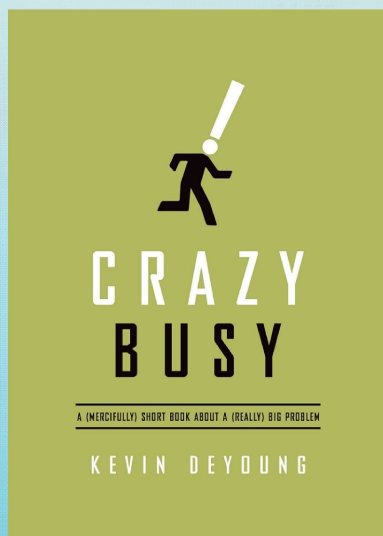
"If you are sick and tired of feeling so dreadfully busy and are looking for a one-point plan to help restore order to your life, this is the best advice I know: devote yourself to the Word of God and prayer. This means public worship and private worship. I'm not telling you how much time to spend. You may start with five minutes a day or fifteen or fifty. A few unhurried minutes are better than a distracted hour, and a consistent habit is better than a sporadic burst of fits and starts. As someone who has had a devotional time since high school—and has also struggled to have a devotional time since high school—I can tell you that no single practice brings more peace and discipline to life than sitting at the feet of Jesus."

-- Kevin DeYoung, "[Crazy Busy](#)", Kindle locations 1274-1275

Lessons from Someone Else's Experience

15. Get to know your Pastor.
16. Join a Small Group in your Church.
17. Initiate Socially in your Church.
18. Learn and apply "The Rule of Principle, not Personality".
19. Always Be 100% Authentic, 100% of the Time.
20. Discover your "wiring".
21. Known your limitations and don't exceed them.
22. Remember that your Mormon Story has given you unique skills an experiences that God *can and will* use to help others.
23. When *you're* ready – and only then – start volunteering.
24. Do few things but do them well.
25. Be gentle with yourself and others.
26. Be patient with yourself and others.
27. Develop the habit of reading good Christians books: A reading Christian is a growing Christian.
28. Do (or don't do) all the above slowly, deliberately, and at the pace that *you* set for *yourself*.

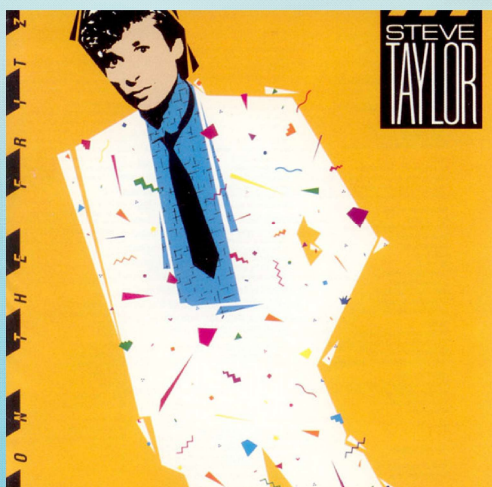
Lessons from Someone Else's Experience



"Making consistent time for the Word of God and prayer is the place to start because being with Jesus is the only thing strong enough to pull us away from busyness. Luke 10:38–42 is nothing but a story version of Deuteronomy 8:3: 'Man does not live by bread alone, but . . . by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.' We won't say no to more craziness until we can say yes to more Jesus. We will keep choosing dinner rolls over the bread of life. We will choose the fanfare of the world over the feet of Jesus. We will choose busyness over blessing."

-- Kevin DeYoung, "[Crazy Busy](#)", Kindle locations 1321-1322

Gaining Wisdom, Avoiding Bear Traps



"But there's bear traps
lying in those woods
Most of 'em
already been used"

-- Steve Taylor, "[I Just Wanna Know](#)"

Bear Traps lying in those woods

1. Taking up the sword against Mormonism prior to full recovery from Mormonism.
2. Assuming that you have to *have* a “ministry”.
3. Assuming that Mormonism taught you the Bible.
4. Assuming that Mormonism taught you Christianity – especially true Christian Church History.
5. Being unteachable. That is, being too darn smart.
6. Confusing Anti-Mormonism with Christianity.
7. Letting well meaning but misguided Christians turn you into a weapon against Mormonism.
8. Trying to Proselytize or Rescue your Mormon family – let God use strangers.
9. Falling into the deceit that Ex-Mormon Atheism is more rational than theism.
10. Ignoring lingering doubts about the reliability of the Bible.
11. Pendulum swinging.

The Biggest Bear Traps

Not questioning false biases, perceptions, and feelings

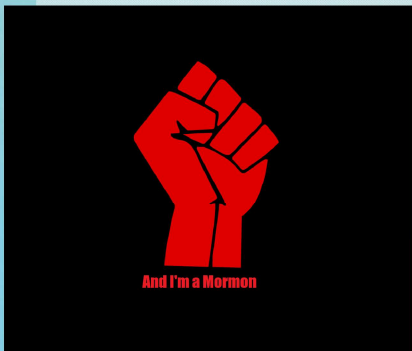


“The very teachings of Mormonism and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints may set up its members to turn away from faith and even provide the content of an atheistic worldview. If these teachings are not re-evaluated, then the ex-member may embrace atheism not solely based on rational and accurate arguments and evidence, but also from false biases, skewed perceptions, and feelings trained into them by the LDS Church. The man or woman who leaves must be resolute and steadfast in rooting out and reconsidering all that they have received from Mormonism; not just doctrines and history, but all of the assumptions and implications of the teachings that they were not even aware of, but that are still determining the way they think about and see the world.”

-- Joshua Valentine, "How the LDS Church Prepares Its Members for Atheism (Part 4)"

The Biggest Bear Traps

The False Dichotomy of Orthopraxy v. Orthodoxy



Methodists have creeds which a man must believe or be asked out of their church. I want the liberty of thinking and believing as I please. It feels so good not to be trammelled. It does not prove that a man is not a good man because he errs in doctrine

—Joseph Smith, *"History of the Church"*, 5:340

"It's clear that orthopraxy (the practice of one's faith) is far more important in Mormonism than orthodoxy (adherence to an established set of beliefs). In other words, Mormons will tolerate wrong belief as long the errant believer is doing all the right stuff. It sounds something like this, 'I mean the dude may be an atheist but, hey, isn't he a great Elders Quorum teacher – I always get so much out of his lessons!'

Stated plainly, Mormonism has no theological boundaries.

So why is this a problem for Ex-Mormons transitioning out of the LdS Church and into mainstream Christianity? Simple: Because they're not aware of this dynamic they often view attempts to conform their beliefs to established Christian orthodoxy as 'legalism' or 'oppression'. As soon as they bump into the wall of Christian orthodoxy their 'inner Joseph Smith' manifests itself."

— Fred W. Anson, *"The Spirit of Mormonism is the Spirit of Rebellion"*

Bear Traps lying in those woods

12. Letting others Bible translation shame you.
13. Being as fanatically Christian as you were Mormon.
14. Fearing or getting intimidated by your Pastor.
15. Becoming a "Lone Ranger Christian".
16. Waiting for your Pastor to give you a calling.
17. Saying yes to a calling that you're not qualified, equipped, or ready for.
18. Transitioning from speaking Mormonese to Christianese – just speak English like a real person.
19. Assuming spiritual giftings and callings that you don't have.
20. Failing to think, question, ponder, and (respectfully) challenge authority.
21. Fixating on what you want and need.
22. Being harsh with yourself and others.
23. Getting impatient with yourself and others.
24. Not finding the sweet spot between legalism and liberty.
25. Relapsing into being a Human Doing again.
26. Deceiving yourself into thinking that you and your situation are the exception.

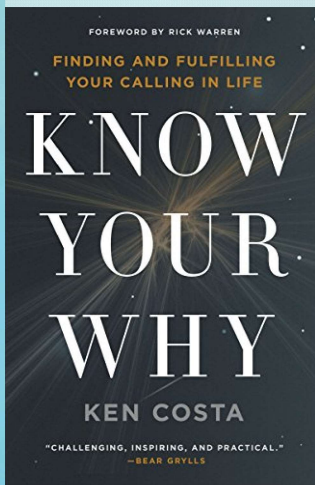
Lessons from Someone Else's Experience And The Biggest Bear Trap of Them All



"The four most expensive words
in the English Language are
'this time it's different'".

-- Sir John Templeton,
creator of the Templeton Growth Fund

Recommended "Deep Dive" Follow-up Resource



"This realization that life is best savored when lived for Christ is the key to living well. It moves the center of gravity from me to him, and, in that shift, is the very basis of finding my real calling.

Our destinies are what he calls us to, but they are never a substitute for our identities—knowing who we are, knowing that we are uniquely and passionately loved by God. And for a good reason: in a fast-paced digital world, and in a world in which job changes are frequent, it is hard to find the constant thread that will keep us centered throughout our lives. If we come to the end of a phase at work, then we are tempted to think of ourselves as having no further value. But if we are secure in our identities, we know that the end of an era is not the end of our destinies. There is always more to come."

-- Ken Costa, *"Know Your Why: Finding and Fulfilling Your Calling in Life"* pp.17&18