

A refrain sung by many Christians since the early 1900s: "Grace, grace, God's grace, grace that will pardon and cleanse within;...grace that is greater than all our sin!" (Four verses are shown below.)

Mormons have the same problem you have: sin. The only solution - God's grace - is found in the Bible. But Mormons look elsewhere - their other scriptures and modern-day prophets - where grace is conditional, to be earned. Here's the gist of "grace" and "justification" in the minds of Mormons.

MORMON "GRACE"

A prominent Mormon authority wrote, "Grace is granted to men proportionately as they conform to the standards of personal righteousness that are part of the gospel plan." In a nutshell, the Mormon church teaches that God gives people the chance to prove themselves worthy of His grace; grace is a supplement God applies after they have made every possible effort themselves. That is the religion's signature difference with biblical faith.¹

Another Mormon authority, in his book *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, never mentioned grace. Instead he wrote about "self-mastery." He said "impure people can perfect themselves and become pure." Christ perfected Himself, he wrote, becoming like God the Father, and the "same path to perfection is offered to man."^{2,4}

Yet another authority in two major works, *Jesus the Christ* and *The Articles of Faith*, mentioned grace not once.³

In the Bible we are assured that "by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). That is, the gift of salvation is by the free and unmerited favor of God; the gift is not merely the opportunity to work toward salvation.

Mormon teachings are saturated with the idea

expressed most succinctly in the Book of Mormon: "...for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do" (2 Nephi 25:23). The religion's founder, Joseph Smith, wrote that justification is "through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." But how?

MORMON "JUSTIFICATION"

A Mormon authority¹ wrote: "What then is the law of justification? It is simply this: 'All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations,' in which men must abide to be saved and exalted, must be entered into and performed in righteousness so that the Holy Spirit can justify the candidate for salvation in what has been done. ...This law of justification is the provision the Lord has placed in the gospel to assure that no unrighteous performance will be binding on earth and in heaven, and that no person will add to his position or glory in the hereafter by gaining an unearned blessing."

THE BOTTOM LINE

You can talk with Mormons. They, like you, sinners, need salvation. Help them receive that unearned blessing, God's free, gracious gift.

Notes: 1. Bruce McConkie. 2. Spencer Kimble. 3. James Talmage. 4. See "self-mastery" and "path to perfection" at lds.org.

START HERE

"THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE:
FOR ALL HAVE SINNED, AND
COME SHORT OF THE
GLORY OF GOD"

see, for example, Romans 3:10-12 and 22-23

"Marvelous grace of our loving Lord
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilled.

"Sin and despair, like the sea waves cold
Threaten the soul with infinite loss;
Grace that is greater, yes, grace untold
Points to the refuge, the mighty cross.

"Dark is the stain that we cannot hide;
What can we do to wash it away?
Look! There is flowing a crimson tide
Brighter than snow you may be today.

"Marvelous, infinite, matchless grace
Freely bestowed on all who believe!
You that are longing to see His face
Will you this moment His grace receive?"