



The LifeLine †

Summer 2022

“Contending for the faith”

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Carol's Corner...

My Loss, God's Gain

I lost my best friend to cancer on May 24th. The cancer may have killed her, but in her case, it didn't win.

I remember first meeting Chevette Kneise in the early 1980's. She had recently been to see Olive Wilcox who had been instrumental in my leaving the RLDS Church. For several years Chevette was having doubts about the validity of the church's history and teachings, and she wanted to be sure that leaving was the right decision. She wanted to hear why I left.

She just wanted to know the truth about the church. It just seemed that she was trying to tie up loose ends that were delaying her decision. Nothing excites me more than someone seeking the truth about the church.

Once Chevette came out of the church, I can't remember a time when she wasn't helping me with the research and writing of my books, tracts and other materials.

I loved the way she did things. She was so polite, so gracious. Her suggestions were always good, but she never got upset when I didn't agree. She was gentle, but strong. If something didn't fit in a particular chapter in my book, she'd speak up.

Because she had spent so much time with me working on the book, *Reorganized Latter Day Saint Church Is It Christian?*, I wanted her to be a co-author with me. But because some of her family members are still part of the church, she turned me down. Because my eyesight has progressively gotten worse over the years, I consider the most recent edition of the book as her book as much as mine.

Over the years we worked hard but got a lot done. I got to see that she genuinely had heart for Jesus and for

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Will Perfection Get You to Heaven?

1 John 3:4 provides us with a definition of sin, "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness." The Apostle Paul further clarifies the issue of sin when he writes in Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Despite these biblical truths, there are followers of Joseph Smith that believe that they are not sinners, and by being sinless achieve perfection in the eyes of God.

Tish Harrison Warren, a priest in the Anglican Church in North America writes in a March 6, 2022, op-ed piece in the *New York Times*, "One of the things that's most difficult to swallow about Christianity is the

idea that normal, nice people are sinners, that we are born sinful and can't elude being a sinner by being moral or religious enough."

She continues, "It can seem gentler and kinder to think of human beings as basically good, our intuitions basically correct and our motives basically pure. But then we run into the hard facts of greed, genocide, abuse, oppression, lies, tyranny, hatred, jealousy, violence, murder, enslavement and even mundane selfishness, impatience, arrogance or resentment in our own heart."

So, which is it? Are we sinless or sinners? Traditional Judeo-Christian belief says that sin became part of human life when Adam and Eve chose to listen to Satan's deception instead of obeying God's instructions not to eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Because of their disobedience, they were banished from God's presence. As their imperfect progeny, we inherit their same fate.

Shortly afterwards God introduced a way that human sins could be forgiven, albeit temporarily—by offering to God the blood sacrifice of a firstborn, unblemished male animal from one's herd. But the sacrifice only covered sins that preceded it, not those that followed, necessitating repeated sacrifices.

Another, more difficult way, was also available—keep all of God's commandments. But only one human in all of history accomplished this feat, Jesus.

So why didn't they succeed?

rooted in pride. The religious leaders in Jesus' day were obsessed with meeting every minute detail of the law and were convinced that they had it covered in their human strength to the point that they missed the Messiah altogether."

Those of us in the United States are familiar with the phrase, "pull yourself up by your own bootstraps." Our culture expects us to be rewarded for our labors. The thought is that the harder we work, the more that we will gain.

But the way to receive the reward

It's been said that perfection is a lot like a hamster spinning endlessly on its wheel.

of spending eternal life with God puts that approach on its head.

The answer can be seen in the degree to which God is perfect. He is perfect in all ways, in all places, all the time. There is no deviation from His perfection. His standard is so much higher than anything humankind can begin to imagine. Humans who think that they have been sin free use their manmade grading system, not God's. In this classroom, it's God's grading system that counts, not humankind's imperfect one.

King David writes in Psalms 36:2, "In their own eyes they flatter themselves too much to detect or hate their sin."

It's been said that perfection is a lot like a hamster spinning endlessly on its wheel. You'll never arrive at your destination and only wear yourself out and lose the joy in the process.

Michael Martin, president of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) wrote recently, "...there's the example of the Pharisees to demonstrate that perfectionism can likewise be

Paul writes in Ephesians 2:8-9, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." In Galatians 2:21 he notes further, "I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Just how does one receive this "gift of God"? Thankfully Jesus allowed his life to be taken from him through the brutal act of crucifixion. The one sinless person in all of history became the perfect sacrifice through which everyone who believed in and followed him could be reconciled to the perfect God and receive eternal life with Him.

Followers of Joseph Smith sometimes say that believing about Christ is too easy, too simple; surely it can't be enough. They go on to say that if someone claims to believe about Jesus Christ and claims to be a

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those who didn't know Him as their savior and lord.

It's because of her love for Jesus, that cancer didn't win. The disease may have caused her to suffer the last seven months of her life, but because she wholeheartedly believed Jesus' words, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6) that she is now with the Father and His son. They are in a place where there are no more tears, and no more pain—heaven.

Along with her family, I grieve for the lose of Chevette, my best friend. But at the same time, I'm happy for her, too.



Chevette Kneyse
1947-2022

...“Perfection” continued from front

Christian, they have a free pass to continue sinning. Perhaps.

We would suggest that a confession of faith from the head and not from the heart falls short of what God requires in a true and complete confession of faith. The Apostle John quotes Jesus in John 11:25, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die...." Note, he did not say, "believe about me." Instead, he said, "believe in me."

A confession of believing in Christ from the heart will cause a person to take his or her confession seriously. They not only say that they believe about Jesus, but they choose to give Christ authority

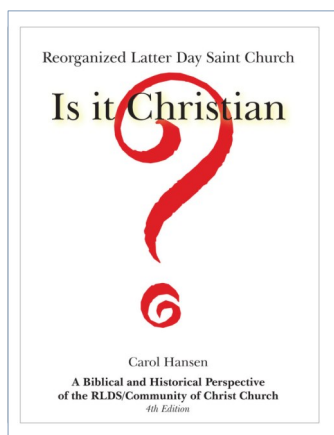
over their life rather than keeping that authority to themselves. As a result, they will strive to avoid sin at every turn. Will they succeed? Probably not.

But instead of worrying whether or not they've done enough to merit spending eternity with Him, they can be assured that all their sins, past, present and future have been paid for by Christ's death on the cross. In God's eyes they are now as sinless as Christ. God's standard of perfection has been reached by the most significant gift ever.

In Philippians 3: 4b-6 the Apostle Paul shares what high status as a Jew he had prior to accepting Christ, "If someone else thinks they have reasons to put

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Resource of Interest



Reorganized Latter Saint Church *Is It Christian* is available on the Resources page at www.lifeline2rlds.org

...“Perfection” from above

confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless."

But he continues in verse 7, "But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith." (Phil 3:7-9)

Those of us who have set aside the worry that a follower of Joseph Smith always has of wondering whether they've been good enough or done enough, and replaced it for the grace of Christ's free gift of salvation, understand what we're saying here. We understand a new sense of freedom that we never had when we followed Joseph Smith's scriptures, teachings and doctrine. We follow Christ's teachings and serve Him not because we have to, but because we want to. It's our way of saying "thank you" to Jesus.

We encourage you, dear reader, to share the freedom from any uncertainty about eternal life with your family and friends who continue to believe Satan's deceptive belief that salvation requires work. Help them get off the hamster wheel of perfection.

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