



The LifeLine



Winter 2022-23

“Contending for the faith”

lifeline2rlds.org

Carol's Corner...

Families and the Holidays

Family gatherings over the holidays for some families can be a mixture of love and walking on eggshells. Several in my family have chosen to leave the RLDS church, but one of my sisters has not.

I think I know what the problem is, she doesn't want the truth, she just wants to be right. Its all about her pride. Many years ago, I was in the same place she is in today. When it came to my beliefs about the church and Joseph Smith, I, too was a hard nut to crack.

I understand how difficult it is to give up something that's as close to us as our faith. But despite the difficulty, I wanted the truth. Sadly, I don't think that's the case with my sister. She's taken to heart the church's scripture, "...lay the foundation of this church,...the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth,...." (D&C 1:5e).

I remember when I first learned that Joseph Smith was a false prophet and that the church was untrue. It broke my heart.

Despite the differences between the seven of us sisters and cousins when we get together every other month, we love each other and have a great time. We realize that if the topic of the church came up, one of us could resent that and might stop attending. Our relationship with her is too important to let that happen.

We've tried to witness to her in the past but without success.

Convincing my two other sisters to leave the church was relatively

See "Carol" on next page...

Your Best Defense Against Fuzzy Thinking

If you've ever gotten a new car, it probably came with an owner's manual. Reading it gives the owner the best way of learning not only about all the new car's features, but also about how to maintain and care for it. But have you ever taken the time to read your car's owner's manual from cover to cover?

Those of us who earlier in life were part of the Community of Christ, the RLDS Church or one of its breakaway groups likely have not read the owner's manual for life, the Bible. Instead, we were encouraged to read the *Book of Mormon*, a book that the church designated as holy scripture. But instead it was a book written from Joseph Smith's imagination using his flawed theology and plagiarizing verses from the King James version of the Bible. It doesn't help that the book also is riddled with anachronisms and irreconcilable inconsistencies. We also might have been encouraged to read the Inspired Version of the Bible, a book that Joseph Smith claimed to have re-translated. He accomplished this by deleting portions, adding verses and generally re-writing portions to more accurately reflect his false theology.

If your experiences with Joseph Smith's scriptures turned you off from reading an authorized version of the Bible, please re-think your position. No other book can better prepare you to live a God honoring life than the Bible. After you've read the Bible from cover to cover once, read it again. Each time you read a verse or chapter in the Bible it will speak to you again, but perhaps differently than before because you are not the same person facing the same challenges as you did during the previous time you

read a passage.

While the Bible was written many years, even centuries ago, it's a story about human beings—fallible, imperfect, sinful human beings, not that much different from people today. We get to read about men and women whose humanity has shown through in both their mistakes and their victories—mistakes and victories that we can learn from. The Psalms contain verses of worship as well as prayers of pain crying out to God. Plus, the New Testament contains inspiring instructions from Christ and his apostles.

If your experiences with Joseph Smith's scriptures turned you off from reading an authorized version of the Bible, please re-think your position.

For example, if you find that you're not a very patient person, read the account of Abraham and Sarah's struggle of getting pregnant. Even though God had appeared to Abraham at age 99 and told him that he would be "the father of many nations," (Gen 17:3) the Bible tells us Abraham's response. He laughed and said to himself how could Sarah get pregnant for the first time at age 90. But it happened, just as God said it would. It wasn't until after Abraham turned 100 that Sarah gave birth to their son, Isaac.

While patience was one of Abraham's attributes, even greater ones were his faith and obedience. On the way to the place where Abraham had been told by God that he was to sacrifice his son Isaac, Isaac asked his father where the lamb was for the sacrifice. Abraham replied, "God himself will provide." (Gen. 22:8) Abraham proceeded to arrange the wood, bind his son, lay him on the wood, and pick up his knife, but was

stopped at the last second by an Angel of God. The Angel noted Abraham's obedience—that he was willing to show it by sacrificing his son. In the end, God provided a ram for the sacrifice and Isaac was spared. It is likely that the list of fathers today willing to do what Abraham initially was told to do to Isaac, would be extremely short.

Then there is the Old Testament story of Joseph who as a young boy, was sold into slavery by jealous brothers. He ended up in Egypt. While there he experienced greater highs and lows in his life

that many of us today could barely imagine. His greatest high came after he had interpreted a dream of Pharaoh's. Joseph told Pharaoh

that the dream indicated seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. As a result, Pharaoh put Joseph, then at age 30, in charge of the entire kingdom, making him the second in importance only to Pharaoh. Joseph, now responsible for the entire kingdom, had Egyptians set aside grain during the plentiful years so that it could withstand the years of famine.

But the irony to the story was that when the famine arrived, it was not limited just to Egypt. Joseph's family, including the brothers who had sold him into slavery, were also affected. Some of the brothers had heard about the stores of grain in Egypt, so they went there seeking help. Through a series of events Joseph helped his brothers get food, and eventually revealed himself to them. What they had intended for ill years before had ended in saving them and their country from starvation. Eventually Joseph's family members

See "Fuzzy" on next page...

...“Fuzzy” continued from front

moved to Egypt. Of course, God had a hand in all the events, good and bad, that occurred in Joseph’s life. Today, would we be willing to submit ourselves to God’s plans, especially if he didn’t tell us what His plans were?

Over the years, the Egyptians became less generous hosts of the Israelites, turning them into slaves. After 430 years, God came to their rescue through Moses, and lead them out of Egypt to the land he promised them. Along the way, their disobedience delayed their arrival in what was then known as Canaan. After wandering for 40 years to allow the disobeying generation to die off, they were finally allowed into Canaan with instructions to conquer it.

Because the Canaanites were a pagan people, God’s instructed the Israelites to eliminate them entirely. But again, the Israelites did not fully follow God’s instructions. Despite their failure he eventually allowed them to take over the land and establish themselves in it. The Old Testament continues to tell of more triumphs and tragedies of the Israelites. But over the years, the worst of their sins was disobeying the first and second commandments—the making and worshiping of idols instead of the God who had rescued them from slavery in Egypt.

He could not tolerate this disobedience, so he allowed them to be conquered by the Assyrians and Babylonians. The conquerors destroyed Solomon’s temple and sent the Israelites into exile. Despite his displeasure with them, God demonstrated his love for His people by forgiv-

ing them and making possible their return and the re-building of the temple in Jerusalem.

But there is no greater example of God’s love and forgiveness of humankind than the gift of his only son, Jesus. During his short three-year ministry, no other man has affected human history with his teachings like Jesus. But his greatest impact on history and humankind was becoming the perfect sacrifice, taking our place so that we could be freed from our sins and reconciled to God. He superseded the sacrifices of the Old Testament, which only forgave people of sins they had already committed, but not those yet to happen.

Jesus Christ’s apostles, continue in the latter parts of the New Testament to tell Christians how to conduct their lives as saved beings, what

Continued below...

...“Carol” continued from front

simple—all I had to do was tell them that the church represented a false gospel and that Joseph Smith was a false prophet. I also shared some of his false prophecies with them. Their response: they were willing to take the hard step and give up everything that they believed about the church, and admit that they were wrong.

This holiday season may find you either in the majority or the minority regarding your beliefs about the RLDS church when you spend it with family. I pray that God helps you know what to say at those times.

“Fuzzy” from above...

qualifications church leaders needed to meet and even to watch out for and avoid false teachers and prophets. In the study notes for the third chapter of Matthew in Tecarta’s digital version of the NIV Study Bible we read, “The ‘kingdom of heaven/God’ in the preaching of Jesus as recounted in the Gospels is the reign of God that he brings about through Jesus Christ — i.e., the establishment of God’s rule in the hearts and lives of his people, the overcoming of all the forces of evil, the removal from the world of all the consequences of sin — including death and all that diminishes life — and the creation of a new order of righteousness and peace.”

The Bible ends with Revelation, a glorious

prophesy of who wins at the end of time. We get to read about the winners and how the losers are vanquished before the final battles even start. Before we read Revelation, we only know the benefits of believing and serving Jesus Christ. Afterwards, we see that there will be no doubt about the benefits of being a true follower of Jesus Christ.

While there are reading plans that would help you read your Bible from cover to cover in one year, have you ever taken advantage of them? Or maybe you’re the kind of person that likes to read a book from beginning to end. Regardless, we’d like to make the case, that reading your Bible from cover to cover, not just once but multiple times is not only worth your time, but your life depends on it.

©2022 LifeLine Ministries to RLDS

LifeLine 



MINISTRIES TO RLDS
PO Box 1536
INDEPENDENCE, MO 64055
lifeline2rlds.org

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED