

8 Duped

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Christ taught that evil cannot lead people to become good. This important notion should be understood, as many who have fallen away often believe that their parents, grandparents, and in some cases even their great-grandparents, have been duped or brainwashed. In essence, they are silently screaming that their faithful parents and family are ignorant in their faith, testimony and life experiences. Not surprisingly those who fall away always believe themselves more educated and enlightened. This begs the question: Are the *fruits of Mormonism* so difficult to see within their own families? How would their families be different if they were not Mormons? What kind of lifestyle would they be living, and what kind of family relationships would they have if they were not LDS and hadn't been for generations? Think about it! Can people who have been 'duped' or 'brainwashed' for generations produce the fruits of a true believer? In other words, can that which is evil lead people to become good? Not according to Christ:

22 And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

23 And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.
(Mark 3:22-26)

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. (James 1:17)

18 And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that every good gift cometh of Christ.... For if there be one among you that doeth good, he shall work by the power and gifts of God. (Moroni 10:18, 25)

There are different levels of inactivity, falling away from the faith, and apostasy. There are those who have embraced an advanced stage of apostasy, becoming so anti-Mormon that they cannot leave the faith of other members alone, even within their own family. Some claim that they have a newfound freedom to "love everyone" but at the same time they harbor anger at the organization that has purportedly "brainwashed" and led their family members astray. It becomes their mission to "save" loved-ones and friends by pointing out the error of their faith and belief. They show their "love" by hacking away at doctrine and dredging up the personal failings of past leaders in an attempt to destroy faith. Spiritual experiences only come to those who are living a life worthy of revelation. Many unbelievers seem not to understand testimony and faith or they would realize that personal spiritual experiences might be the basis for an active member's testimony and faith.

Given that mankind understands only the tiniest portion of all the laws and forces that operate in our universe, it is reasonable to conclude that what any of us know for sure is an infinitesimal part of the whole. In other words, what we know and understand perfectly compared to the knowledge

and truth that exists in the universe is minuscule. Yet many assume they know enough about temporal and spiritual domains, dimensions, and unseen realities to make informed decisions about the experiences of other individuals.

No one can judge the spiritual experiences of another. Feelings generated from such an experience are personal and it is foolish to say or deduce that another's spiritual witness or experiences are the effect of a frenzied mind.

The real question is: Who are the ones duped? Those who have the faith and commitment to change their lives for the better, or the one who seeks to destroy the faith of their loved ones? The basis for this rebellion is often, but not always, the desire to live a lifestyle that is incongruent with accepted morality of the Church and their family. The effort by the nonbeliever to enroll and proselyte other family members in this rebellion may stem from loneliness and a desire to not be the only outsider; but more often than not, they seek to satisfy a need to justify their choice. The ego of the natural man must protect itself, seeking some type of justification for falling away. Some become spiritual victims, blaming their disaffection on the supposed wrongs perpetrated against them by ignorant priesthood leaders.

Those who are miserable will seek the misery of those around them (2 Nephi 2:18). Look at the fruits of the active Latter-day Saint and the fruits of the anti-Mormon.

16 Wo unto them that turn aside the just for a thing of naught and revile against that which is good, and say that it is of no worth! For the day shall come that the Lord God will speedily visit the inhabitants of the earth; and in that day that they are fully ripe in iniquity they shall perish.

20 For behold, at that day shall he rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good.

22 And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none—and thus he whispereth in their ears, until he grasps them with his awful chains, from whence there is no deliverance. (2 Nephi 28:16-23)

The spiritual manifestations that a loving God provides will only come to the prepared heart. Signs and testimonies follow the faith of a believing heart, but only on God's time-table and within the framework of His restrictions and rules. To say or conclude that a believer is 'duped' in their spiritual witness is the epitome of ignorance and arrogance. When an intellectual says that the spiritual realm doesn't exist or that messengers from the other world are not real (because it hasn't happened to them), it is as foolish as saying that the country of England doesn't exist because they have never been there and then scorning the reports of those who have. The weakest of men may be inspired to initiate the greatest of changes.

19 The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh—

20 But that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world;

21 That faith also might increase in the earth;
(D&C 1:19-21)

Only one has walked the earth without sin or imperfection. The Lord has chosen to work with the human frailties' and weakness of mind, body and spirit. God can and does use humanity in their weakness to serve others, and in particular He uses those who have spiritually prepared themselves for the tasks that lie ahead. In truth, those who believe they can judge the reality of the spiritual preparation and experiences of another individual are the ones who are duped.