

## Testimony,

What is a testimony?

A Testimony is as Paul declares before Agrippa and Festus in Acts:

### **A Witness of salvation through Jesus Christ the Atonement and Resurrection**

To have a Character requires three things. Likewise, to have a Testimony requires the same three elements. In the scriptural audience of Paul before king Agrippa and Festus, one can see a definite pattern:

Knowledge / Experience

Emotion: The personal processing of that Knowledge and Experience  
Agency” Your actions based on and according to your knowledge and emotion.

#### **What a testimony is not:**

Travel-mony

Love-a-mony

Thank-a-mony

Hope-a-mony

Three important issues with a personal Testimony

1. Not genetic
2. Not easily acquired
3. Not easily kept

#### **1. Not Genetic:**

#### **The Gospel is new to every generation:**

Righteousness and Wickedness lasts “until the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> generation”

Judges, “there rose up a generation that knew not the Lord”

Mosiah, “there rose up a generation that did not remember the words of King Benjamin”

3 Nephi, The rising generation “came unto their own” and “for themselves” and even led their parents to fall away.

4 Nephi is a witness of this spiritual Entropy

## 2. Not Easily Acquired:

Many Members are born to be a Mormon but you must work to become a Christian

**It is said that Wisdom is based on the failures of Experience and Failed experiences are a result of the lack of Wisdom.**

**A Testimony is a “Statement of Fact” the truth “as one “knows” it to be; which must be based on personal experience and knowledge.**  
Therefore:

**Rotic is romantic without the man.  
Can there be a test-imony without a “test”**

**The BoM is a record of a fallen people:  
Empty are the annals of a happy people (4 Nephi)**

Why did Abraham need to be commanded to offer Isaac as a sacrifice?  
Was it so the Lord would know of Abraham’s commitment?

Abraham’s greatest weakness, and at the same time his greatest strength, was his love of God and his love of mankind.

**D&C 101** We all must pass through an Abrahamic Test,  
Which is to be tested in our greatest weakness at our weakest moment.

The greatest growth is usually during pain, or some sort of tribulation.  
Though we don’t see it at the time, Pain and suffering has two consequences or outcomes: it can make you **better or bitter**.

Many who suffer, Members and non-members become bitter, suffering only becomes better when it is shared by those who know have a testimony of the Gospel, and the plan of happiness.

We are counseled or commanded to comfort those who stand in need of comfort and mourn WITH those who have a cause to mourn. This is not only to help

increase our love of mankind but to help others turn their mortal experiences in to the better character building opportunities.

#### **4 Not easily Kept**

Alma 5:

Once you have a testimony and have been born again Alma questions;  
“Can ye feel so now”

There is work, effort and energy that must be expended to maintain and increase a testimony.

To reach the Tree of Life all must use the Iron Rod. No one made it to the tree of Life without “grasping firmly and holding tightly” the iron rod. To make it through the mists of darkness there was only one way. Each individual must make the effort to walk toward the Tree. Pass through the mists of darkness and temptation, trials and tribulations, and the only way anyone made it was by “Grasping” and “Holding tightly” to the word of God.

We are told in Revelation that ‘Christ stands at the door and knocks’ but we must be prepared, we must listen for that knock, we must walk to the door, we must open the door and we must invite him into the homes of our hearts.

The Second law of thermodynamics or entropy rules the temporal day in our physical universe and our spiritual existence while here: Outside energy must be infused into everything if it is to get better or stronger.

Apathy is mental and spiritual entropy, and spiritual apathy is the first step toward apostasy.

#### **Testimony**

For two years in my ward I kept track of the testimonies given in every Fast and Testimony meeting. It was divided into Adults and Youth with Four different categories in each age group.

Over the two years there were a total of 372 Testimonies borne. There was a total of 75 Testimonies that actually bore testimony of Jesus Christ. That is 20% or 1 out of every 5 of the Testimonies in Fast and Testimony Meeting bore testimony of Jesus Christ.

That means **80%** of the testimonies in Fast and Testimony Meetings did not testify of Jesus Christ as the savior.

?? What did this show?

Almost all of the testimonies-- more than 90% said, "I know the Church is true" That is good! There is nothing wrong with stating that fact.

The statistics are that almost 50% of youth between the ages of 18 to 31 are falling away from the church.

### **The big question is WHY?**

There are two fundamental reasons this is happening and four separate contributing factors.

I would like to talk about the two fundamental reasons.

### **The First is that of Christ, His Atonement and Resurrection.**

According to scripture, Joseph Smith and the Prophets the purpose of the Church organization is to make sure that everyone who desires and is able by law to receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ might do so in an organized way.

### **Candy...**

13 And the Lord God hath sent his holy prophets among all the children of men, to declare these things to every kindred, nation, and tongue, that thereby whosoever should believe that Christ should come, the same might receive remission of their sins, and rejoice with exceedingly great joy, even as though he had already come among them.

Mosiah 3:13

17 And moreover, I say unto you, that there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.

Mosiah 3:17

9 O remember, remember, my sons, the words which king Benjamin spake unto his people; yea, remember that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, who shall come; yea, remember that he cometh to redeem the world. Helaman 5:9

12 And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, **because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation,** a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall. Helaman 5:12

The purpose and responsibility of the Church is to administer the Gospel of Jesus Christ making available all that an individual might need to come unto Christ and understand their need of a Savior, a Son of God; to prepare and offer of the emblems of his sacrifice, to provide The ordinances one may wish to participate in, offer a venue to study His word in classes, to be encouraged and edified by the speakers in our Meetings. The Church is to help the individual person come unto Christ by their choice not to **make sure** they come unto Christ but only provide the opportunity. Like the path to the Tree of Life one must choose to begin to walk path through the mists of Darkness along the river of filthy water, keeping an eye on the Fruit and Joy. And this they must do by **grasping firmly and Holding tightly the Iron Rod.**

### **The second element of a Testimony: A Standard**

If one doesn't have a standard then there is no standard. One must choose their spiritual authority. All have been counseled that we trust not in the arm of flesh, Teacher, Professor, Internet site or even our own education.

The prophets have said that if "any teacher high or low in the church, including myself, teach anything that is contrary or is not found in the four standard works of the church, he is but expressing his own opinion."

Joseph Smith said that: "The Book of Mormon is the keystone to our Religion and that a man would get nearer to God by abiding by it's precepts than any other book.

If it is the Keystone to our religion this book should be the keystone to our life.

And what is a Keystone?

That which holds us together making us able to bear the weight, giving us strength to endure.

As Moroni opens the Book of Mormon the Title Page reads, “For the convincing of Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the Living God”

In Joseph Smith Matthew in the Pearl of Great Price The Lord begins the discussion of the last days with this prophetic observation.

22 For in those days there shall also arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch, that, if possible, they shall deceive the very elect, who are the elect according to the covenant.  
JS-Matthew 1:22

37 And **whoso treasureth up my word, shall not be deceived**, for the Son of Man shall come, and he shall send his angels before him with the great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together the remainder of his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. JS-Matthew 1:37

28 Yea, thus we see that the gate of heaven is open unto all, even to those who will believe on the name of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God.  
29 Yea, **we see that whosoever will may lay hold upon the word of God**, which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning and the snares and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery which is prepared to engulf the wicked—Helaman 3:27-29

The Publican and the Pharasiee

Our focus, faith and testimonies must be centered upon Jesus Christ and his Atonement and Resurrection. Our worship and activity is not so much in the Church as it is in the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; Faith and Repentance, Baptism and the Gift of the Holy Ghost.