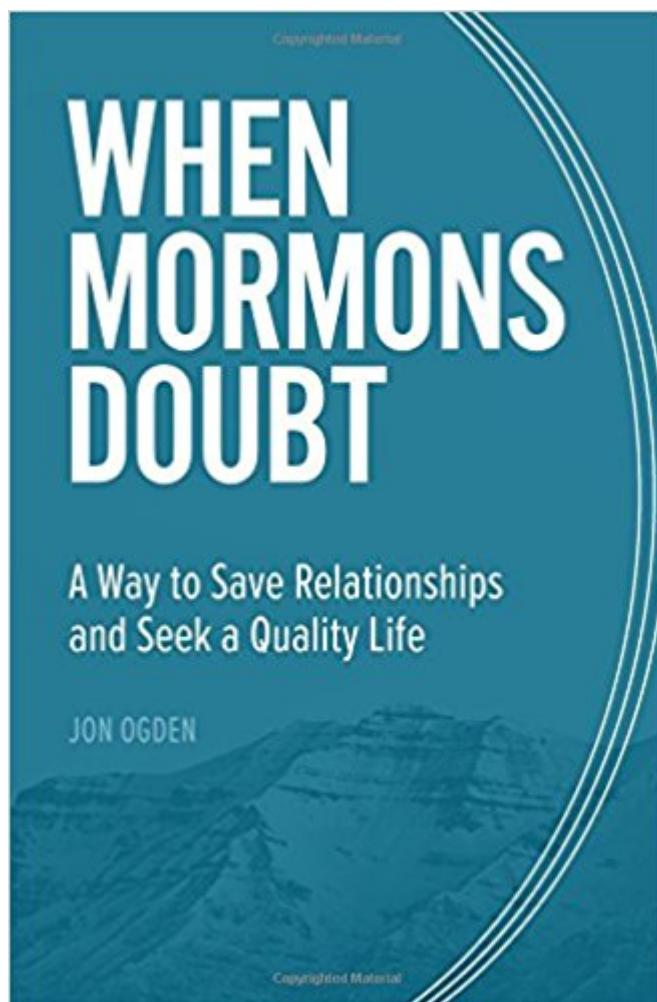


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When Mormons Doubt: A Way To Save Relationships And Seek A Quality Life



Synopsis

What do you do when your religious beliefs differ from your spouse, parent, child, sibling, or friend? For many Mormons, these differences can be heartbreak. This book explores how truth, beauty, and goodness can save our relationships even when we disagree with those we love. This book is for: 1) Mormons who want to better understand a family member or friend who doubts 2) Unorthodox or former Mormons who are looking for ways to talk about their transition with believing family members and friends 3) People who are experiencing a Mormon faith crisis and wondering where to turn. Excerpts from this book can be found at jonogden.com

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Customer Reviews

Jon Ogden has a BA and an MA from Brigham Young University, where he studied methods of civil discourse. He lives in Utah with his wife and two sons.

"When you are ready for a message, the messenger appears." This is the message for me right here, right now. For those going through a faith "transition" (I don't consider it accurate to call it a faith "crisis"--to me it typically is moving to a "higher reality") or understanding those who are going through a transition, this will prove valuable. Got it Friday after work. Finished it early Saturday morning. Lots of ways to preserve or improve relationships with those in a difference place, particularly with respect to institutional religion.

I very much enjoyed reading When Mormons Doubt. Jon Ogden has thoughtfully outlined a path

forward for those of us whose relationships have been strained through a crisis or loss of faith. The purpose of this book is to bridge the gap between doubter and believer and does so by establishing what seems to be a universal common ground: the quality life. This quality life is to come about as we strive to find balance between truth, beauty, and goodness. This truly is a must-read for modern Mormons, but I believe the principles Ogden outlines can be universally applied and I recommend this quick read for anyone.

An interesting book that seeks to address a real struggle and members of the Mormon (or any other) church (or any organization) find that the simple narrative that they believed in does not adequately describe (and may even be in conflict with) a much more complex reality. But in some ways I found the book to be somewhat like eating at a fancy French restaurant with a head cold - physically filling, but missing the subtle essence of the experience - or in this case intellectually filling, but missing or avoiding much of the spiritual nature of what is going on (this may have been the intent of the author). While truth, goodness, and beauty are important, not all versions of truth, goodness, and beauty are of equal importance. A critical part of the discussion might have been how to avoid developing, accepting, or settling for our own version of truth, beauty, and goodness rather than looking outside of ourselves and seeking God's (assuming one believes in a higher being) definition of truth, beauty, and goodness. Or put another way, that (leading off the quote from Richard Bushman), how does someone avoid selecting a version of truth, goodness, and beauty that makes themselves feel that "all things are good in [my] universe" rather than a facing, responding to, and not running from a version of truth, beauty and goodness that pushes and stretches and makes them feel uncomfortable, but in the long run helps them avoid the self centered creation of a new philosophy that agrees with "us" (or "creating God in our own image") to accepting truth, goodness, and beauty from a higher source and seeking "all things are good in [God's] universe." Perhaps this is the missing final chapter of the book.

"Above all, we must see that people aren't corrupt just because their beliefs differ from our own. We must recognize that the world isn't a melodrama, made up of bad guy sand good guys. Instead, the world consists of people with divergent motives and viewpoints" (pg 75). When Mormons Doubt fills a niche we didn't know was empty. It does not go point-by-point through the litany of issues many are having with the LDS Church, but chooses instead to provide a framework for understanding how to maintain relationships in light of differing opinions. That framework is built on three principles: Truth, Beauty, and Goodness. Some focus almost exclusively on truth (is this true or is it false?),

others focus almost exclusively on beauty (I just *feel* that it's so powerful), and the rest focus almost exclusively on goodness (what concrete effects does this have on the world?). The author makes the case for a balance, for an outlook that doesn't privilege any of the three over the others, and that therefore makes room for the complexity of human relationships despite differences in belief, opinion, or even faith community. This is an invaluable addition to the discussion of how to live a loving life in a world full of disagreement.

I recently purchased this book because I lost faith in the LDS church, but my spouse and most of my family is still active in it. As you can imagine, this has caused much stress, tension and pain for all involved on all sides. I feel this book does a fantastic job of helping present ways to bridge the distance between differing beliefs and helps us find suggestions for moving forward by concentrating on things we still agree on. I appreciate the honest evaluation he gave on both sides of the issues, and truly shows the feelings and sentiments that each side feels. I like the way he helps paint the realization of how beautiful life is because of the differences and how we can still find ways to be united and find the beauty in life despite the lack of shared beliefs or traditions. I do believe that regardless of what side you are on, this book will only benefit you if you are willing to go into it with an open mind and heart, willing to understand that your viewpoint is just one perspective, and that none of us can ever be 100% certain of any of our conclusions. I feel encouraged by the message of this book and hope that I can begin to do a better job to implement many of its suggestions. I am eager to strengthen the relationships that have had enormous strain since my faith loss. This book has given me much valuable information and hope that it can be done.

Leaving a faith behind doesn't have to mean losing your family and friends. Loving and accepting someone who chooses to leave your religion doesn't condemn them to a life of bad decisions. With so much fact vs faith and black vs white rhetoric it's no wonder we lose sight of what matters most. When Mormons Doubt provides a framework for both believers and non-believers alike to unite behind the pursuit of a common goal - saving relationships and maximizing well-being. It couldn't have come at a better time, and I can't recommend it enough.

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