

Davis County Ex-Mormon meetup Sunday Sept 07, 2025, 2:30 PM

[All links from Invitations.](#)

How to Find us: Sunday **Sept 07**, 2025 meetup is 2:30 PM at Smiths Marketplace, 1370 W 200 N, Kaysville, UT 84037. Entering Smith's turn right, take the up staircase on the right side of Starbucks, turn right on the 2nd floor at the top of the stairs, take 10 strides passing the lockers to the conference room entrance on the right. **Contact:** Francis 'Nelson' Henderson, 858-668-6943, francisnh12@gmail.com

Our purposes: First, when leaving Mormonism, people often find that they no longer have community or support. Our goal is to provide support for each other and to build community. So, whether you are a member, or left the church recently, or have been out for years, or were never Mormon but are looking for community, come and socialize with us and share your story.

Secondly, we uncover the fallacies, deception, and misinformation employed by the LDS Church to gain control over our lives.

Subject of Discussion: Escape from Freedom

[The Full Invitation with extended comments](#)

[Tale of two Brains-Part1](#)

[Tale of two Brains-Part2](#)

[Was Jesus Married](#)-Speculation by Bishop John Shelby Spong

Meetup Invitation 2:30 PM

Video (8:00)

Video (9:46)

Audio



Love, Union, Integrity - the healthy way

First is the **healthy** way of meeting our need to belong stated by Erich Fromm. Mankind “... is aware of his aloneness and separateness, of his powerlessness and ignorance, of the accidentalness of his birth and of his death. He could not face this state of being for a second if he could not find new ties with his fellow man ... There is only one passion which satisfies man’s need to unite himself with the world and to acquire at the same time a sense of integrity and individuality, and this is love. Love is union with somebody, or something outside oneself under the condition of retaining the separateness and integrity of one’s own self. It is an experience of sharing, of communion, which permits the full unfolding of one’s own inner activity. ... Love is in the experience of human solidarity with our fellow creatures, it is in the erotic love of man and woman, in the love of the mother for her child, and also in the love for oneself as a human being; it is in the ... experience of union. In the act of loving, I am one with All, and yet I am myself, a unique, separate, limited, mortal human being.”¹

Adopted Will - the unhealthy way

Second, is the **unhealthy** way of meeting our need to belong. Erich Fromm describes alternate ways “... in which this union can be sought and achieved. Man can attempt to become one with the world by submission to a person, to a group, to an institution, to God. In this way he transcends the separateness of his individual existence by becoming part of somebody or something bigger than himself and experiences his identity in connection with the power to which he has submitted. Another possibility of overcoming separateness lies in the opposite direction: man can try to unite himself with the world by having *power* over it, by making others a part of himself, and thus

¹ Erich Fromm, On Disobedience: and Other Essays, 1981, 2

transcending his individual existence by domination. ... Both persons involved have lost their integrity and freedom ... The ultimate result of these passions is defeat.”²

“What is restricted is the free, spontaneous expression of the infant’s, the child’s, the adolescent’s, and eventually the adult’s will, their thirst for knowledge and truth, their wish for affection. The growing person is forced to give up most of his or her autonomous, genuine desires and interests, and his or her own will, and to adopt a will and desires and feelings that are not autonomous but superimposed by the social patterns of thought and feeling.”³ Church, and family “has to solve a difficult problem: *How to break a person’s will without his being aware of it?* Yet by a complicated process of indoctrination, rewards, punishments, and fitting ideology, it solves this task by and large so well that most people believe they are following their own will and are unaware that their will itself is conditioned and manipulated.”⁴

“...but, in so far as society itself is composed of de-individualized persons ... People go on blithely organizing and believing in the sovereign remedy of mass action, without the least consciousness of the fact that the most powerful organizations can be maintained only by the greatest ruthlessness of their leaders and the cheapest of slogans. [Follow the Brethren] ...

...the very Churches whose care is the salvation of the *individual* soul ... they too do not appear to have heard anything of the elementary axiom of mass psychology, that the individual becomes morally and spiritually inferior in the mass, and for this reason they do not burden themselves overmuch with their real task of helping the individual... It is, unfortunately, only too clear that if the individual is not truly regenerated in spirit, society cannot be either, for society is the sum total of individuals in need of redemption. I can therefore see it only as a delusion when the Churches try – as they apparently do – to rope the individual into a social organization and reduce him to a condition of diminished responsibility, instead of raising him out of the torpid, mindless mass and making clear to him that he is the one important factor and that the salvation of the world consist in salvation of the individual soul.”⁵

Escape from Freedom⁶

Eric Fromm explains that many people are as eager to surrender their freedom as their fathers were to fight for it. He presents authoritarianism as a significant mechanism for the escape from individual freedom and responsibility. Authoritarianism, he says, is the tendency to give up the independence of one’s own individual self and to fuse oneself with somebody or something out-side of oneself in order to acquire the strength which the individual self is lacking.

² Ibid, 2

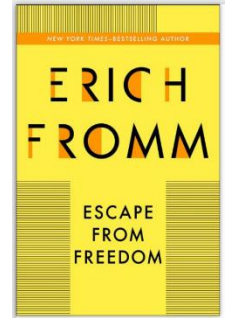
³ Erich Fromm, To Have or To Be, 1976, 165,6

⁴ Ibid, 166

⁵ C.G. Jung, The Undiscovered Self, 1957, 67,8,9

⁶ "[The Discovery of Freedom](#): Man’s Struggle Against Authority", 1943, By Rose Wilder Lane, who is joined by Søren Kierkegaard, and Erich Fromm—three very different thinkers who converge on a powerful shared insight: True morality and authentic freedom begin with the individual’s inner choice—not obedience to an external authority.

By becoming part of a bigger and more powerful whole which is felt as unshakably strong and eternal, one participates in its strength and glory. One surrenders one's own self to a leader, church, nation, institution, or God, and renounces all strength and pride connected with self, one loses one's integrity as an individual and surrenders freedom; but one gains a new security and a new pride in the participation in the power in which one submerges. One gains also security against the torture of doubt.



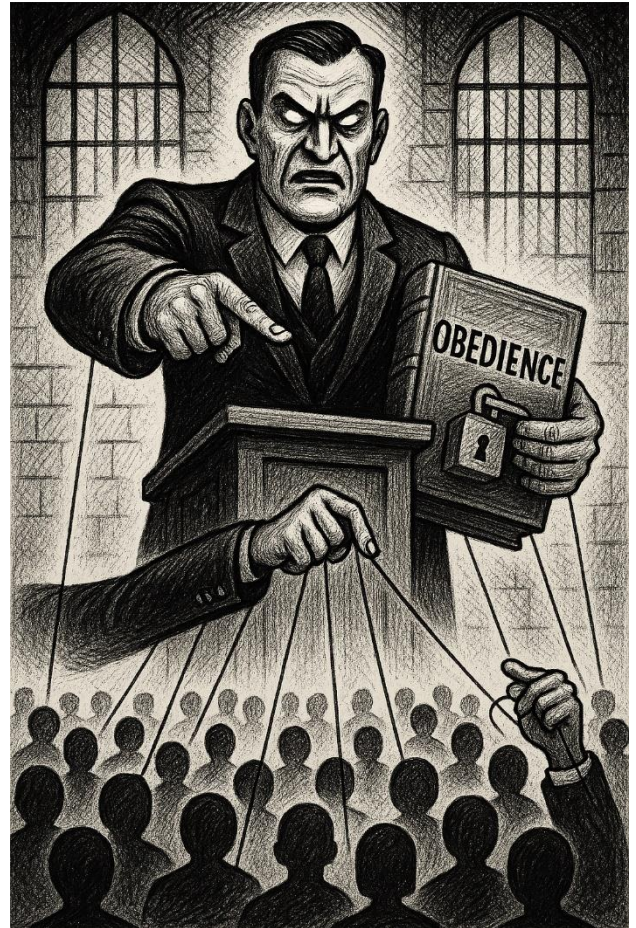
One is saved from making decisions, saved from the final responsibility for the fate of oneself, and saved from the doubt of what the meaning of his life is or who he is. These questions are answered by the relationship to the power to which he has attached himself. The meaning of his life and the identity of his self are determined by the greater whole into which the self has submerged.

This authoritarian character is defined by his conformity and by his suppression of spontaneous feelings. Yet, at the same time he consciously conceives of himself as free and subject only to himself. However, he has consigned his freedom and his individual power to the leadership in submission to them. This submission is revealed by the absence of responsibility he feels for the actions of his leaders. One example of the Mormon authoritarian character's escape from freedom (and associated responsibility) is the total absence of financial accountability required by the contributing membership of their church leadership.

Likewise, I believe the submission of devout Mormons to "worthiness interviews" deprives individuals of their sense of moral or ethical autonomy. It puts entirely too much power in the hands of church officers; "it undermines the individual's sense that they are primarily responsible for their own moral behavior; it encourages deceit and petty manipulation. No other church that I know of exercises this kind of control over its members. No other church that I know of makes such wanton use of disciplinary tools like 'disfellowshipping' and 'excommunications.'⁷"

⁷ John D. Wrathall, Sexual Terrorism, Case Reports of the Mormon Alliance, Vol3 1997, June 1998, 181-2

Faithful Mormon authoritarian characters say that his (or her) individual freedom and autonomy are fundamental religious precepts⁸, yet are silent about or supportive of the forceful repression of the freedom of public expression within the Mormon faith community. Even among the Mormon Intelligentsia this culture of public silence is justified as “the Mormon way.”⁹ Because, to publicly question, or to publicly support the rights of others to public dissent and advocacy, is to refute his overarching devotion to the authority that he wants to control the church and to dominate his life. By his silence he sustains his escape from freedom through devotion to the authorities of the “only true church,” that are required to say what is “right” for all, and to whom he wants to reaffirm his symbiotic promise of *obedience*.



However, my experience is that by this loyalty to authority the development of character is stunted. Normally, love is based on freedom and an equality of power. But, in the authoritarian system, the meaning of love, and self-love are confounded by submission. An attitude of self-denial for the sake of communal unity, and the surrender of one’s own rights and power are perceived as examples of “great love,” duty, and devotion. However, just the opposite is true in that loyalty and *obedience* are placed ahead of self-trust. Because, love, self-love, and self-interest (rather than self-denial) are the essential affirmations of one’s own life, happiness, growth, freedom, and purpose.

Likewise, the teaching of *sacrifice* as an end in itself, is a perversion of true sacrifice if the individual self is in submission to the higher power of an authoritarian system. Rather, sacrifice has moral authority only when individuals act freely in the sense of spontaneity, acknowledging no higher authority or motive than from within themselves.¹⁰

Indeed, one of the most obvious losses of individual self within Mormonism is the submission of “Endowed” Temple goers to the church laws of *obedience*¹¹ and *sacrifice*¹².

⁸ J. Fredric Voros Jr., Freedom of Speech in the House Household of Faith, *Sunstone*, Oct 1991, Volume 15:4, 16 - 22

⁹ Orson Scott Card, Walking the Tightrope, *Sunstone*, April 1989, Volume 13:2, 41

¹⁰ Erich Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*, 1941, 19,21,177,178,182, 266, 295

¹¹ 1. “Obedience”, Family home evening Manual, *Gospel Principles*, Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978, 213 – 219

2. “All That Thou Commandest Us We Will Do,” Melchizedek Priesthood Personal Study Guide 1980 – 81, *Choose You This Day*, Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, 1

3. “Obedience Is The First Law of Heaven”, *Choose You This Day*, 1979, 125 – 130

4. “First Law of Heaven”, *In His Footsteps Today*, For the Sunday Schools of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1969, 49, 156 - 162

5. “What Does It Mean to Sustain the Lord’s Servants?”, A Personal Study Guide for the Melchizedek Priesthood 1975 – 1976, *A Royal Priesthood*, Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1975, 38 – 39

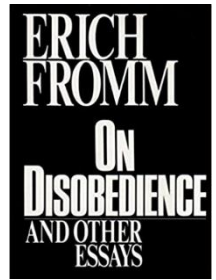
¹² 1. “Sacrifice”, *Gospel Principles*, 1978, 161 – 167

2. *A Royal Priesthood*, 1975, 77, 80

3. “The Law of Sacrifice”, Melchizedek Priesthood Personal Study Guide 1979 – 1980, *He That Receiveth My Servants Receiveth Me*, Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978, 86 - 91

Disobedience, Authenticity, and Courage

According to Hebrew myth, by an act of disobedience, Adam and Eve became free and independent. Likewise, every individual must have the capacity to be disobedient—disobedient to authorities who try to muzzle new thoughts and to the authority of long-established opinions which declare change to be nonsense.¹³ “... I do not mean to say that all disobedience is a virtue and all obedience a vice.” ...However, “If a man can only obey and not disobey, he is a slave; if he can only disobey and not obey, he is a rebel (not a revolutionary); he acts out of anger, disappointment, yet not in the name of a conviction or a principle.



However, in order to prevent a confusion of terms an important qualification must be made. Obedience to a person, institution or power ... is submission; it implies the abdication of my autonomy and the acceptance of a foreign will or judgment in place of my own. Obedience to my own reason or conviction ... is not an act of submission but one of affirmation. My conviction and my judgment, if authentically mine, are part of me. If I follow them rather than the judgment of others, I am being myself; ...¹⁴

“Why is man so prone to obey and why is it so difficult for him to disobey? As long as I am obedient to the power of the State, the Church, or public opinion, I feel safe and protected. In fact, it makes little difference what power it is that I am obedient to. It is always an institution, or men, who use force in one form or another and who fraudulently claim omniscience and omnipotence. My obedience makes me part of the power I worship, and hence I feel strong. I can make no error, since it decides for me; I cannot be alone, because it watches over me; I cannot commit a sin, because it does not let me do so, and even if I do sin, the punishment is only the way of returning to the almighty power.

In order to disobey, one must have the courage to be alone, to err and to sin. But courage is not enough. The capacity for courage depends on a person's state of development. Only if a person has emerged from mother's lap and father's commands, only if he has emerged as a fully developed individual and thus has acquired the capacity to think and feel for himself, only then can he have the courage to say 'no' to power, to disobey.

A person can become free through acts of disobedience by learning to say no to power. But not only is the capacity for disobedience the condition for freedom; freedom is also the condition for disobedience. If I am afraid of freedom, I cannot dare to say 'no', I cannot have the courage to be disobedient. Indeed, freedom and capacity for disobedience are inseparable; hence any social, political, and religious system which proclaims freedom, yet stamps out disobedience, cannot speak the truth”¹⁵

¹³ Fromm, Disobedience, 17

¹⁴ Ibid, 18, 19

¹⁵ Ibid, 21

In dictatorships, silence △ from those at the bottom is required. People's beliefs become hostage to instructions from their Authorities. Recommend to individuals that one become the author of one's own authentic life, and that religious claims to power shall not succeed at condemning faith in one's inner divinity. Contrary to LDS Priesthood claims first made by their philandering treasure digging founder, Joseph Smith, there is no one true path toward God for everyone.

The four (4) sections above explain how Mormon Authoritarianism harms the member. A young person does not suspect the source of temptation is coming from Church activity and Temple attendance. Furthermore, Church leaders have succumbed to the [Authoritarian Temptation](#) and promote it in the Temple as the "Law of Obedience."

