

Why I Left the Mormon Church

What's wrong with my **Mormon** church friends? My son may be dying!

Sixteen-year-old Micah had contracted Rocky Mountain spotted fever while on a youth activity in Wyoming for the **Mormon Church**. His fever was soaring, his muscles weak, his kidneys failing. Thank God that as a professor, I was off work from **Brigham Young University** for the last part of the summer.

I stayed with him day and night. One desperate evening, he worsened and I tore through the neighborhood knocking on doors, looking for two worthy Mormon men to give him a proper oil-anointed priesthood blessing. I believed it would significantly increase his chances of survival. I pounded on neighbors' doors; his own father was out of town. It seemed to take eons before two men agreed.

I had taken Micah to the **emergency room** but couldn't get the doctor to give him the critical antibiotics that were needed as soon as possible for that disease. The doctor said, "No one gets that anymore." He ignored the fact that Micah had been in sheep country, sleeping outside at night with the ticks in the sagebrush.

The nurse overheard the doctor and whispered to me, "Yes, people do get it. My own father had it last year."

Of course, this man was a doctor and we were females. It was expected in the culture not to question males in authority. Micah went home without the drugs.

In parting, though, the doctor said to me, "When he has the characteristic rash and you can prove he was bitten by a tick, come back."

The next morning, Micah had the rash. Not only that, but Someone had placed a large tick in the bottom of my washing machine, in the load containing Micah's shorts from the trek. We went back to the ER, tick in a Ziploc bag, and he got his antibiotics—but by now he was seriously ill.

Now, I considered that tick in the washer a veritable gift from **God**—a **miracle**—but recently, one of the women involved in the youth activity told me she thinks the reason men hesitated to come was that their wives thought I was crazy. I had told them about the miracle of the tick, but they did not believe it. To believe God had done this made me daft.

You see, the **God of Mormonism** has a body of flesh and bone and can't be all places at all times. He requires our works. Mormons are supposed to control their own destinies through righteous living. Illness can be considered a weakness born of unrighteousness/sin.

Now that I look back, I think God was trying to show me something. People who have truly given their lives to Jesus Christ are branches of the Vine—Him—and have access to His unending love when others need it. It was this unconditional love for which we longed.

Perhaps those who did not know the **God of grace** could not possibly give it. A God of works stirs up continual assessment and judgment. But I wasn't seeing it yet.

To help me be brutally honest with myself, maybe God allowed me to be hurt. I was helpless and exhausted from Micah's illness and then angry because of others' disinterest. Maybe I needed a few slaps to wake me from my cataleptic allegiance to the Mormon Church. Maybe only experiences like this could break my trance.

Then I devoured the Bible, and the God of grace appeared in my life. And I will never be the same.

Lynn Wilder is a former tenured professor at Brigham Young University and 30-year faithful Mormon. She tells her story of leaving Mormonism and finding the God of grace in *Unveiling Grace: The Story of How We Found Our Way Out of the Mormon Church*. Currently she teaches at Florida Gulf Coast University, and she and husband, Michael, run the ministry *Ex-Mormon Christians United for Jesus*. They have four adult children and seven grandchildren.