

TO THE POINT



I used to be mean, but I've changed, and I want to share the gospel. How can I overcome my reputation?

First of all, don't let fear stop you. If you have been touched by the Spirit and are trying to repent and change, that is a marvelous thing. Remember, this change happens through the enabling power of the grace of Jesus Christ. With His help, you can become a new person and start to change your reputation. He will also help you share the gospel. Though changing your reputation will take time, it will be worth it. Here are just a few things you can do in that process:

- Apologize to people you know you've hurt.
- Go out of your way to show kindness to people you wouldn't have shown kindness to before.
- Always be sincere and genuine.
- If the people you hang out with are unkind to others, either get them to stop it or stop hanging out with them. Otherwise, people will lump you in with them.
- Consider studying Moroni 7 and praying for charity. ■

The Savior said the **spirit of contention** is of the devil (see 3 Nephi 11:29). What's the **difference** between **disagreeing** and **contending**?

It's normal for people to have different views, and there are times when disciples of Jesus Christ need to stand up in the face of opposition for what we believe. But we need to

state our positions in a positive and factual way without becoming angry, bitter, or insulting. So how do we avoid contentious conflict?

You've probably heard we can "disagree

without being disagreeable." Avoiding contention begins with your motives and desires. The scriptures say that "only by pride cometh contention" (Proverbs 13:10). If you care more about "winning an argument" or "being right," a spirit of contention is almost certain to follow.

Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has

taught some ways to avoid contention: (1) "show compassionate concern for others"; (2) "bridle the passion to speak or write contentiously for personal gain or glory"; and (3) "in humble submissiveness, truly [love] God."¹ Then we can have the Spirit of the Lord with us, not the spirit of contention. ■

NOTE

1. Russell M. Nelson, "The Canker of Contention," *Ensign*, May 1989, 70–71.