

HOW TO DEFEND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM



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HOW HAVE YOU APPLIED THIS?

I know I can show others what I believe by how I treat those around me.
Hunter S.

It's so important to not argue with anyone about their beliefs, but don't be afraid to defend and stand up for your own.
Tori D.

We can help make laws and regulations to help others live a better life.
Andrew H.

challenge you to work with people of other faiths to **improve the moral fabric of the world** and to protect religious freedom. How can you help bring about this restoration of morality in our day and help preserve religious freedom?

1. Be a righteous example. You must **not be in camouflage** as to who you are and what you believe. We need to be the best examples we can possibly be. Collectively, our example will be more important than what any single member or leader proposes.

2. Be civil in your discourse. We live in a world where there is much turmoil. Our faith requires that we **treat our neighbors with respect**. In general conference I pointed out, "There are some who feel that venting their personal anger or deeply held opinions is more important than conducting themselves as Jesus Christ lived and taught. . . . It is appropriate to disagree, but it is not appropriate to be disagreeable" ("We Follow Jesus Christ," *Ensign*, May 2010, 84–85).

3. Be an advocate for religious freedom and morality. This is a time when those who feel accountable to God for their conduct feel under siege by a secular world. Religious freedom all over the world is under attack. It is important for your generation to **become well educated** on this issue and **assume responsibility** for insuring that the religious freedom you have inherited is passed on to future generations.

All religions hold truths, and we should **work together for the common good**. Our joint effort should be to **protect important civic values** like honesty, morality, self-restraint, respect for law, and basic human rights. Our challenge is to help people without religious faith understand that the protection of moral principles grounded in religion is a great benefit to society and that religious devotion is critical to public virtue.

One of the reasons the attack on the moral or religious principles has been so successful is the reluctance of people of faith to **express their views**. Extraordinary effort will be required to protect religious liberty. Our doctrine confirms, "No government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience" (D&C 134:2).

Join with people of all faiths who feel accountable to God in defending religious freedom so it can be a beacon for morality. We caution you to be civil and responsible. We ask that you do this on the Internet and in your personal interactions. Be an active participant, not a silent observer. **NE**

Adapted from a December 2011 commencement address at BYU–Idaho, "The Restoration of Morality and Religious Freedom."

Share Your Experiences

Share *your* experiences in applying this principle and read the experiences of other youth by going to lds.org/go/02M.

