

Hermetically Sealed Systems in LDS Thought

bwv549

A [hermetic seal](#) is one which is entirely airtight. A hermetically sealed system of thought is, by analogy, one which is cutoff from, or virtually impervious to, outside ways of thinking.

In a religious context, a hermetically sealed system of thought may be created when a person accepts one or more assumptions (sometimes accepted unawares) which then prevent them from ever arriving at a conclusion *outside* the prescribed system of thought.



A hermetically sealed vial of neon gas.
http://www.elementsales.com/photo/p2016/nd-gasgeneric-1_np.JPG

Hermetically sealed systems of thought are frequently found in [totalistic groups](#) that use [thought-reform techniques](#), particularly “milieu control”, “mystical manipulation”, “sacred science”, “loading the language”, “doctrine over person”, and “dispensing of existence” to exert influence over their membership.

It is easier to spot hermetically sealed systems of thought in *other* groups. Here are two straightforward examples from the Jehovah’s Witnesses:

Assumed: To love God means to entirely avoid communication with a former Jehovah’s Witness.

Innaccessible: Exposure to criticism from former Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Example:

...should we listen to apostates, read their literature, or examine their Web sites on the Internet? If we love God and the truth, we will not do so. We should not allow apostates into our homes or even greet them, for such actions would make us ‘sharers in their wicked works.’ (2 John 9-11) ([source](#))

Assumed: You will miss the good and only see bad if you focus on the flaws of the organization or leaders.

Innaccessible: Aspects of the organization or the actions or teachings of some leaders may be ethically deficient.



<http://www.crustaceansingles.com/2016/04/inquiring-minds.html>

Example:

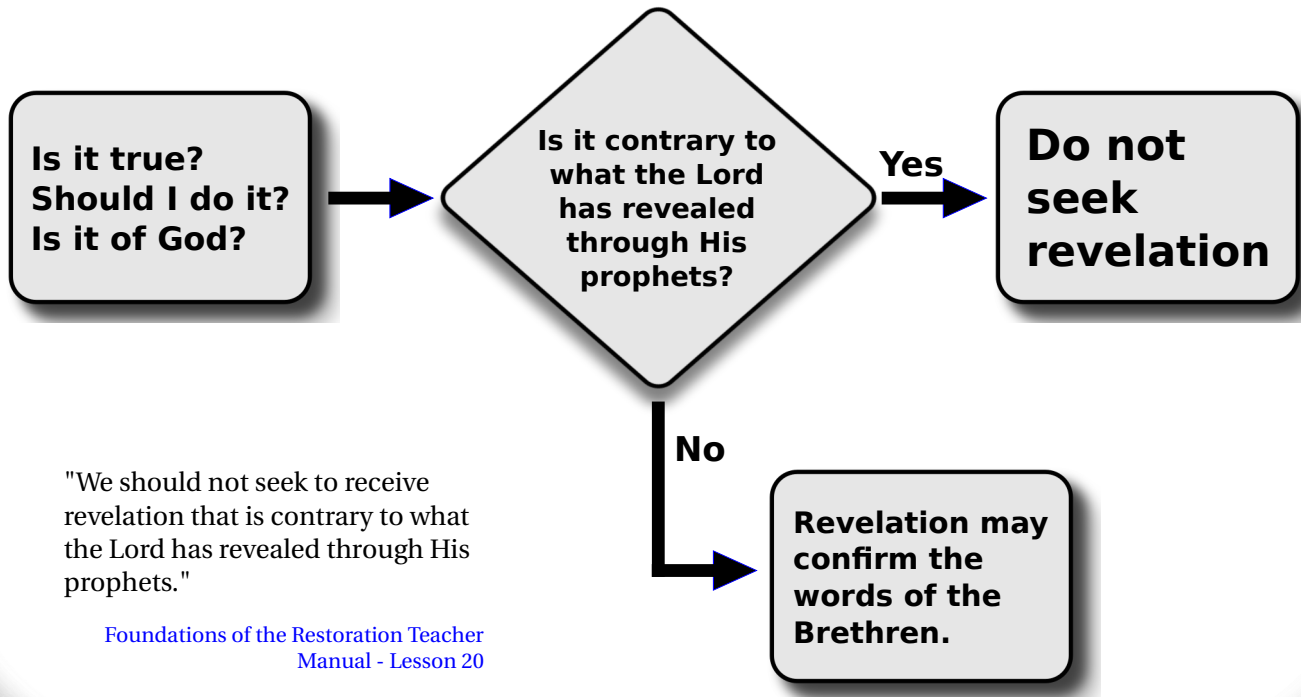
Every person in this organization—every one of Jehovah’s Witnesses including the governing body—we’re all imperfect and thus we are subject to making mistakes. Which means that if you look hard enough, all you will see instead of seeing these amazing things that Jehovah is accomplishing and our tremendous privilege of being part of it, all we are going to see is the errors of men. But when we focus on the good, on the guidance and loving support that we’ve received, aren’t we moved with appreciation to cleave to this body of fellow worshipers. And just look at what Jehovah is accomplishing by means of his imperfect servants. There is no other organization on earth providing spiritual food like the one that we belong to. When we look at all of this, how could we possibly let the failings of just a few people undermine this overwhelming proof of Jehovah’s backing? (From the [2016 “Remain Loyal To Jehovah” regional convention](#))

List of hermetically sealed systems of LDS thought which follow:

1. Do not seek revelation on that which contradicts the Brethren.
2. Revelations contradicting the Brethren are not from God.
3. All answers to prayer are correct.
4. Follow Moroni's Promise to know that the Book of Mormon is true.
5. Only the ignorant and proud disagree with accepted LDS doctrine.

A Hermetically Sealed System (#1)

**Do not seek revelation on that which
contradicts the Brethren**

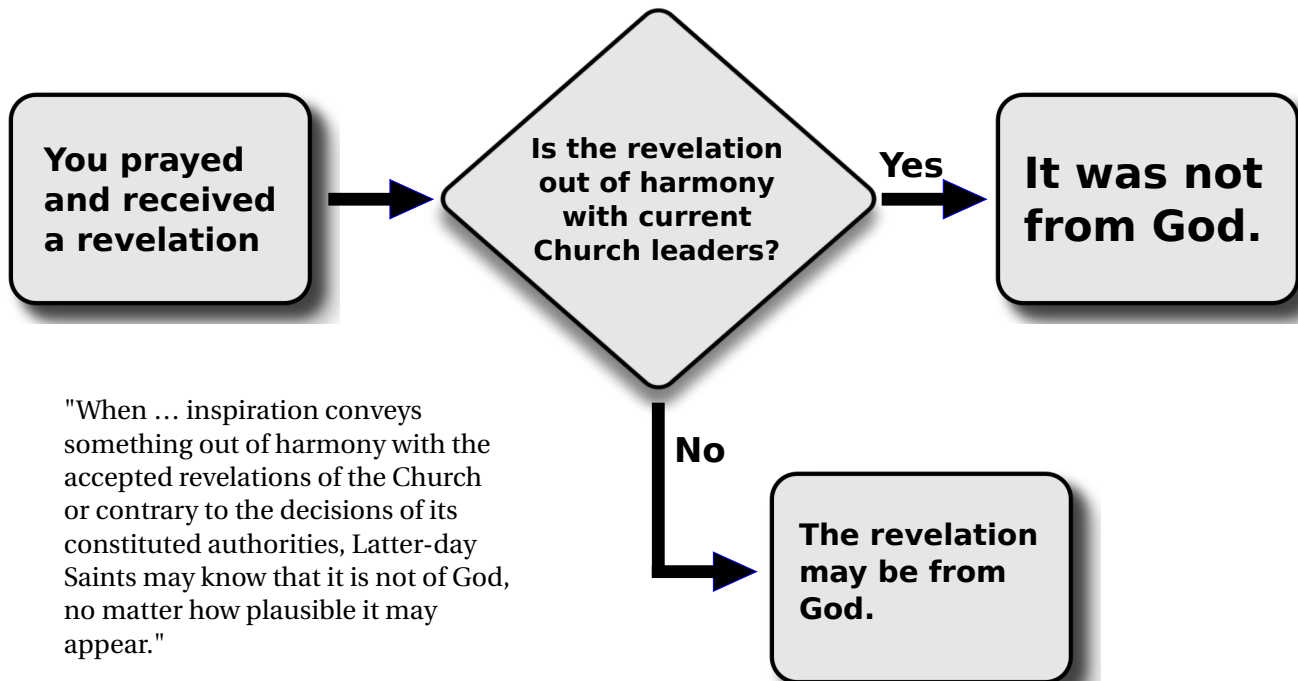


INACCESSIBLE

**Perhaps a revelation
from God may
contradict what was
purportedly revealed
to LDS leadership.**

A Hermetically Sealed System (#2)

**Revelations contradicting the Brethren are
not from God**



"When ... inspiration conveys something out of harmony with the accepted revelations of the Church or contrary to the decisions of its constituted authorities, Latter-day Saints may know that it is not of God, no matter how plausible it may appear."

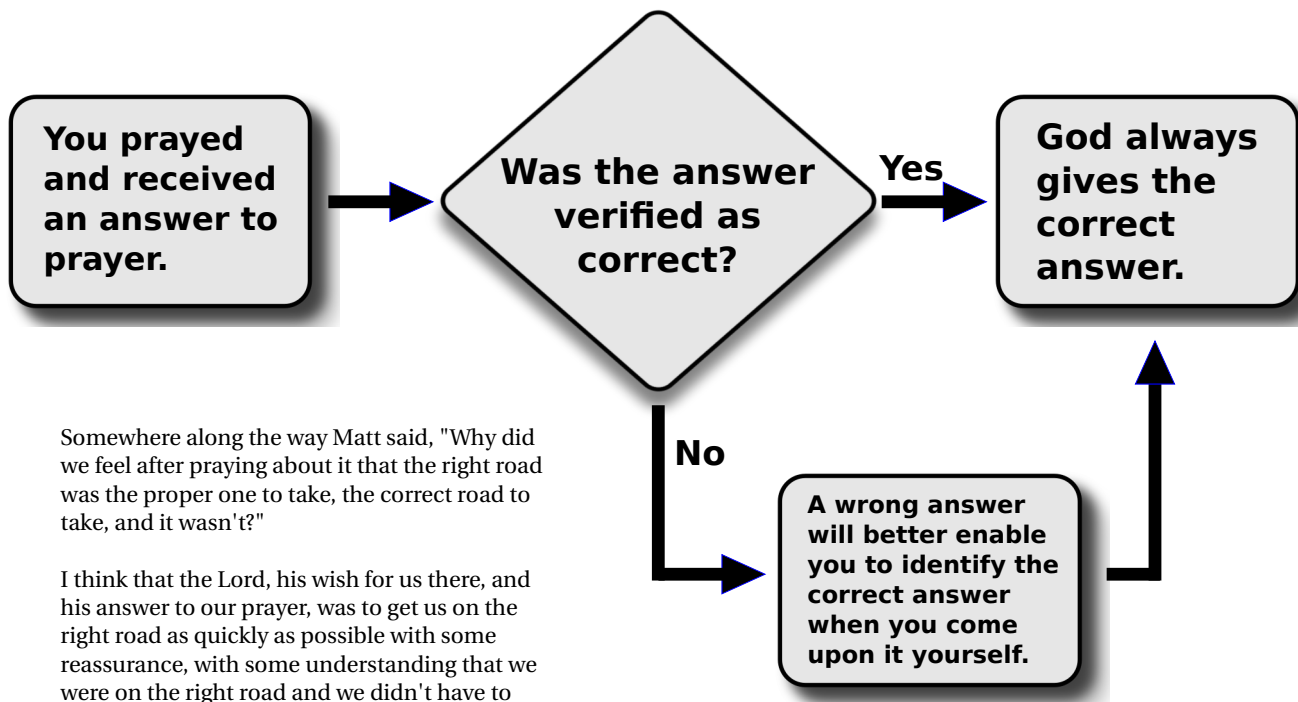
D&C and Church History Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual
Lesson 6: "I Will Tell You in Your Mind and in Your Heart, by the Holy Ghost"

INACCESSIBLE

**Perhaps a person
may receive
revelation from God
which contradicts
the decisions of the
current leadership.**

A Hermetically Sealed System (#3)

All answers to prayer are correct



Somewhere along the way Matt said, "Why did we feel after praying about it that the right road was the proper one to take, the correct road to take, and it wasn't?"

I think that the Lord, his wish for us there, and his answer to our prayer, was to get us on the right road as quickly as possible with some reassurance, with some understanding that we were on the right road and we didn't have to worry about it.

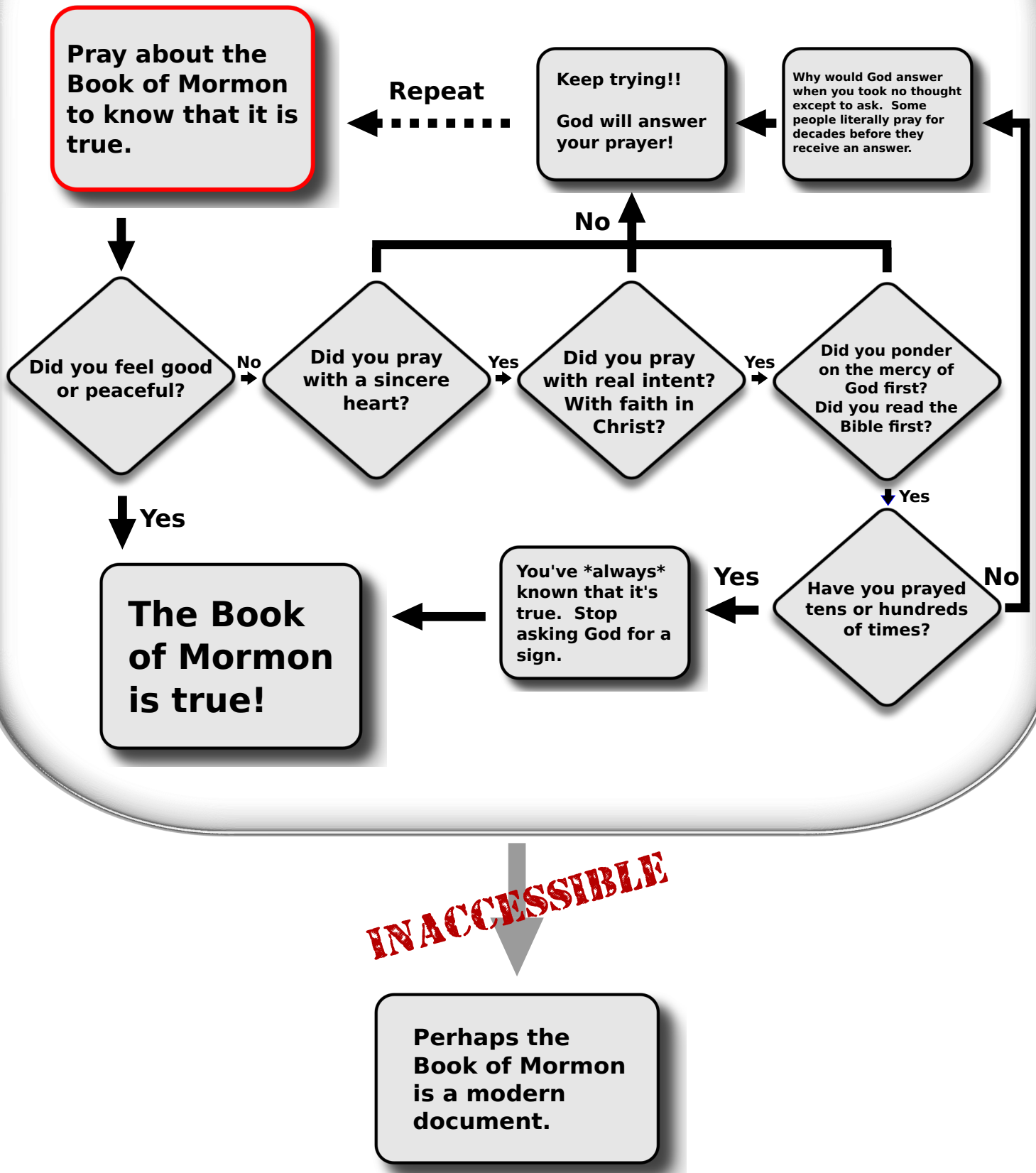
Elder Jefferey R. Holland
Mormon Message: Wrong Roads

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Perhaps an answer to prayer may be wrong.

A Hermetically Sealed System (#4)

Follow Moroni's Promise to know
that the Book of Mormon is true



A Hermetically Sealed System (#5)

**Only the ignorant and proud disagree with
accepted LDS doctrine**

**Someone
varies with
accepted LDS
doctrine.**

**Is the person
extremely
knowledgeable
on the topic?**

Yes

**They are proud and
self-vaunting and
read by the lamp of
their own conceit.**

No

**They are hopelessly
ignorant due to
their indolence and
sloth.**

**Beware the
lazy and the
proud—both
are ignorant.**

Among the Latter-day Saints, the preaching of false doctrines disguised as truths of the gospel, may be expected from people of two classes, and practically from these only; they are:

First—The hopelessly ignorant, whose lack of intelligence is due to their indolence and sloth, who make but feeble effort, if indeed any at all, to better themselves by reading and study; those who are afflicted with a dread disease that may develop into an incurable malady—laziness.

Second—The proud and self-vaunting ones, who read by the lamp of their own conceit; who interpret by rules of their own contriving; who have become a law unto themselves, and so pose as the sole judges of their own doings. More dangerously ignorant than the first.

Beware of the lazy and the proud.

Teachings of Presidents of the Church:
Joseph F. Smith, (2011), 113–21

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**A knowledgeable,
humble, spiritually-
minded person may
justifiably be at
odds with accepted
LDS doctrine.**