

# Consequences of membership in the LDS Church

	Helps	Harms
<b>epistemology</b>	Members are taught to pay careful attention to impressions and feelings which may be useful in making choices which resonate with their core values.	The manner in which truth is evaluated in the church may lead members to embrace a 'magical' world view where legitimate evidence is neither sought after or trusted and feelings are given too much weight in the decision making process.
<b>family</b>	An emphasis on family, its structure, and associated activities often produces functional families displaying highly desirable characteristics.	Doctrines concerning family structure now and in the hereafter can generate significant family strain when a family member doesn't fit the traditional mold.[1]
<b>resource commitment</b>	The sacrifices demanded of full church activity encourage members to become good at managing limited resources. Significant service to members and the community is often rendered.	Activity in the Church requires a tremendous commitment in money, time, and effort—families are often stressed by those demands. At the same time, the church itself both tolerates and encourages inefficient processes in the name of providing service opportunities[2] raising the question as to whether a family can achieve greater good in other ways.
<b>women</b>	The general deference and consideration shown to women stands in sharp contrast to the objectifying and belittling behavior that is pervasive across many modern subcultures.	The way in which church structure and teachings implicitly and explicitly devalue women while simultaneously putting them on a pedestal is demoralizing to many girls and women and results in varying degrees of misogyny in its men and boys. [3]
<b>sexuality</b>	Members tend to respect sexuality and are mindful of the negative consequences of sexual relationships outside of marriage. For instance, active LDS are by far the most successful group at avoiding pre-marital sex.	The Church's teachings on modesty and chastity are infused with an overabundance of guilt and shame which may be counterproductive to building moral and chaste individuals who are able to live a healthy sexuality within marriage.[4]
<b>ethics and morality</b>	In a variety of ways, members are taught to consider and value the well-being of others, producing morally minded individuals.	An overemphasis on rules and sin can contribute to pathologies like scrupulosity, stunt moral reasoning, and lead to excessively judgmental attitudes.
<b>leadership and conflict resolution</b>	Members take turns in leadership and supporting roles which builds leadership skills and may help them to be able to effectively contribute to other organizations.	An overemphasis on avoiding contention and following leaders without criticism creates a culture where avoidance is the preferred conflict resolution style among Latter-day Saints.[5]
<b>education</b>	The Church emphasizes obtaining an education and living a life of continual education, so most members obtain educational certificates, are well-read, and capable of complex thought.	Many members tend to avoid learning about "secular" topics that might impinge upon LDS belief. [6] Members also tend to avoid examining the LDS faith with same level of skepticism or scrutiny they would apply to any other topic.
<b>relationships and community</b>	The Church runs programs that encourage members to visit one another and look after one another.	The Church inadvertently encourages members to categorize/label people relative to our/their relationship to the church and to relate with them based on our church assignment.

[1] For example, if a family member chooses to leave the church, marry a non-member, or chooses a gay lifestyle.

[2] In referring to the new mill and pasta plant, "the plant could have been built to be almost entirely automated. 'But we designed it to provide opportunities to give service.'" (<https://tinyurl.com/lds-pasta-plant>)

[3] <http://www.beliefnet.com/columnists/flunkingsainthood/2011/04/mormon-women-are-mens-equals-kind-of-sort-of-maybe.html>

[4] <http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/3091773-155/op-ed-mormon-culture-has-fostered-some>

[5] <https://imgur.com/F1eCWOL>

[6] For example, many members avoid delving into human evolution, human sexuality, climate change, and modern biblical criticism. If they do study them, it is with trepidation or only with an eye to garnering support for the LDS viewpoint.

*Acknowledgment: several of the listed harms were adapted from the writing of Donald Cohen.*

See *The Pros and Cons of Mormonism* for an in-depth analysis of helps and harms.