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Chapter 29

The Lord's Law of Health

Our Bodies Are Temples of God

One of the great blessings we received when we came to earth was a physical body. We need a physical body to become like our Heavenly Father. Our bodies are so important that the Lord calls them temples of God (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19–20). Our bodies are holy.

Because our bodies are important, our Father in Heaven wants us to take good care of them. He knows that we can be happier, better people if we are healthy. The Holy Ghost can be with us if our bodies and minds are clean. Our Father knows that we face temptations to treat our bodies unwisely or to take harmful things into them. For this reason He has told us which things are good for our health and which things are bad. Much of the information God has given us concerning good health is found in Doctrine and Covenants 89. This revelation is called the Word of Wisdom.

We must obey the Word of Wisdom to be worthy to enter the temple. If we do not obey the Word of Wisdom, the Lord's Spirit withdraws from us. If we defile the "temple of God," which is our body, we hurt ourselves physically and spiritually.

We Are Commanded Not to Take Certain Things into Our Bodies

- What has the Lord commanded us not to take into our bodies?

The Lord commands us not to use wine and strong drinks, meaning drinks containing alcohol. The First Presidency has taught that strong drink often brings cruelty, poverty, disease, and plague into the home. It often is a cause of

dishonesty, loss of chastity, and loss of good judgment. It is a curse to all who drink it. (See “Message of the First Presidency,” *Improvement Era*, Nov. 1942, 686.)

Expectant mothers who drink can cause physical and mental damage to their children. Many automobile accidents are caused each year by people who drink alcohol.

For teachers: Writing lists can generate interest and help learners focus their attention. As class members or family members discuss substances that the Lord has commanded us not to take into our bodies, you may want to ask someone to write their answers on the board or on a large piece of paper. You could do the same when they discuss things that are healthful for our bodies.

The Lord has also told us that “tobacco is not for the body” (D&C 89:8). It is harmful to our bodies and our spirits. We should not smoke cigarettes or cigars or use chewing tobacco. Scientists have shown that tobacco causes many diseases and can harm unborn children.

The Lord also counsels us against the use of “hot drinks” (D&C 89:9). Church leaders have said that this means coffee and tea, which contain harmful substances. We should avoid all drinks that contain harmful substances.

We should not use drugs except when they are necessary as medicine. Some drugs are even more harmful than alcohol and tobacco (which are also drugs). Those who misuse drugs need to seek help, pray for strength, and counsel with their bishop so they can fully repent and become clean.

We should avoid anything that we know is harmful to our bodies. We should not use any substance that is habit forming. We should also avoid overeating. The Word of Wisdom does not tell us everything to avoid or consume, but it does give us guidelines. It is a valuable temporal law. It is also a great spiritual law. By living the Word of Wisdom, we become stronger spiritually. We purify our bodies so the Spirit of the Lord can dwell with us.

- What are some things that are not specifically mentioned in the Word of Wisdom that we should avoid?

We Are Taught That Certain Things Are Good for Our Bodies

- According to the Word of Wisdom, what are some things the Lord says are good for us?

Fruits, vegetables, and wholesome herbs are good for us. We should use them with wisdom and thanksgiving.

The flesh of birds and animals is also provided for our food. However, we should eat meat sparingly (see D&C 49:18; 89:12). Fish is also good for us to eat.

Grains are good for us. Wheat is especially good for us.

- How has the use of these things blessed you?

Work, Rest, and Exercise Are Important

- What do work, rest, and exercise have to do with the Lord's law of health?

In addition to Doctrine and Covenants 89, other scriptures tell us how to be healthy. They tell us that we should “cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; ... cease to sleep longer than is needful; retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated” (D&C 88:124). We are also told, “Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work” (Exodus 20:9). The Lord counsels us not to labor more than we have strength for (see D&C 10:4).

A latter-day prophet has told us that we should keep our bodies healthy. He counseled, “Nutritious meals, regular exercise, and appropriate sleep are necessary for a strong body, just as consistent scripture study and prayer strengthen the mind and spirit” (Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 60; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 46).

Promised Blessings for Living the Lord's Law of Health

- What blessings come to us as we obey the Word of Wisdom?

Our Heavenly Father has given us health laws to teach us how to care for our bodies. The scriptures tell us about God's laws: “No temporal commandment gave I ... , for my commandments are spiritual” (D&C 29:35). This means that His commandments concerning our physical state are for our spiritual good.

When we keep the Lord's law of health and obey His other commandments, the Lord promises to bless us physically and spiritually.

Physically we have been promised good health. As a result of this good health we “shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint” (D&C 89:20). This is a great blessing, but the spiritual blessings He has promised us are even greater than the physical ones.

The Lord promises us that we “shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:19). We will be taught important truths by the Holy Ghost through revelation. President Boyd K. Packer taught: “Our physical body is the instrument of our spirit. In that marvelous revelation the Word of Wisdom, we are told how to keep our bodies free from impurities which might dull, even destroy, those delicate physical senses which have to do with spiritual

communication. The Word of Wisdom is a key to individual revelation” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1989, 16; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1989, 14).

The Lord also promises that the destroying angel shall pass us by. President Heber J. Grant said, “If you and I desire the blessings of life, of health, of vigor of body and mind; if we desire the destroying angel to pass us by, as he did in the days of the children of Israel, we must obey the Word of Wisdom; then God is bound, and the blessing shall come to us” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Heber J. Grant* [2002], 192).

- How can we help children and youth understand the eternal significance of the Word of Wisdom?
- What can we do to help family members or friends who have difficulty obeying the Word of Wisdom?

Additional Scriptures

- Judges 13:13–14; Proverbs 20:1; Isaiah 5:11–12; Daniel 1 (avoid strong drink)
- D&C 59:16–20 (things of the earth for the benefit of man)
- Proverbs 23:20–21 (warning against drunkenness, gluttony, laziness)
- D&C 136:24 (cease drunkenness)