

**George Albert Smith, Lesson 19:
Temporal & Spiritual Blessings from Word of Wisdom**
Monte F. Shelley, 11 Nov. 2012

Quotes

- Eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside. (Mark Twain)
- The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want, drink what you don't like, and do what you'd rather not. (Twain)

Timeline of Events Related to the Word of Wisdom	
Eden	Eat of every tree except the tree of knowledge
Moses	Clean and unclean beasts, fowls, fish
Acts	Gentiles: No 'idol' meat, blood, things strangled (15:29).
1830	D&C 27:2 sacrament does not require bread and wine; However, members continued using wine.
1831	D&C 49, 59. Beasts, fowls, plants for food "to be used, with judgment, not to excess." Wo if kill and no need.
1833	Feb 27. D&C 89. The Word of Wisdom Our first 3 verses were set off as a caption. 89:5–6 Wine OK for sacrament; used as late as 1892.
1834	Several Kirtland disciplinary councils. Required for office Leaders in Missouri did not keep or promote W of W.
1838	Joseph moved from Kirtland to Missouri; Joseph said in Missouri that it should be observed. Missouri president David Whitmer's disciplinary council for Word of Wisdom and other charges
1839	Saints moved to Nauvoo
1844	Joseph died. W of W standard relaxed: (a) medicinal use, (b) prominent leaders urged moderation not abstinence, (c) prominent members did not abstain.
1847	Saints moved to Utah
1851	Brigham proposed that all Saints covenant to abstain from tea, coffee, tobacco, whiskey, ...
1870	Birth of George Albert Smith
1876	D&C 89 caption became the first 3 verses.
1880s	John Taylor urged. Condition for School of Prophets.
1908	Required for local leadership positions
1913	Required to be a missionary
1918	Heber J. Grant: President (1918–1945)
1919	Required for temple recommends
1920	Prohibition amendment; repealed 1933 (Utah last state).
1942	First Presidency. "quit trifling with this law and so ... live it that we may claim its promises." (Oct. Conference)
1945	George Albert Smith: President (1945–1951)
2012	W of W "does not mention the use of caffeine" (lds.org)

1. Typhoid fever as a child (GAS)

When George Albert Smith was a child, he was afflicted with typhoid fever. The doctor ... told his mother that he should stay in bed for three weeks, eat no solid food, and drink some coffee. ...

"When he went away, I told mother that I didn't want any coffee. I had been taught that the Word of Wisdom, given by the Lord to Joseph Smith, advised us not to use coffee. Mother had brought three children into the world and two had died. She was unusually anxious about me."

Young George asked instead for a priesthood blessing. ...

"When the doctor came the next morning, I was playing outside with the other children. He was surprised. He examined me and discovered that my fever was gone and that I seemed to be well. I was grateful to the Lord for my recovery. I was sure that he had healed me."

2. Loving counsel from our Father (GAS)

I look upon the Word of Wisdom as kind advice of our Father in heaven, who desires to see His children become more like Him. ... I take it as the fatherly counsel of one who, knowing what I needed, said to me: "My son, these things are not good for you, and if you will avoid them I will give you the companionship of my Holy Spirit and joy while you live in the world and in the end eternal life." How foolish I would be then to partake of these forbidden things, having the assurance that it is the counsel of the Lord I should abstain therefrom. I would feel under condemnation if I should partake of them, when He who knows better than anybody else says that they are harmful, and has warned me against them. ...

He thought it of enough importance to give it unto us, and to warn us, and if He who knows all things thought it necessary to give advice and counsel upon these temporal matters, how carefully we, who know not what the morrow has in store for us, should observe that divine counsel. I feel that the Latter-day Saints have in the Word of Wisdom a law that will exalt them and lift them above those who fail to keep it.

3. The Lord promises mental and physical health (GAS)

Our Heavenly Father not only tells us what we should avoid, but tells us what we may use with profit. He has said to us that all grain, all wholesome herbs, the fruit of the vine etc., are good for man. Flesh of beast and fowls of the air; and these things he refers to we may use with prudence and thanksgiving; and I want to emphasize with thanksgiving.

We observe that compliance with the laws of health produces mental and physical strength, and we discover that through disobedience thereto, mental and physical deterioration follows. It is our Creator, the Father of our spirits, ... who has said that certain things referred to in that revelation are not good for us. He has made us valuable promises, if we will obey this law,— promises of wisdom, of health and strength, and that the destroying angel shall pass us by and not hurt us, as he did the children of Israel [see D&C 89:18–21].

4. Obedience strengthens faith (GAS)

I am fully convinced that the Lord in His mercy, when He gave us the Word of Wisdom, gave it to us, not alone that we might have health while we live in the world, but that our faith might be strengthened, that our testimony of the divinity of the mission of our Lord and Master might be increased, that thereby we might be better prepared to return to his presence when our labor here is complete. I fear that as sons and daughters of Zion we sometimes fail to realize the importance of this great message to the world.

By a more general observance of the Word of Wisdom, faith will be increased among the Latter-day Saints, and greater knowledge will flow to us as a result; for by obedience to it, there will come a disposition to obey other laws of our Father, and compliance with each insures a blessing.

5. Obedience prepares us for eternal life (GAS)

The Word of Wisdom "has been given to us for our exaltation; not only for our temporal blessing, but to prepare us for spiritual life."

If we believe ... that Jesus is the Christ, and that we are the children of our Heavenly Father, then how careful we should be to conduct ourselves that we may be worthy of the temples we occupy, which were created in the image of God. How many of us realize that by taking into our systems things that our Father has forbidden, we defile the temple of the spirit? How many of us stop to consider that when we give way to weakness of the flesh, we

deprive ourselves of opportunities that await us in the future, and cut ourselves off from the blessings that the Lord hath in store for the faithful?

6. Best way to teach it is to live it (GAS)

The best evidence of our faith in that law, that we believe it came from God, is a consistent observance of it in our lives. We may preach it all day long, but if we transgress it in practice, our example may be disastrous to those we love better than life, for they will feel that they can safely follow where we lead.

7. Why do we have this lesson for High Priests?

8. Temptation to judge those who smoke or drink

Do I help them feel welcome or uncomfortable at Church?

Do I treat them like the Pharisees treated publicans and sinners?

If all our weaknesses had a distinctive smell like tobacco smoke, none of us would feel comfortable in church.

9. Changing habits (Change)

Nothing is impossible ... for the one who does not have to do it. Changing my life is simple, but not easy.

Change Strategies:

- Identify crucial moments: (when, where, how tempted)
- Create vital behaviors (What to do when tempted)
- Engage all six sources of influence
- Turn bad days into good data (learn from experience; revise)

Six Sources of Influence

You run out of gas just before reaching the top of a hill. If you can get to the top, you can coast downhill to a gas station. One man is not strong enough to push the car. If 6 equally strong men were to push your car, some uphill and some downhill, how many you would need to push the car uphill?

	Motivation	Ability
Personal	1. Pros and cons	2. Skills needed (do instead?)
Social	3. Peer group	4. Accomplices to friends
Structural	5. +/- Consequences	6. Change environment

Nurse smoker: When called to resuscitate a patient, she took stairs but stopped gasping for air. (1) Default future, (2) stress and distraction skills, (3&4) turned accomplices into friends, (5) save \$400 a month, (6) removed ashtrays/cigarettes, avoided places.

Heroin addicts: In 1970, 69,000 soldiers were returning home from Vietnam addicted to heroin. Leaders worried that hospitals and jails would be overwhelmed. However, 88% kicked habit shortly after leaving Vietnam. All 6 influences were different at home. Rehab facilities have much lower success rates, because when they leave, the 6 influences are the same ones that led to the addiction. (Change, 193)

Counselor asked an alcoholic woman: What would you do if you did not drink? After 3 days she called and said she did not know.

Plate size: Kids with large plates ate 70% more. People eat 92% of what is on their plate regardless of size. Changing plate size is one of the easiest ways to reduce food consumption.

Make what you want easier: (reminders, resources): One father moved the TV downstairs and converted the old TV room near kitchen into a reading and project room. He replaced junk food snacks with fruit snacks.

Erickson: Drink as often as you want. Keep no beer in the house. Walk 1 mile to store, buy one can, walk home, and drink it alone.

Erickson: Smoke when you want. But one pack of cigarettes, put it in the basement, and put matches on the second floor. When you want to smoke, go downstairs, get one cigarette, walk up to second floor get one match, go outside to smoke.

Erickson told a depressed woman to give some of her flowers to people in her church or neighborhood for happy or sad events. Why did this simple change solve her depression problem?

Quotes

Harold B. Lee: The most important of all the commandments of God is that one that you're having the most difficulty keeping today. If it's one of dishonesty, if it's one of unchastity, if it's one of falsifying, not telling the truth, today is the day for you to work on that until you've been able to conquer that weakness. Then you start on the next one that's most difficult for you to keep. (Church News, May 5, 1973, 3)

LDS.org: Despite what was reported, the Church revelation spelling out health practices (D&C 89) does not mention the use of caffeine. The Church's health guidelines prohibit alcoholic drinks, smoking or chewing of tobacco, and "hot drinks" — taught by Church leaders to refer specifically to tea and coffee. (<http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/mormonism-news--getting-it-right-august-29>)

Boyd K. Packer: The Word of Wisdom was 'given for a principle with promise' (D&C 89:3). ... A principle is an enduring truth, a law, a rule you can adopt to guide you in making decisions. Generally principles are not spelled out in detail. Members write in asking if this thing or that is against the Word of Wisdom. ... We teach the principle together with the promised blessings. There are many habit-forming, addictive things that one can drink or chew or inhale or inject which injure both body and spirit which are not mentioned in the revelation. ... Obedience to counsel will keep you on the safe side of life. ("The Word of Wisdom: The Principle and the Promises," *Ensign*, May 1996, 17–18)

The Book of Mormon went on sale at the E. B. Grandin bookstore in Palmyra, New York on March 26, 1830. Two months later, an article came out in a newspaper 25 miles away in Rochester. The heading was, "Imposition and Blasphemy!!—Moneydiggers, etc." Among other things it said, "The book of Mormon—containing the books of Nephi, Nimshi, Pukei, and Buckeye—and contains some [400 to 500] pages." (*The Gem* [Rochester, NY] 15 May 1830)

Sources:

- GAS = George Albert Smith, see chapter in lesson manual
- Paul Y. Hoskisson, "The Word of Wisdom in Its First Decade," *The Journal of Mormon History*, 131–200.
- Change = Kerry Patterson, etc. *Change Anything*, and *Influencer: The Power to Change Anything*.
- Erickson = Milton H. Erickson, therapist, various books
- MFS = Monte F. Shelley, Gospel Doctrine lessons, www.sviewp.com