

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

**Quotes**

- **Book of Mormon: books of Nephi, Nimshi, Pukei, and Buckeye**
- 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)

<b>Timeline of Events Related to the Word of Wisdom</b>	
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	<b>Birth of George Albert Smith</b>
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	<b>Heber J. Grant: President (1918–1945)</b>
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1920	Prohibition amendment; repealed 1933 (Utah last state).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	<b>George Albert Smith: President (1945–1951)</b>
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."

**Later, he used brandy for medicinal use. (Journal 3/10/1905)**

**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?

Preaching to the choir?

- To motivate us to live it, or to help us appreciate it?
- To keep living it when new temptations arise?
- To keep the “do nots” or the “to dos”?
- To help others live the “do nots” or the “to dos”?

#### 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.

**Which methods of influence do most church talks focus on? Personal motivation!**

**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?

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## Conclusion

The last two pages of the handout are from my Gospel Doctrine lesson on the Word of Wisdom.

**W of W = a star to guide us, not a club for beating ourselves or others**

**Brigham Young:** You hear the Elders ... praying for power to overcome their enemies: they want power to strike them blind and ... dead. (JD 8:190, Sept 30, 1860)

When rebuked for speaking kindly of his enemies instead of trying to destroy them. Lincoln said, Do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?"

### Read Harold B. Lee quote

We are all somewhere between natural men and saints. We are not encouraged to destroy the natural man who is an enemy of God, but to become a saint or friend of God. Some may need to improve how well they live the Word of Wisdom, or other commandment. Others may need to become more Christlike in how they treat sinners. May we work on our own most important commandment, and help others with theirs.

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## 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)

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**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](http://www.sviewp.com)

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I frequently reflect upon how much power we need. You hear the Elders of Israel praying for power to overcome their enemies; they want power to strike them blind and to strike them dead. We have seen times, within a few years back, when we would have been glad to have had power to destroy our enemies. (Brigham Young, JD 8:190, Sept 30, 1860)

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**IMPOSITION AND BLASPHEMY!!--MONEYDIGGERS, etc**  
Some months ago a noise was made among the credulous of the earth, respecting a wonderful production said to have been found as follows. An ignoramus near Palmyra ... pretended he had found some Gold Plates ... upon which is said to be engraved characters of marvelous and misunderstandable import, which he, nor no other mortal could divine. These characters he has translated into the English language, and lo! they appear to be no other than the mysticisms of an unrevealed Bible! A person more credulous or more cunning, than him who found the plates, ordered the translation thereof, mortgaged his farm, sold all he had, and appropriated it to the printing and binding of several thousand copies of this pearl, which is emphatically of GREAT PRICE! The book comes before the public under the general title of the Book of Mormon, arranged under different heads, something as follows. The book of Mormon—containing the books of Nephi, Nimshi, Pukei, and Buckeye—and contains some [400 to 500] pages. (*The Gem* [Rochester, New York] 15 May 1830: 15)

## 10. How do ancient and modern temples compare?

### a. Faith in Christ/Jehovah

### b. Washings and anointings

**Mikveh/Baptism:** tomb (death of natural man and desires, symbol of Christ's death; ascend out of water → rebirth, resurrection) and womb (born again spiritually, willing to submit as a child; water, blood, spirit).

**Washing the body or clothes** → cleansing the spirit

**Anointing** sense organs → blessing of the Holy Spirit on and through those organs (thoughts, words, perceptions, hearing) to protect and inspire. (**Olive oil** → Spirit, Gethsemane and atonement)

**Anointing priests** → setting apart to function in temple as a representative of Jehovah

**New name** → responsibilities by birth or covenant (parents provide, protect; child honor/respect); names given at birth, adoption, new ruler (king gave Daniel a new name), new status or person (Abram to Abraham)

**Laying on of hands** → transfer heart, might, mind, strength of God

I will lay my hand upon you by the hand of my servant Sidney Rigdon, and you shall receive my Spirit, the Holy Ghost, even the Comforter, which shall teach you the peaceable things of the kingdom; (D&C 36:2)

### c. Clothing (uniform)

Scout uniforms, sports uniforms, military uniforms

Temple uniforms (equality before God, team, work, authority, called to serve others as representatives of God). God is no respecter of persons.

Apron: (kitchen → work; fertility & work of multiplying)

Clothes symbolize soul (white → washed white in the blood of the Lamb). White clothes are an outer symbol for an inner purity made possible through Christ's atonement. They represent worthiness to enter into the presence of God

<sup>21</sup> At that day that ye cannot be saved; for there can no man be saved except his garments are washed white; yea, his garments must be purified until they are cleansed from all stain, through the blood of him of whom it has been spoken by our fathers, who should come to redeem his people from their sins. (Alma 5:21)

Change of clothing: change of status (street clothes to white → newness of person, preparation to serve; separated from old ways); Mt. of Transfiguration (change from fallen to exalted position; become like God). Priesthood robes → authority, power (becoming more Christlike until prepared to converse with the Lord through the veil and then enter His presence).

Initiation: put off the natural man and become a saint; separation from the world and worldly allegiances

### d. Altars

Sacrifice in obedience (faith, baptism, washings) by priests representing Christ before entering the house of the Lord (temple)

Washings, anointing, garment (Aaron's sons)

Sacrament (points back to Christ's sacrifice) replaced sacrifice (pointed forward to Christ's sacrifice)

All sacrifices made (as if) at the altar (place of sacrifice). Now we sacrifice the natural man as we offer the sacrifice of a **broken heart** (vs. hard heart; broken bread [body]; broken soil → seeds grow; humble/teachable; seek to know God's will) and a **contrite spirit** (crushed → Gethsemane; wine/water; willing to submit to Father as did Christ; willing to do God's will).

Altars → Christ's atoning sacrifice, Christ's presence, the throne of God. The incense altar before the veil represented prayers ascending to heaven for others by a priest representing Christ as a mediator. Praying for others at an altar → one saves oneself as we seek to help others by mourning with those that mourn and comforting those in need of comfort.

**SOED comfort, To strengthen, encourage, support.**

### e. Creation story and symbols

LORD God = Jehovah (YaHWeH) Elohim = He who creates Gods.

Who and why we should worship

Beautify; sameness or variety, stars or teamwork; disunity or unity

Creation of earth is like creation of saint from a natural man (separate light and dark, water, spirit required to bear fruit, mountains or temples). The key of creation is obedience to God.

To become like God, we too must desire and create good and beauty. Evil came into the world through disobedience

### f. Story and symbols of the fall of Adam

This story is primarily to teach us about ourselves for we are to consider ourselves as if we were Adam and Eve. We are children of God with the agency to obey or disobey his commandments. The consequences of disobedience is separation from God. Thus we need a Savior and others to invite, entice, and help us return.

Adam and Eve were not only to abstain from the forbidden fruit, but also not to touch it. They could not keep both commandments (avoid the forbidden fruit, multiply and replenish), but we can.

Satan entices us to disobey God's commandments which are portrayed as restrictions.

### g. Prayers before the veil

Prayer circle → mourn with those that mourn (Gaskill)

Christ in Gethsemane prayed for us and took on our infirmities and sins so he could mourn with and comfort us.

Speaking with the Lord through the veil.

Brother of Jared

**Prayer with Uplifted Hands:** "In the setting of the ancient tabernacle and temple, the sacred gesture of lifting up the hands often accompanied the act of prayer. (1 Kgs 8:22-23; Ps. 28:2; 141:2). ... [It] is associated with the atonement ... [Those who] lift their hands to heaven ... show God that their hands are pure (Ps. 24:4), that is, made pure through the atonement, and they expect an answer to their prayers. (S&S 32) (OT #16)

<sup>19</sup> Can ye look up to God at that day with a pure heart and clean hands? I say unto you, can you look up, having the image of God engraven upon your countenances? (Al 5:19)

Prayer with uplifted hands → look up showing hands, heart, countenance (face)

#### **h. Entering into the presence of God**

Which uniform? (all-white priest uniform)

Coming from Holy of Holies and putting on High Priest uniform → Christ coming from the presence of God as an immortal and putting on mortal body to become the Great High Priest.

Taking off High Priest uniform and putting on all-white priest uniform → becoming immortal like angels