

D&C Lesson # 22
The Word of Wisdom: A Principle with Promise
(D&C 89)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Restoration).

1. The Word of Wisdom is not a restraint but was a **precious forewarning** which has brought great blessing to the saints.

A. When lived, it has blessed the saints **with better health, stronger character, and thus happier lives.**

B. Those who have followed this precious forewarning have generally been saved from innumerable tribulations and heartache.

1. If one has ever known someone who has died of cancer due to smoking, or other health problems due to excessive drinking, one can appreciate what a blessing this forewarning was.

2. The modern surge in **immorality among youth must at least partially be attributed to drinking alcohol** or taking other drugs, which erodes the sense of right and wrong.

C. Furthermore, it is often health problems which have caused much poverty among people, so the obedient saints have been blessed with better living than they might otherwise have had.

D. Excessive use of caffeine is destructive to the bones. Recently one teenager died from drinking three heavily caffeine loaded drinks in one day. Also, the most recent research shows that drinks with caffeine do cause problems with the brain during the time of withdrawal. Brain scans show a definite decrease of blood flow. This leads to headaches, fatigue and other issues.*

II. The purpose of the Word of Wisdom, however, was **far more than this.**

A. The Word of Wisdom has brought special spiritual blessings.

B. One of those blessings, specifically promised to those keeping this counsel is that they shall “find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:19).

C. The prophet Daniel is a prime example of the fulfillment of this promise.

1. Daniel was in many ways a foreshadowing of us in the Latter-days.

2. Note that he was an Israelite, living among the Gentiles, and longing for the restoration of God’s Kingdom. This describes us, the Israelites of the Latter-days. And our experience has many parallels to his.

3. He kept a Word of Wisdom and consequently *was blessed with great treasures of knowledge*. Only he who could interpret King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream (Daniel: 2). Later, Gabriel revealed to him other special knowledge concerning the future. (See Daniel, chapters 4-5, 7-12).

4. Today, **the Church as a whole is a fulfillment of this same promise.** Because the Word of Wisdom is a principle of the Church, those who keep this law are blessed with “wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” through the revelations granted to the prophet Joseph Smith, like a Daniel. Great revelations have been passed on to us. Those keeping the Word of Wisdom are most likely to heed, to cherish, and to thus receive the greatest benefits from this knowledge.

5. This promise also applies to individuals, as we receive personal revelation attesting to the truth of scriptural and prophetic teachings, as well as individual revelation concerning our own lives. This gift often includes witnesses of deeper truths which enlighten our minds and brings us joy.

6. Furthermore, when one keeps the Word of Wisdom, that person has access to the temple, where great revelation is given concerning spiritual and Eternal matters not understood by others.

III. Refusing to drink wine has been through the centuries a **witness of those “set apart” and “consecrated” to the Lord.**

- A. Refusing strong drink was what set apart Daniel and his associates, who were types and foreshadowers of us in the latter-days.
- B. Previously, in Numbers 6, the Lord revealed the Law of the Nazarite. **Those who desired to consecrate their lives unto the Lord were not to partake of wine**, among other things.
 1. Much of the Law of Moses witnessed of Jesus Christ.
 2. (Nephi, speaking of that law, said “all things which have been given of God from the beginning ... are the typifying of [Christ],” 2 Ne. 11:4).
 3. Jesus was raised **in Nazareth, a place likely established by Nazarites**, for it is claimed a group of priests did establish it. It is highly possible they were Nazarites because (a) the root word *nazir* means “consecrated or set apart”; (b) Matthew 2:23 tells it was prophecy that Jesus would be born in Nazareth, and the only prophecy known is this “typifying” set by the Nazarites;
 4. Jesus felt it important to continue to associate Himself with Nazareth, and deliberately titled Himself as “Jesus of Nazareth” identifying Himself that way even to the Saints in the Last Days. **His early followers also called themselves “Nazarenes.”**

IV. Jesus was indeed the ultimate One **consecrated unto the Lord.**

- A. While Jesus did partake of something called “wine” some of his life, at the Last Supper, He announced, **“I will not drink henceforth of [the fruit of the vine], until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s Kingdom”** (Matthew 26:29).
This may have been a final act of **consecrating Himself unto the Lord.**
For immediately thereafter, **He gave Himself as an offering unto God.** It was likely not accident that “Jesus of Nazareth” was the Title put upon His offering on the cross.
- C. For what He was offering **was His own blood, as the “New Wine” [His atoning sacrifice].** It would replace the old corruptive wine, and bring joy and blessing to all mankind. [He and other prophets had made oblique references to His offering as a “New Wine” (Mat. 9:17; Joel 3:18).]
 1. Dr. Hugh Nibley pointed out that several ancient accounts of Adam portray the forbidden fruit as the grape (See Nibley, *Abraham in Egypt*, p. 156). There are great implications to the forbidden fruit as being the juice of grapes, as that is a symbol of the blood of the Savior.
 2. **Consider this powerful contrast: firstborn man [Adam] sins in a garden by partaking of a fruit [a corruptive wine], which brings Death upon all men. The firstborn of the Father shoulders men’s sins in a garden and sacrifices Himself upon a tree (cross), from which comes a fruit (his flesh and wine-like blood) which brings New Life to all men.**
 3. An early Christian writing adds impetus to this view. It claims after the flood Noah hesitated to replant the grape vine, “... for Adam was destroyed by it,” whereupon an angel appeared and said, **“Arise Noah, plant the vine; its bitterness shall be changed to sweetness, and its curse changed to a blessing.”** (Nibley, *Abraham*, p. 156). [The change occurred through Jesus’ offering, of course].

4. *That the forbidden fruit may have been wine is supported by the fact that this is the only fruit of which we as Latter-day Saints have also been forbidden to partake.*
 - a. Note the Lord revealed that only in the sacrament should wine be partaken (D&C 89:5), and that it should be pure wine of the Saints own making (D&C 27:3 & D&C 89:6).
 - b. While wine is a special reminder of the blood of the Savior, when Jesus died, both water and wine poured from His wound. Thus our current partaking of water, a more practical substitute, is also symbolic of His atonement.

E. When Jesus Christ returns, He will bring a pure, uncorruptive wine, of which we will partake, in joyful remembrance of His great work of salvation (D&C 27:5). **Note He then says He will drink it with “all those whom the Father hath given me out of the world”** (v. 14) whom He specifically names. Most of those listed gave their lives, and **many their blood**, for Christ. And surely all were “consecrated unto Him.

IV. The Word of Wisdom also witnessed of those “set apart” or consecrated unto the Lord with a **specific responsibility: to prepare for the coming of Christ.**

- A. This was what John the Baptist was set apart for: to prepare for the *first coming of Christ*.
 1. The angel, telling Zacharias of John’s coming birth, said, “For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, *and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink*” (Luke 1:15). We all know that John’s specific calling was as preparer of the way for the first mortal ministry of Jesus.
- B. Does not the non-usage of wine or strong drink similarly set us apart and identify us as the preparers of the way for the second coming of Christ?**

V. Just as not partaking of wine was the way the Nazarites and John the Baptist showed they were consecrated unto the Lord, so we Latter-day Saints should recognize not partaking of wine or strong drink helps us become consecrated unto the Lord in *every* way.

A. Keeping the Word of Wisdom allows us to attend the Temple and to make new covenants of consecration, which is the *chief way we have of consecrating ourselves* unto the Lord. [We do not live the ancient Law of the Nazarites, for old things were changed, and all has become new. **New covenants** we take upon ourselves consecrate us to the Lord.]

VI. In fact, Joseph Smith received the revelation on the Word of Wisdom during the same time they were preparing the Kirtland Temple.

A. **The Kirtland Temple was to be a place of holiness, set apart and consecrated to the Lord.**

It seems the Lord was also beginning to prepare His people to be worthy to serve therein!

B. For we are now asked *to make our own bodies as Holy Temples, and ourselves to be similarly consecrated to the Lord within His Holy Temples*. Literally being “set apart” for each of our callings in the Church is another witness that we have been consecrated to the Lord and will be blessed by Him in carrying out our specific roles.

C. Nearly always it is worthy members, who keep the Word of Wisdom, who receive and are “set apart” for callings in the Lord’s Church.

D. The blessings which come from being “set apart” are real!

When one of my nephews, Alvin Hadley, was being “set apart” by his stake president to serve an English speaking mission in Canada, his mother was shocked to hear the Stake President

promise Alvin he would be blessed *to learn the language*. Carol expressed her dismay in private to my brother, stating that she wished the stake president would read over the calls so that he knew where the missionaries would be serving. She feared his mistake might have undermined her son's confidence in this blessing, since Alvin was going to an English speaking country and would not be required to learn a new language.

But as soon as Alvin arrived in Canada, he was assigned to work with a Korean elder, and to go with him to teach Korean immigrants. **So Alvin was required to learn Korean, without any previous training at all, mostly by learning from his companion and study! Only the Lord could have known this beforehand and "set him apart" with such a blessing.**

As he was so blessed in being "set apart," Alvin was able to learn Korean in that way, and served a successful mission to Koreans in Canada.

VIII.

A. The Word of Wisdom is indeed a great principle which not only blesses our lives physically and economically, **but sets us apart today for our lives of consecration unto the Lord**. It does this by making us more worthy.

B. **And it opens all blessing for those set apart to prepare for the second coming of Christ.**

*Joseph Smith revealed God's Word of Wisdom by telling us "hot drinks" were not good for man. Since then this has been interpreted as tea and coffee.

Recently, (June of 2016), the World Health Organization determined **that tea and coffee should be put upon the list of those items considered as dangers for cancer.**

The cause of their concern was specifically that they were "hot drinks." [And note that was precisely the danger Joseph had warned of: "hot drinks"]. Because these drinks are drunk at high temperatures, it is the heat which is determined likely cancer causing. The level of heat at which they become dangerous is much lower than that at which they are traditionally served.

The Lord did indeed reveal a full and true Word of Wisdom through the prophet Joseph Smith.