

THE LORD'S LAW OF HEALTH

ALSO KNOWN AS THE WORD OF WISDOM

Modern apostles and prophets are a distinctive characteristic of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Church members view senior Church leaders – Joseph Smith, Brigham Young and the presidents of the Church that followed - as prophets of God in the same way they view Abraham, Moses, Isaiah and the apostles in the day of Jesus Christ. Thomas S. Monson is the current president and prophet of the Church.

Members believe The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a restoration of the Church originally established by Jesus Christ during His mortal lifetime. Part of that restoration includes living prophets and apostles. A health plan for the Church was first written down in 1833 by Joseph Smith as a revelation from God. Today, Latter-day Saints usually refer to these health guidelines as “the Word of Wisdom” (see D&C 89). The provisions of the health code include no alcoholic drinks, no smoking or chewing of tobacco, and no “hot drinks” – believed to refer specifically to tea and coffee. The Lord also declared in the Word of Wisdom that vegetables and fruits should be used “with prudence and thanksgiving”, the flesh “of beasts and of the fowls of the air [should] be used sparingly”, and grains such as wheat, rice, and oats are “the staff of life”. While the revelation came first as a “greeting; not by commandment or constraint” (D&C 89:2), when members of the Church had had time to be taught the import of the revelation, succeeding Presidents of the Church declared it to be a commandment. And it was accepted by the Church as such.

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). To those who keep the Word of Wisdom, the Lord promised “health in their navel and marrow to their bones” and “wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures”. The Lord also promised that these individuals “shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint”.

According to an Associated Press release on April 28, 1997 entitled “LDS Lifestyle May Be Secret to Long Life”, Mormons are some of the healthiest and longest-living people in the country. Based on research conducted by UCLA epidemiologist James E. Enstrom, LDS Church members who follow religious mandates barring smoking and drinking have one of the lowest death rates from cancer and cardiovascular diseases - about half that of the general population. Moreover, the healthiest LDS Church members enjoy a life expectancy eight to 11 years longer than that of the comparable general population in the United States. According to the study, LDS high priests have only 16 percent of the expected deaths from smoking-related cancers and 6 percent of the expected deaths from emphysema, asthma, ulcers, cirrhosis of the liver, homicide and suicide. Also, high priests who exercise regularly and get proper sleep have an overall death rate that is only 38 percent of all comparable males in the United States.

For more information about living a healthy lifestyle,
please visit www.providentliving.org.