

“What’s the harm in trying alcohol or tobacco just once?”

The scriptures teach that for us to exercise agency, there must be opposition—good and evil—in the world and that we must be “enticed by the one or the other” (2 Nephi 2:16; emphasis added). You do not need to occasionally give in to the enticement of wrong choices in order for your agency to be genuine. The ability to distinguish right from wrong is what’s important. You do not need to know both good *and* evil; you need to know good *from* evil—and then choose the good.

You may think that trying alcohol or tobacco one time won’t hurt you, but it will. They are harmful substances, and you cannot feel the Spirit if you partake of them. For some, that one time turns into a life-long addiction.



There’s Never “Just Once”

No, you shouldn’t try it; not even once! You may say that you will never do it again, but alcohol and tobacco can be addictive. I have a friend who tried alcohol once. The next time she went out, guess what? She drank again. Everyone knew she had drunk “just once,” so it became “just one more.” We as members are being watched constantly by nonmembers. It doesn’t look good when we don’t obey our own standards—not to mention how disappointed your parents would be.
Kaila W., 17, New South Wales, Australia



Commandments Keep You Safe

Our loving Father in Heaven knows every single thing that goes on in life and its effects. This is why He gave us the Word of Wisdom. He loves you so much and wants to keep you safe from the devil. This is one way He is trying to keep you safe—through commandments. You know it’s a commandment not to take drugs, so stick to the safe side. Pray for His guidance to keep you safe from thoughts of trying things you know are not right.
Asenaca V., 18, Suva, Fiji

Responses are intended for help and perspective, not as pronouncements of Church doctrine.



Keep the Word of Wisdom

Remember that the Word of Wisdom is a commandment from

God, and as such we need to pay strict heed to it. Otherwise we are sinning, and a sin will always be a sin, even if we do it only once. Don't forget that serious sin happens only if we first yield to small temptations, such as trying alcohol or tobacco to find out what it's like.

Ana M., 20, Michoacán, Mexico

Fight the Temptation

All harmful substances deliberately taken into the body are against the Word of Wisdom. Don't experiment with them! Using these substances, even in the smallest of doses, can lead to destructive dependence. In violating the Word of Wisdom, we cut ourselves off from many blessings that we could have received. We stain our spirits. The best weapons for fighting temptation are prayer, fasting, and scripture study.

Oleg P., 16, Crimea, Ukraine

Don't Learn the Hard Way

Our Church leaders don't say "just once." They say no. Just have faith that the Church teaches us so that we don't have to learn it the hard way for ourselves. Also, remember that in the temple recommend interview, priesthood leaders ask if you obey the Word of Wisdom.

Lauren R., 15, Maryland, USA

Rationalizing Can Lead to Addiction

What is wrong with saying "It's only once" is the fact that you did it. If you did it, this will weaken your resistance to doing it again. Rationalizing "it's only once" leads us away from the strait and narrow. Once you go in that direction, it may not be so easy to return, because you will say, "It's only once more, and besides, I can quit any time I want to." It may eventually become, "I must have another," or, "There is no hope left for me."

Adam H., 16, British Columbia, Canada

NEXT QUESTION

"Some of my Church friends argue with nonmember friends over which religion is true. I know contention is wrong, but how do I let my friends know how I feel about the gospel?"

Please send your answer by July 15, 2008, to:

**Liahona, Questions & Answers 7/08
50 E. North Temple St., Rm. 2420
Salt Lake City, UT 84150-3220, USA
Or e-mail: liahona@ldschurch.org**

The following information and permission must be included in your e-mail or letter:

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SIGNATURE

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There Is Harm in Just Once



"Some years ago, one of our sons asked me why it wasn't a good idea to try alcohol or tobacco to see what they were like. He knew

about the Word of Wisdom, and he also knew the health effects of these

substances, but he was questioning why he shouldn't just try them out for himself. I replied that if he wanted to try something out, he ought to go to a barnyard and eat a little manure. He recoiled in horror. 'Ooh, that's gross,' he reacted.

"I'm glad you think so," I said, 'but why don't you just try it out so you will know for yourself? While

you're proposing to try one thing that you know is not good for you, why don't you apply that principle to some others?' That illustration of the silliness of 'trying it out for yourself' proved persuasive for one sixteen-year-old." ■

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Sin and Suffering," *Tambuli*, Apr. 1994, 32; *Ensign*, July 1992, 73-74.