

TRUSTING THE WISDOM OF THE WORD

Sometimes commandments might not make sense to us. But obedience to the Lord always does.

By **Charlotte Larcabal**

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Have you ever wondered why a certain commandment had to be the way it is? Maybe there are principles you still don't fully understand, or maybe there's a standard that seems to contradict what the media or people around you are saying. Have you ever experienced something like that? You're not alone.

The Word of Wisdom

One commandment that probably didn't make sense to everyone at first is the Word of Wisdom. Today it's pretty common knowledge that using tobacco is bad news, but when Joseph Smith first introduced the Word of Wisdom, most people had no idea how harmful tobacco was. In fact, early Church members often smoked or chewed tobacco during Church meetings. So maybe giving up tobacco to live the Word of Wisdom might not have made much sense at the time. But obeying the Lord by listening to His chosen prophet did.

Heavenly Father sees and knows

infinitely more than we do, so keeping His commandments is always the right decision.

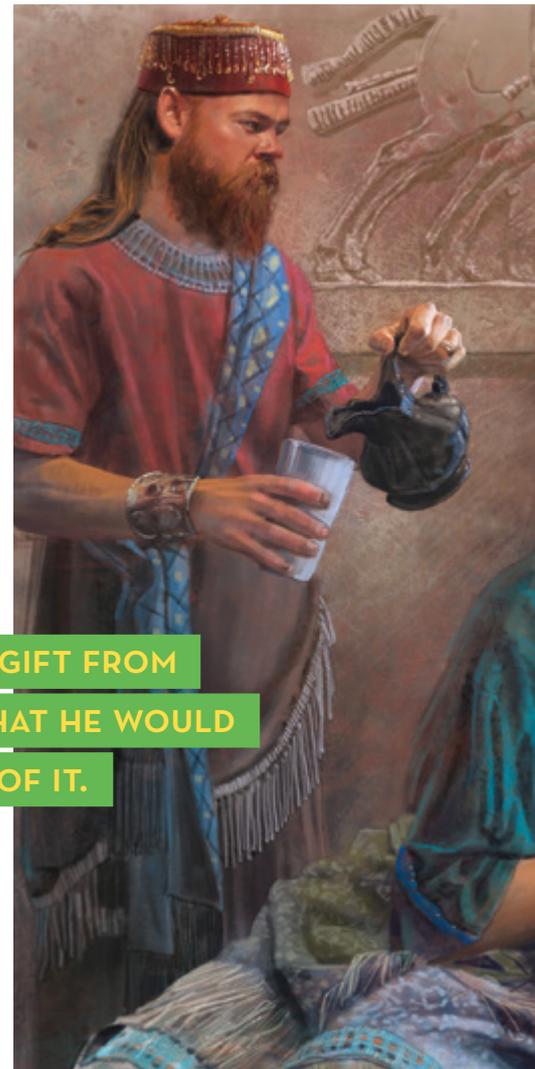
Check out the first verse of Doctrine and Covenants 89, the section containing the Word of Wisdom:

“A Word of Wisdom, for the *benefit* of the council of high priests, . . . and the church, and also the saints in Zion” (see D&C 89:1; emphasis added).

Like all of the Lord's commandments, the Word of Wisdom is for our benefit; in fact, it's given as a “principle with promise” for everyone who lives it (D&C 89:3).

YOUR BODY IS A TEMPLE, A GIFT FROM GOD. SO IT MAKES SENSE THAT HE WOULD KNOW HOW TO TAKE CARE OF IT.

So what's the promise? Those who care for their bodies and avoid tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol, and habit-forming substances are promised many things, including better health (see D&C 89:18) and “great treasures of knowledge,



even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:19).

Not too bad, right? Your body is a temple, a gift from God. So it makes sense that He would know how to take care of it. That’s why we can trust His counsel.

Daniel and the Faith to Live the Lord’s Law of Health

The Word of Wisdom wasn’t the first law of health from the Lord.

Through His prophet Moses, the Lord also gave dietary instructions and promises to the ancient Israelites (see Leviticus 11). One young man—Daniel—lived the Lord’s law of health even when taken to the palace of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon.

Daniel was an Israelite living in Babylon, far away from home, and almost everyone else was eating the king’s food and drinking the king’s

wine, but Daniel “purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank” (Daniel 1:8). Refusing to eat the food of a king would put Daniel in danger. From that point of view, it might not have made sense to avoid the king’s meat. But Daniel knew he could trust God’s command. Daniel had faith that God promised protection and



DANIEL AND THE KING'S MEAT, BY BRIAN CALL

blessings to those who kept His commandments. And you know what? That's exactly what happened.

The king's servants tried to talk Daniel out of it, but Daniel stayed strong and proposed an experiment: For 10 days, Daniel and his friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego would eat fruit, vegetables, and grains and drink water while everyone else ate the king's meat and wine. Then they could see who was healthier.

You can guess what happened. Ten days later, "their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all the children which did eat the portion of the king's meat" (Daniel 1:15). Daniel and his friends were so much healthier than the others that the king ended up putting everyone else on the same healthy diet.

Abed-nego were even 10 times better than all astrologers in the realm (see Daniel 1:17–20).

Delayed Blessings

Sometimes promised blessings do come quickly, like they did for Daniel and his friends. But sometimes they don't come as quickly as we'd like.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, learned this when he was training to be a fighter pilot. During fitness training, he noticed that men who smoked and drank repeatedly outran him.

"I remember thinking, 'Wait a minute! Aren't I supposed to be able to run and not be weary?'" he said. "But I *was* weary, and I was overtaken by people who were definitely not following the Word of Wisdom.



AN EXPRESSION OF LOVE

"His commandments are a manifestation of His love for us and obedience to His commandments is an expression of our love for Him."

Carole M. Stephens, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, "If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments," *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 120.

blessings that come immediately from obedience to any of God's laws," he said. "Looking back, I know for sure that the promises of the Lord, if perhaps not always swift, are always certain."¹

God's ways are not our ways (see Isaiah 55:8–9), and sometimes that means we might not immediately understand His ways. But they are always correct. Eventually the promised blessings will come and we will begin to understand the wisdom of the Lord's commandment. Today, medical evidence proves that tobacco is harmful, and the principles in the Word of Wisdom are widely accepted as sensible health guidelines. But we don't live the Word of Wisdom because the world accepts it or because it's supported by the science of men. We live the Word of Wisdom because it's a commandment from God. He gave us commandments because He loves us, and we keep the commandments to show our love for Him. His commandments mark the straightest way to happiness and the surest way to Heavenly Father. **NE**

NOTE

1. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Continue in Patience," *Ensign*, May 2010, 58.

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A healthy glow wasn't the only benefit. God also blessed Daniel with "knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom: and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams" (Daniel 1:17). When it came to matters of wisdom and understanding, King Nebuchadnezzar found that Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and

I confess, it troubled me at the time. I asked myself, was the promise true or was it not?"

Like many of us, President Uchtdorf had to wait for an answer.

"Years later I could see clear evidence of the temporal blessings that come to those who obey the Word of Wisdom—in addition to the spiritual