

Run and Not Be Weary

One of the greatest blessings we received when we came to earth is a physical body. The Word of Wisdom, found in Doctrine and Covenants section 89, teaches us “the order and will of God in the temporal salvation of all saints in the last days” (v. 2). Following are testimonies of the Word of Wisdom from Latter-day Saints around the world.

Never Too Young

I’m 13 years old, and I know that when we take care of our bodies, we will receive the blessings promised in the Word of Wisdom that we can “run and not be weary” (D&C 89:20). When I play sports, eat healthy food, and get enough sleep, I grow stronger. When I keep this commandment, I am free of addictive substances, and I am not under their control.

I know that Heavenly Father gave us the Word of Wisdom not to limit our lives but to help us live healthy and happy lives. Satan tries to tempt us into believing that smoking and drinking will make us popular, free, and happy. But that is not true. Sometimes it is hard to keep high standards, especially at school, but when I try to be a good example, I help my friends understand the importance of choosing the right.

The biggest blessing I have received from keeping the Word of Wisdom is the opportunity to have the Spirit as my constant guide. My goal is to be worthy to go to the temple one day.

Sevil V., Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Help with Diabetes

I am a 57-year-old grandmother who was diagnosed with diabetes in June 2006. In addition to using medication, I turned to the Word of Wisdom for help. I learned the value of regular exercise and a healthy diet. I lost 88 pounds (40 kg) and have kept the weight off. I felt very blessed for my obedience to the Word of Wisdom the day my doctor discontinued my medications for diabetes and high blood pressure. I have a testimony of the Word of Wisdom because the spiritual and physical blessings I have received through obedience to it continue to bless my life.

Beverly Rutherford, Washington, USA

Running Marathons at 73

I was born in Brazil with rickets—a disease characterized by distorted bones. At 19 I weighed 50 kilos (111 lbs) and was 1.64 meters (5'5") tall. As a result, I was not accepted into the military, so I began looking for ways to improve my physical condition. I began a series of exercises and ate a balanced diet.

During this time, I met the missionaries. I became acquainted with the Church and learned about the



commandments, including the Word of Wisdom. It was just what I needed. It gave me guidelines of foods to eat and a list of impure items to avoid, namely tobacco and strong drinks. By reading the Doctrine and Covenants, I learned about the need for rest and sleep (see D&C 88:124).

I gained strength and weighed 78 kilos (172 lbs). I became a champion weight lifter. I also did judo and swam. Today at age 73 I am a marathon runner and have finished 30 marathons. In 2005 and 2006, I was second in my age class in Brazil. I have excellent health, and I am very happy.

I am grateful to our Heavenly Father for giving us laws that, if obeyed, will bring us blessings of health.

Antonio Olívio de Oliveira, São Paulo, Brazil

A Jug of Wine

As I cleaned the beauty shop after school, I found a half-full jug of wine left over from a party. I asked my boss what I should do with it. "Dump it out, and throw away the bottle," he said as he left. He locked the door on his way out, and I was alone. I continued my usual cleaning routine, but that bottle of wine was on my mind. I was 14 and had never tasted wine. I was tempted.

I cleaned the restroom, sanitized the hairbrushes, and mopped the floor, thinking the entire time about that jug of wine in the back workroom. I knew one taste would not make me drunk. I knew that nobody else would ever know. With that thought I realized that I would know and so would my Heavenly Father. My struggle was over. I knew I would be sorry if I gave in to this temptation, and I wanted to be strong enough to resist all temptations. I poured the wine down the drain,

rinsed the bottle, and dropped it into the trash.

This experience might seem unimportant except for the difference it made in me. I had made a decision that I would keep the commandments even when nobody was looking. I wanted to do the right thing for the right reason. I now know that I have the strength to resist temptation, and I feel more confident that I can walk the path back to my Heavenly Father.

Beth M. Stephenson, Oklahoma, USA

Strength to Endure

The year after I was baptized, I became a volunteer firefighter. I kept the Word of Wisdom even though my friends offered me tobacco, alcohol, tea, and coffee. When they asked me why I refused these things, I told them it was because I was a Mormon. Most of them mocked me and laughed.

One day we were required to take a three-hour physical exercise test to determine who could stay on as firefighters. We each wore a heavy uniform and boots and carried breathing equipment. Before the test I saw the others smoking and laughing at me because I was only a teenager and they thought I wouldn't be able to pass the rigorous test.

First, we had to run laps around a field, carrying extremely heavy hoses. After the first lap my legs and body ached, and my co-workers laughed at me. It was then that I remembered what it says in Doctrine and Covenants 89: "All saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in the navel and marrow to their

bones; . . . and shall run and not be weary” (vv. 18, 20).

I knelt down and prayed to the Lord, asking Him for faith to see the promise fulfilled. Several men came over to see if I was OK, and I told them I was fine. Then we started running again. Right away the pain left my legs. I ran and ran and realized that the others had fallen to the ground with fatigue, but I didn’t even feel like stopping. I passed the test, while my co-workers had to repeat the exercise.

I know that thanks to my obedience to the Word of Wisdom, I was able to get through that test. I know that God was with me that day and that if we obey His commandments, He will bless us with His infinite mercy.

Cristian Castro Marin, Santiago, Chile

A Daily Commitment

Two days after my mother’s funeral, I looked in the mirror. I didn’t like what I saw: dark circles under my eyes, pale skin, bad posture, and 10 to 15 excess pounds. The last three years of caring for my parents had taken a toll on me. With the stress of having both of my parents fall ill and pass away within two years of each other, it was no wonder that I looked like I hadn’t slept well or eaten a balanced meal in weeks.

At 26 years of age I was at a crossroads. I could carry on as I was and risk succumbing to diabetes, heart disease, or cancer, which ran in my family, or I could take control and make my health a priority. This was a commitment I needed to make for life—not just for a few weeks. As I stared at my unhealthy reflection, I made myself a promise. I was going to live the Word of Wisdom in a way I never had before.

My husband and I started working out two

to three times a week. I became more aware of how many calories I ate. I added more fruits and vegetables to my meals. It took effort, but I learned how to read nutrition labels and make healthier food choices.

The real key to my success was setting realistic goals. I wanted to lose some weight, increase my energy level, and look healthier. With the help of Heavenly Father and a wonderfully supportive husband, I accomplished all three.

Six years later I’m still exercising regularly and watching what I eat. I continue to set fitness and dietary goals and work to reach them day-by-day. If someone had told me back then that one day I’d be this passionate about exercising, I honestly wouldn’t have believed it. I’m living proof that you can change your lifestyle if you really want to. If you will put your faith in Heavenly Father, He will support you in your efforts.

I feel good about myself as I strive to reach my optimum health. Since I made this commitment, my mind is clearer and quicker, and my body is stronger and more energized. Because of this, I’m able to enjoy the wonderful blessings Heavenly Father has promised to those who follow the Word of Wisdom. He says that all obedient Saints will “receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones; and shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures” (D&C 89:18–19).

Meagan Sandor, Ontario, Canada

Outlining a Plan

Shortly after my mother and I were baptized, she began working as a registered nurse. As a single parent, she didn't have time to cook, so we began eating more processed and fast foods. Although I was only 12, my health began to decline. I didn't have the energy I once had. I felt tired and anxious. I gained weight.

I asked my mom how I could get into better shape. Hoping for a medical response, I was a little surprised when she simply said, "Live the principles of the Word of Wisdom." I thought she would give me advice on calories and carbohydrates and fats, but her answer was exactly what I needed.

For family home evening the following Monday, we reviewed Doctrine and Covenants 89 and outlined an eating and activity plan. Our lifestyle change was dramatic. We both began to feel healthier and happier. I noticed more peace in my life and more quiet promptings from the Holy Ghost.

I am grateful to a loving Heavenly Father, who wants to communicate with us. I know now that we must be prepared physically and spiritually to receive sacred, personal revelations.

Eric D. Richards, Utah, USA

Arise Early

Arising early is not in Doctrine and Covenants 89, but rather in section 88: "Retire to thy bed early, that ye may not be weary; arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated" (v. 124).

My husband gets up for work at 5:00 a.m. In the past, I didn't get up with him. I would sleep in, and I didn't get up with my teenage sons either. At night I went to bed early, but my husband stayed up until 11:00 p.m. or later. I was

worried about him because he would get sleepy when driving. We needed a change.

I decided to get up with my husband and have breakfast with him. Now we spend time together talking over breakfast. As a result, I am up now with my children before they go to school, and I send them off with prayers and hugs.

My husband is now going to bed early too. I find that my sleep, which had always been poor, has become much sounder, so I don't need as much. It seems that many things are working better in my life because I strive to heed the counsel to "arise early." ■

Linda Davis, Utah, USA

