

Afternoon Tea and The Word of Wisdom

Brigham Young taught that the Lord revealed the Word of Wisdom to improve the quality of our mortal lives, to make us more effective workers in God's earthly kingdom, and to help us to fill the full measure of our creation. (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young, Introduction, Chapter 29, p. 211)

Joseph F. Smith said, "Observance of the Word of Wisdom will strengthen our bodies, ennoble our souls, and bring us nearer to God." (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith, Introduction, Chapter 36, p. 323)

"The Word of Wisdom was 'given for a principle with promise' (see D&C 89:3). That word *principle* in the revelation is a very important one. A principle is an enduring truth, a law, a rule you can adopt to guide you in making decisions. Generally, principles are not spelled out in detail. That leaves you free to find your way with an enduring truth, a principle, as your anchor." (Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign*, May 1996 p. 17)

As we read and ponder and practice our "Health Code", we come to understand it is a profound gift with a profound purpose: 1) to protect the physical well being of the faithful and to extend their lives so that they will live longer and have more opportunity to learn and understand and contribute to what happens in the earth; and 2) to open the door to spiritual blessings and spiritual guidance.

The Word of Wisdom, found in the *Doctrine & Covenants, Section 89*, states:

Verse 5: "That inasmuch as any drinketh wine or strong drink among you, behold it is not good, neither meet in the sight of your Father, only in assembling yourselves together to offer up your sacraments before him."

Verse 6: "And behold, this should be wine, yea, pure wine of the grape of the vine, of your own make."

Verse 7: "And, again, strong drinks are not for the belly, but for the washing of your bodies."

Verse 8: "And again, tobacco is not for the body, neither for the belly, and is not good for man, but is an herb for bruises and all sick cattle, to be used with judgment and skill."

Verse 9: "And again hot drinks are not for the body or belly."

These are the “**DON'Ts**” of the Word of Wisdom. Latter-day Prophets have explained these verses this way:

David O. McKay taught “I must tell you that our people do not believe in drinking stimulants, and we think tea is a stimulant . . . There is a substance in tea and coffee which when taken into the human system, tends to increase the beating of the heart; which in turn increases the rapidity of the circulation of the blood and of breathing. This causes the body to become warmer and more exhilarated. After a time, however, this temporary enlivenment passes off, and the body is really in a greater need of rest and recuperation than it was before the beverage was taken . . . The habitual use of strong drink, tobacco, tea, and coffee, only tends to make the body weaker and more dependent upon the stimulants to which it is addicted.” (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay, p 103, 105)

Brigham Young said, “The constitution that a person has should be nourished and cherished; and whenever we take anything into the system to force and stimulate it beyond its natural capacity, it shortens life. I am physician enough to know that . . . If you will follow this counsel, you will be full of life and health, and you will increase your intelligence, your joy, and comfort.” (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Brigham Young, p. 212)

Joseph F. Smith explained, “If the pure intelligence of the Spirit of God were substituted for the stimulating influence of the tea and the liquor; if we could by some means get a sufficient portion of the Spirit of the Lord within us that would cause us to know just what to do when we felt weariness and faintness coming upon us, without resorting to the aid of stimulants and drugs that go far to injure our systems and make us slaves to an acquired appetite, it would be a great deal better for us. I would rather feel tired and exhausted by labor, and let nature have a chance to restore itself, than I would attempt to doctor myself by the use of narcotics and drugs that would sap the foundation of my physical and spiritual health . . . The young man who would cope with the world, who would be full of vigor, and fresh for the battle of life, will find his strength in living according to the word of the Lord.” (Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith, p. 327-328)

The late Dr. John R. Christopher, Master Herbalist and Founder of Dr. Christopher’s [*School of Natural Healing*](#) in Springville, Utah, has addressed the elements of the Word of Wisdom in his concise 24-page booklet titled *Just What is the Word of Wisdom?* in this way:

Strong drink – “This has generally been accepted as referring to intoxicating liquors, but a strong drink is any drink, hot or cold, which is a habit forming drink.” He goes on to explain that it was many years after this revelation was given before Man and Science understood the phrase “for the washing of your bodies”. It was discovered that alcohol could be used for the cleansing of wounds and for the killing of germs.

Herb to be used with judgment and skill – Dr. Christopher suggests that if tobacco is such a strong and dangerous herb to require a caution for its use even on the outside of the body, “what will it do to the delicate tissues and membranes *inside* the body?”

Hot drinks – “The common conception of hot drinks is tea and coffee . . . Medical Science has discovered . . . that any hot liquid taken into the body is harmful . . .” He clarifies that hot chocolate, postum and even soup—if too hot—can be very injurious to the delicate tissues of the body. (*Just What is the Word of Wisdom?* By Dr. John R. Christopher, MH, p.5-7)

Now for some “DO’s”!

Verse 10: “And again, verily I say unto you, all wholesome herbs* God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man—

Verse 11: “Every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof; all these to be used with prudence and thanksgiving.”

*A footnote here defines “herbs” as “plants”, which would include plants, vines, trees, bushes, roots – all of which produce food and herbs for human nutrition.

Dr. Christopher stated that *wholesome herbs* “is used collectively, wherein an edible food from plants of any type, not under the fruit classification, are included. Wholesome means healthy, whole . . . [entire, complete].” (Ibid.)

Many other verses of scripture, both ancient and modern-day, support these verses with greater teaching:

Genesis 1:29, 31 and Moses 2:29, 31 (The Creation) – “And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. . . . And I God, saw everything that I had made, and, behold, all things which I had made were **very** good; and the evening and the morning were the sixth day.” (bold, italics added)

Alma 46:40 – “And there were some who died with fevers, which at some seasons of the year were very frequent in the land—but not so much so with fevers, because of the excellent qualities of the many plants and roots which God had prepared to remove the cause of diseases, to which men were subject by the nature of the climate.”

D&C 42:43 (Section 42 is “The Law of the Lord to the Church”; verses 40-52 instruct that the sick are to be healed through administrations and by faith.) – “And whosoever among you are sick, and have not faith to be healed, but believe, shall be nourished with all tenderness with herbs and mild food, and that not by the hand of an enemy.”

D&C 59:17-19 – “Yea and the herb, and the good things which come of the earth, whether for food or for raiment, or for houses, or for barns, or for orchards, or for gardens or for vineyards; “Yea, all things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man, both to please the eye and to gladden the heart; “Yea, for food and for raiment, for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul.”

Is there a difference between “tea” and “herb tea”? YES!

True teas, from the tea plant (*Camellia sinensis*), are naturally caffeinated and include black, green, white, yellow, oolong, etc. The concentration of caffeine depends on when the leaves are harvested. For example, white tea has the least caffeine because it comes from the youngest leaves; green tea is the next harvest and is still significantly less than a black tea which has had time to grow to its fullness. De-caffeinated teas come from the same plant; the tea has been processed to remove the caffeine. **

“Herbal tea” is a catch-all term for any naturally non-caffeinated beverage made from the infusion or decoction of herbs, spices, or other plant material in water. “Tisane” is another word for herbal tea. Tisanes have been used for nearly as long as written history extends, dating back to Ancient Egypt and Ancient China. The word “tisane” originates from the Greek, meaning a drink made from pearl barley. Tisanes/Herbal Teas are commonly used for their perceived medicinal benefits.

Source: Herbal tea, From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

I learned to drink herb tea on my mission in Bavaria. As it was common practice to serve guests tea and cake, our mission president encouraged us to graciously accept the offering, but to politely request an herb tea. It was never a problem as they always had a variety of herb teas on hand.

I have been studying herbs and their uses and health benefits, and thoroughly enjoy creating my own blends for health and wellness, or simply a pleasurable moment by the fire with a good book, or a good friend and some good conversation!

Some people are anxious about the word “tea” – that we should “avoid the appearance of evil.” All I can say to that is, herb tea is not evil. The scriptures teach us that herbs are a gift from a loving Heavenly Father. The simplest way to get the benefits of the herbs is to cover them with hot water and allow them to steep so that the beneficial properties and the exquisite flavors are infused into the water. It’s no different than putting herbs in water and calling it broth or soup!

Herb Tea is to Tea what Root Beer is to Beer.

They are NOT the same.

It’s that simple!

And YOU control the temperature!



** CAFFEINE COMPARISON CHART

Coffee	8 oz.	110 mg
Cola	8 oz.	46 mg
Black Tea	8 oz.	40 mg
Chocolate Milk	8 oz.	34 mg
Oolong Tea	8 oz.	30 mg
Green Tea	8 oz.	20 mg
White Tea	8 oz.	15 mg
Herbal Tea	8 oz.	0 mg

Caffeine contents in tea averaged for clarity.

Brewing times, brands, varieties, etc.
can affect these figures dramatically.