

Word of Wisdom Study Class
Class 1 with Barbara Hobbs
Study Notes
July 13th, 2025

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsH6BrGJ6ds>

<https://www.livinghopebranch.org/word-of-wisdom-class-1/>

Summary

This class is a comprehensive teaching and testimony on the Word of Wisdom, a revelation given to guide physical, emotional, and spiritual health. The teacher, Barbara Hobbs, emphasizes the importance of feasting on the words of Christ, absolute surrender to God, and diligent obedience to the Word of Wisdom. She shares personal experiences and historical insights, explaining that while the Word of Wisdom was initially presented not as a strict commandment but as inspired counsel, it is indeed a divine principle with promises of blessings for obedience. These blessings include protection against disease, increased wisdom and knowledge, physical strength and vigor, and spiritual protection.

Barbara underscores the holistic nature of health—body, mind, and spirit—and the necessity of prayer and personal revelation in gaining a testimony of the Word of Wisdom. She also addresses common misconceptions about the Word of Wisdom, its' historical context, and its' ongoing relevance today, encouraging individuals to seek their own confirmation through faith and prayer. The teaching concludes with reflections on the interconnectedness of spiritual and physical well-being and the importance of breaking personal bondage to sin or unhealthy habits.

Highlights

1. **The Word of Wisdom encompasses** physical, emotional, and spiritual health, not just dietary guidelines.
2. **Obedience to the Word of Wisdom** brings promises of health, wisdom, strength, and divine protection.
3. **The Word of Wisdom was given as inspired counsel**, not initially a strict commandment, to respect agency and encourage acceptance.
4. **Personal revelation and prayer** are essential for understanding and applying the Word of Wisdom in one's life.
5. **Children of Christ** are characterized by listening attentively and obeying God's counsel.
6. **Historical context** reveals the Word of Wisdom was introduced with sensitivity to church unity and individual agency.
7. **Barbara shares personal and communal testimonies** illustrating the transformative power of adhering to the Word of Wisdom.

Key Insights

1. **Holistic Definition of Health:** Health is more than physical well-being; it includes emotional stability and spiritual soundness. Barbara's definition aligns with modern concepts of wellness but roots it firmly in scriptural teachings, highlighting the interconnectedness of body, mind, and spirit. This integrative approach encourages believers to view health as a divine stewardship rather than merely a physical condition.
2. **Absolute Surrender and Heartfelt Devotion:** The hymn "Give Me Thy Heart" symbolizes the essential attitude required to fully embrace the Word of Wisdom—complete surrender to God's will. This spiritual posture is foundational for obedience, implying that physical health practices must be accompanied by a willing heart and submission to divine guidance.
3. **The Word of Wisdom as a Principle with Promises:** The revelation is described not as a rigid law but a principle with a promise, adapted to the weakest among the saints. This nuance highlights God's compassion and understanding of human frailty, offering a path to health that is accessible to all, regardless of their starting point or struggles.
4. **Historical Sensitivity and Agency:** The careful wording of the Word of Wisdom's preface ("not by commandment or constraint") was strategically employed to foster acceptance among church members and avoid alienation during a time of tension between different congregations. This approach reflects a respect for individual agency and acknowledges that true discipleship comes from willing obedience, not coercion.
5. **Promises and Consequences:** While not following the Word of Wisdom will not jeopardize eternal salvation directly, it results in the loss of temporal and spiritual blessings such as health, wisdom, and strength. This distinction emphasizes the principle of stewardship—obedience yields blessings, disobedience brings natural consequences, and both affect the ability to serve God effectively.
6. **Scientific and Scriptural Correlation:** Barbara connects scriptural promises to physiological realities, such as the importance of the navel area for digestion and the role of bone marrow in immune function. This blend of faith and science provides a compelling argument for the relevance of the Word of Wisdom in modern health discussions, showing that divine counsel anticipated contemporary health understandings.
7. **Faith Leading to Understanding:** The teaching stresses that faith must precede full understanding. The invitation to pray and seek personal revelation about the Word of Wisdom aligns with broader scriptural principles (Moroni 10, Verses 4-5). This process respects personal agency and encourages individuals to develop a testimony based on spiritual experience rather than blind adherence.

8. **Impact Beyond the Individual:** The benefits or consequences of following the Word of Wisdom extend beyond personal health to influence families, communities, and ministry effectiveness. The example of a young woman who regained health by returning to its principles illustrates how lifestyle choices can affect not only individual well-being but also one's ability to fulfill divine purposes.
9. **Spiritual Health as the Pinnacle:** This class includes reflections on the integration of physical, emotional, social, and spiritual health, with spiritual health being the summit that supports and enhances the others. This holistic view encourages believers to prioritize spiritual communion with God as central to overall wellness.
10. **Breaking Bondage and Overcoming Besetting Sins:** Barbara acknowledges that many struggle with addictions or habits that undermine health and spiritual progress. Recognizing these as "bondages" that must be broken points to a compassionate and practical gospel application, encouraging reliance on God's power and grace to overcome weaknesses.
11. **Economic Stewardship and Health:** An implied promise of the Word of Wisdom is economic welfare, as maintaining good health can reduce medical expenses and free resources for other charitable or Zion-building efforts. This practical benefit aligns with the gospel principle of wise stewardship over temporal resources.
12. **Promises are Conditional and Reliable:** Barbara reiterates the scriptural principle that God is bound by His promises when His commandments are obeyed, underscoring the reliability and trustworthiness of divine counsel. This assurance should motivate sincere effort to keep the Word of Wisdom and trust God's faithfulness in return.
13. **Role of Examples and Testimonies:** The use of personal anecdotes, scriptural references, and testimonies strengthens the teaching's impact. These stories provide tangible evidence of the Word of Wisdom's blessings and encourage faith among listeners.
14. **Encouragement to Seek Personal Testimony:** Barbara invites everyone to personally seek confirmation of the Word of Wisdom's truth through prayer, emphasizing that spiritual knowledge is accessible and that God honors sincere seekers.
15. **The Word of Wisdom as a Foundation:** The Word of Wisdom is presented as the first step toward comprehensive health, not a complete answer to all health issues. This perspective encourages continual learning and adaptation while respecting the foundational role of divine counsel.

Conclusion

Barbara's teaching on the Word of Wisdom offers a rich, multidimensional understanding of health as a divine stewardship encompassing body, mind, and spirit. She balances historical context, scriptural insights, personal testimony, and practical application, encouraging believers to embrace the Word of Wisdom not out of obligation but with willing hearts through faith and prayer. The promises attached to obedience provide motivation for compliance, while the acknowledgment of human weakness invites grace and continual growth. Ultimately, the Word of Wisdom is a vital principle that enhances physical vitality, mental clarity, spiritual strength, and the ability to serve God effectively in this life and beyond.