

Word of Wisdom Study Class

Class 2 with Barbara Hobbs

Study Notes

July 20th, 2025

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FQ-SSGyhg>

<https://www.livinghopebranch.org/word-of-wisdom-class-2/>

Summary

Barbara Hobbs leads a comprehensive study class on health, nutrition, and spiritual well-being framed within the context of the Word of Wisdom, a revelation from the Doctrine and Covenants guiding the dietary and lifestyle practices of believers. Barbara shares a personal testimony about the consequences of neglecting health principles and the power of unified prayer, emphasizing community support and divine intervention. She then shifts to the pervasive challenges and “evils and designs” in the modern food industry, including fraud, adulteration, false advertising, distorted public tastes, exploitation of labor, environmental harm, and the rise of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). These practices contribute to widespread nutritional deficiencies, chronic diseases, and compromised public health. Barbara provides detailed examples of adulterated foods, misleading labeling, and unhealthy food fads such as gluten-free and plant-based diets, emphasizing the importance of moderation and prudence.

The class then revisits the Word of Wisdom’s specific dietary guidelines, highlighting substances to avoid—such as alcohol, tobacco, and hot drinks (tea, coffee, cocoa)—and the rationale behind these prohibitions, including their negative physical and spiritual effects. Barbara elaborates on what constitutes wholesome food, defining food as substances that nourish, build, and repair the body with essential nutrients. Wholesome herbs, fruits, grains, and flesh are affirmed as God-ordained for human consumption, but with the caveat of prudence, moderation, and thanksgiving. Barbara stresses the importance of consuming whole grains over processed ones and critiques modern agricultural practices and food processing that strip nutrients from foods.

Further, Barbara addresses the impact of excessive meat consumption and processed foods on health, linking them to heart disease, diabetes, and other degenerative diseases. She also underscores the significance of gratitude and discernment in food choices, encouraging believers to honor God’s design for their bodies by following the Word of Wisdom. The study class concludes with community interaction, questions about nuts and dairy, and practical advice on herbs and spices, all reinforcing the message of mindful, wholesome living for physical and spiritual vitality.

Highlights

1. **Personal testimony** illustrating the consequences of neglecting the Word of Wisdom and the power of unified prayer.
2. **Detailed critique of the modern food industry’s** fraudulent and adulterated practices harming public health.

3. **Explanation of the Word of Wisdom's** dietary prohibitions and their spiritual and physical rationale.
4. **Emphasis on wholesome** herbs, fruits, grains, and meat as God-ordained foods to be consumed with prudence and thanksgiving.
5. **Warnings against processed foods**, artificial additives, and distorted food fads like gluten-free and plant-based diets.
6. **Discussion on the health consequences** of excessive meat consumption and the importance of whole grains.
7. **Call to exercise prudence, moderation, and gratitude** in dietary habits for overall well-being.

Key Insights

1. **The Spiritual and Physical Interconnection of Health:** Barbara begins with a personal health crisis linked to dietary neglect, demonstrating that spiritual well-being and physical health are deeply interconnected. Prayer and community support were instrumental in recovery, highlighting the role of faith and unity in overcoming health challenges. This insight underscores the holistic nature of wellness, integrating body, mind, and spirit.
2. **Systemic Fraud and Adulteration in the Food Industry:** The food industry's history of fraud—from early adulteration of staples like flour to modern deceptive labeling and chemical additives—reveals a systemic problem driven by profit motives rather than public health. This insight reveals how consumers are often misled by marketing tactics and the importance of vigilance and education in food choices.
3. **The Decline of Nutritional Integrity in Modern Diets:** Barbara points out how the shift toward processed, refined, and convenience foods has led to widespread nutrient depletion, contributing to chronic diseases like cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. This insight is a critical call for a return to whole, natural foods that nourish the body genuinely, reinforcing the traditional principles of the Word of Wisdom.
4. **Prudence and Thanksgiving as Core Principles:** Beyond specific dietary rules, Barbara elevates prudence (careful discernment and moderation) and thanksgiving (gratitude for God's provisions) as foundational attitudes toward food and health. This insight frames healthy eating not just as a physical act but as a spiritual discipline, fostering mindfulness and respect for the body and Creator.
5. **The Complexity of Modern Food Choices and Fads:** The discussion on gluten-free and plant-based diets highlights the complexity and sometimes unintended consequences of popular dietary trends. Many such products contain unhealthy additives, excess sugars, or lack essential nutrients. This insight cautions against blindly following fads without understanding their nutritional impact.

6. **Environmental, Ethical, and Economic Dimensions of Food:** Barbara touches on labor exploitation, animal welfare, environmental degradation, and corporate monopolies in the food industry, linking them to broader social justice and stewardship concerns. This insight expands the scope of dietary choices to include ethical and ecological responsibility, aligning with a holistic worldview of care.
7. **The Timeless Relevance of the Word of Wisdom:** Despite changing agricultural practices, genetic modification, and industrialization, the Word of Wisdom remains relevant as a divine guideline for health. It encourages believers to adapt prudently to current conditions while maintaining core principles of moderation, natural food consumption, and spiritual awareness, reinforcing faith-based health stewardship.

Conclusions: Expanded Analysis

Barbara's personal experience with illness due to dietary negligence illustrates the real-life consequences of ignoring divine health counsel. This story serves as a microcosm of a larger societal issue: the neglect of wholesome living amidst the availability of unhealthy, processed foods. The immediate improvement following prayer and administration from church elders highlights the power of faith and communal support in healing, reinforcing the interconnectedness of physical and spiritual health.

The detailed exposition on fraud and adulteration in the food industry reveals a deliberate and ongoing deception aimed at maximizing profits at the expense of consumer health. Historical context, such as the repeated defeat of food safety legislation, underlines the entrenched nature of these practices. The use of misleading buzzwords like "natural" and "organic," alongside additives and preservatives, obscures the truth about food quality. This creates a landscape where consumers must be well-informed and discerning to avoid harm.

The critique of food fads like gluten-free and plant-based diets is particularly insightful as it acknowledges legitimate health needs (e.g., gluten intolerance) while cautioning against commercial exploitation that often substitutes unhealthy ingredients or promotes unbalanced nutrition. This nuanced perspective encourages moderation and individual assessment rather than wholesale adoption of trends.

The focus on wholesome herbs, grains, fruits, and sparing use of meat aligns with both ancient scriptural guidance and modern nutritional science. The explanation of food nutrients and their synergistic nature emphasizes the importance of whole foods rather than isolated supplements or processed items. Barbara's mention of local herbs like dandelion and echinacea illustrates practical, accessible ways to incorporate healthful plants into daily life.

Health risks associated with excessive meat consumption, especially processed and farm-raised meats laden with hormones and antibiotics, are well-documented in current research. The speaker's reference to recent studies linking red meat intake to heart disease and diabetes reinforces the need for moderation and diet diversification. The adverse effects on digestion, hydration, and cognitive function further emphasize the physiological impact of dietary choices.

Environmental and ethical concerns raised about labor conditions, animal welfare, and ecological damage broaden the conversation beyond individual health to collective responsibility. Recognizing the food system's social and environmental costs invites a more conscientious and sustainable approach to eating, consistent with stewardship principles found in scripture.

Finally, the timelessness of the Word of Wisdom, despite modern challenges like GMOs and processed foods, speaks to the adaptability of divine counsel. The principles of prudence and thanksgiving provide a flexible yet firm foundation for healthful living that transcends cultural and temporal shifts, offering guidance for contemporary believers seeking to honor their bodies as sacred temples.

Barbara ultimately calls for a balanced, informed, and grateful approach to diet, integrating spiritual obedience, scientific understanding, and ethical awareness to promote holistic health and well-being.