

Vonda J. Thorpe
Kaysville, Utah
-543-1876-

Sanctity of Life

After hearing Mr. Thomas L. Rodgers of Bountiful, Utah tell the following story, I felt driven to really study the Word of Wisdom, as recorded in Doctrine and Covenants 89. I will first review his story, then share what in-depth study of DC 89 revealed to me. Mr. Rodgers' family consisted of his wife, Betty, six children 5 yrs to adults, plus nine foster children - 3 in college, 3 on missions at that time.

In Febr. 1990 Mr. Rodgers was diagnosed as having terminal cancer...tumors in his groin, breast, lower right abdomen, and one growing at the back of his neck with spines going up into his head. Weeks later he went through three hours of surgery which left him partly blind, partly paralyzed, and unable to speak clearly. Despite his having faithfully observed the 'Word of Wisdom', all of his life his body was failing him. He had already suffered the devastation that illness brings - bedridden for many months, loss of over \$30,000 seeking cures, the relentless pain of arthritis and hemmoroids, strokes, plus legs clustered with varicose veins & 100# overweight. One morning in January 1991, Mr. Rodgers awoke with severe chest pains, pain in his arms & other places in his body... recognized them as heart attack symptoms and soon was admitted to the Veteran's Hospital in Salt Lake City where he learned that he had suffered 'post ventricular contraction'. He was unable to work or care of himself. Six months later he was bitten on his hand by a dog, which resulted in a strep infection, type A. Again, he was admitted to the hospital. There the doctors tried valiantly to save his life but death would not release its claim upon him.

He relates that he felt himself leave his body, experienced joyous relief in being freed from years of relentless pain. He felt a wonderful, sweet spirit of love surrounding him. He saw tables laden with wonderful fruits and vegetables surrounded by many animals and people, all praising God in song and rejoicing. While in this state of bliss he thought of his wife, family and 5 year old son who would grow up not knowing his father. He pleaded to return to help raise their family. His request was granted but with certain things imbedded in his mind, namely -

1. He should be grateful to have been placed in the hands of honorable and righteous men of science and medicine who were sincerely working to save his life.
2. Now it was HIS RESPONSIBILITY to learn what HE must do to preserve his life.
3. NOTHING ELSE was to die so that he might live.

A summary of his near-death-experience was that 'I will grant you life if YOU will give life', i.e., share what you learn with others, that they might learn from your experience...and LIVE. Upon returning to life, he made a complete life-style change. From that time on Mr. Rodgers has refrained from eating meat of ANY sort, ALL dairy or dairy products, eggs and honey.

Nearly three years later, his weight has dropped from 265 pounds to 180. He is trim and vigorous looking, though he does still have a very slight speech delay problem. He still has cancer but it now amounts to only one small, diminishing, peanut-size tumor in his right side. Remarkably, three years after his brush with death, he was able to run and complete Salt Lake's 26.2 mile Pioneer Days marathon race, sponsored by the Deseret News.

His father was in a similar state of health but upon hearing his son relate his NDE experience, he changed his diet, too. In two years he lost 75 pounds and is now a trim, fit 77 year old who works at the Deseret Gymn with few activity restrictions. They both feel that their recovery came from living a higher level of God's health plan as stated in DC 89 - the Word of Wisdom.

Studying, analyzing, and researching the Word of Wisdom, as given to the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., 27 Febr. 1833, in Kirtland, Ohio, sheds new light on this revelation. We can show our love for the Lord by the choice of foods we eat. Keep in mind - "...HE IS THE SAME, yesterday, today, and forever..", 1Ne10:18 and in Hebr. 13:8- "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." This is important to remember in researching the Word of Wisdom. Alma 7:20 also confirms this.

Now please note: In Vol. 1 of "A Companion To Your Study of The D&C" by Daniel Ludlow, published 1978, p. 1171, it states:

"One of the most significant variations in the text of this section (DC89) is the ADDITION of verses 1-3 into the main body of the revelation. Prior to its publication in the 1876 edition of DC 89, the revelation began with what is now verse 4." Verses 1-3 are qualifying statements...not part of the original revelation. As published today, the Word of Wisdom states:

Verse 1. "A word of WISDOM, for the benefit of the council of high priests, assembled in Kirtland, AND the church, AND ALSO the saints IN ZION. (Given to THREE different groups - the church leadership and church at large. But who or what is that third group - the SAINTS IN ZION? How does that differ from 'the church'? This merits further study...would indicate all who obey His words).

Verse 2. To be sent greeting: NOT by commandment or constraint, but by revelation AND the word of WISDOM (common sense), showing forth the order and will (WILL means 'Thus sayeth the Lord!')...these four words constitute a COMMANDMENT of God in the TEMPORAL (mortal-physical) salvation of all saints in the LAST days.

Verse 3. Given for a principle WITH PROMISE (promise from GOD, not the medical community or such), adapted to the CAPACITY of the weak AND the WEAKEST (God makes no qualifying statement here but indicates this promise is to ALL who heed this advice. Might it not include the terminally or seriously ill, those born in some way deficient and even the animals we are designated as stewards over? (V.14 ...and ALL wild animals that run or creep on the earth.) of