
HEALTH, ATTITUDES TOWARD

In light of modern revelation, Latter-day Saints believe that the **PHYSICAL BODY** and its health and well-being are an essential part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. One purpose of mortality is to acquire and care for a physical body that is united with a **SPIRIT** in a temporary union. The body is the house or tabernacle of each person's unique eternal spirit. At death, the body and the spirit are temporarily separated. One cannot fulfill his or her eternal potential, however, when the spirit and body are apart. In the **RESURRECTION** the spirit and the then-immortal body will become eternally reunited and inseparable.

The physical body is a gift from God. No mortal body is perfect; some persons are born with handicaps or serious disabilities. Nevertheless, in premortal life spirits looked forward with great anticipation to receiving a physical body. Latter-day Saints look upon the body as an essential component in the progress to become perfect, even as the Heavenly Father is perfect.

The health laws or commandments given in the scriptures are to teach mankind how to care for their bodies. Such laws have spiritual consequence. Obedience to health laws can enhance physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

Latter-day Saints are counseled not to take harmful and habit-forming things into their bodies. Tobacco, alcoholic beverages, coffee, tea, and drugs are to be avoided. Fruits, vegetables, herbs, grains, and fish are good for the body; meats, however, should be used sparingly (*see* **WORD OF WISDOM**).

In addition, the Lord counseled, "Cease to be idle; cease to be unclean; . . . retire to thy bed early, . . . arise early, that your bodies and your minds may be invigorated" (D&C 88:124). Modern prophets have stressed that people should keep their bodies healthy.

Other principles, such as love, kindness, compassion, forgiveness, and charity, foster a healthy and positive mental perspective. A God-given moral code promotes good health and enduring family life by requiring **CHASTITY** before marriage and total fidelity within marriage.

Without a solid foundation of ethical values, including integrity, responsibility, self-esteem, and self-discipline, children and adults are in danger of being drawn to high-risk behaviors that impair both the body and the spirit. Mortality is a

time for the spirit to constrain and discipline the body's appetites. The choices made on a day-to-day basis determine whether one is incapacitated by addictive substances, suffers from sexually transmitted diseases (including AIDS), dies prematurely from degenerative diseases, or suffers traumatic injury.

Thus, Latter-day Saints believe that God has mandated striving to achieve and maintain optimal health. A central purpose of mankind's creation is negated when one trivializes, through wrong choices, the sacredness of one's own body or the body of another. The apostle Paul declared, "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6:19).

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JAMES O. MASON

HEAVEN

Significant meanings of the word "heaven" are (1) the place where God resides (Matt. 6:9; Alma 18:30); (2) the eternal dwelling place of the righteous in the hereafter (Matt. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:4); and (3) the type of life enjoyed by heavenly beings. A desire for heaven—to eventually live in a better world than the present one—is the basis of a hope that motivates Latter-day Saints (cf. Ether 12:4; D&C 25:10).

Although the specific word "heaven" is regularly used in the day-to-day literature of the Church, it is not as frequently used as it no doubt would be if there were not substitute terms. The revealed nomenclature involving the hereafter in latter-day scripture is precise in detailing the varied conditions that exist in the afterlife. Hence in LDS literature there are many words that refer to life beyond mortality, such as **PARADISE**, the **CELESTIAL KINGDOM**, the **TERRESTRIAL KINGDOM**, the **TELESTIAL KINGDOM**, or the **DEGREES OF GLORY**.

In the future, this earth will be renewed and receive a paradisiacal glory (A of F 10; Isa. 65:17–25; D&C 88:25–26). This change of the earth will