Temperate in all Things

To be Temperate is to have moderation, self-control and not do things to excess. It is also to have control of one’s temper. Being temperate applies to eating, drinking, habits that are addictive, including computer and game use. Intemperance (or too much of something) in anything causes an imbalance in a person’s life. This can apply even to such things as work and TV. A temperate person will usually exhibit patience and will not “fly off the handle”. They will not react in an angry way to something that someone says or does. Anything that is extreme is not temperate.

The Word of Wisdom is part of the Law of Temperance and was given as a test of obedience.

The dictionary states that temperance is: moderation, self-restraint, in speech, conduct, etc. especially in eating and drinking.

The opposite of temperance or self control is self-indulgence. (Yield freely to desire)

D&C 12:8 No one can assist in this work except ….being temperate in all things”

D&C 4:6 “Remember….Patience…Temperance”

D&C 6:19 “Be patient, be sober, be temperate”

D&C 107:30: “The decisions of these quorums….are to be made in all….temperance.”

D&C 38:10: “And now, as ye have begun to teach the word even so I would that ye should continue to teach; and I would that ye would be diligent and temperate in all things.”

Another word in the scriptures associated with temperance is mildness

D&C 38:41: “And let your preaching be the warning voice, every man to his neighbour, in mildness and in meekness.”

Gentleness is also an attribute connected to being temperate:

D&C 121: 41: “No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the Priesthood only by….. Gentleness…..” (see Alma 7:13)


An intemperate person is given to excess:

D&C 59: 18-20: “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. And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used, with judgment, **not to excess**, neither by extortion.”

The Word of Wisdom includes admonitions of temperance:

**D&C 89: 11-12:** “Every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof; all these to be used with **prudence** (carefulness) and thanksgiving. Yea, flesh also of beasts and of the fowls of the air, I, the Lord, have ordained for the use of man with thanksgiving; nevertheless they are **to be used sparingly**.”

**For the Strength of Youth:** “To care for your body, eat nutritious food, exercise regularly, and get enough sleep. Practice balance and moderation in all aspects of your physical health. Also, avoid extremes in diet that could lead to eating disorders. Do not intentionally harm your body. Avoid dangerous activities that put your body at risk of serious injury.2

**2 Peter 1:5-6:** “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; **And to knowledge temperance**; and to **temperance patience**; and to patience godliness….”

**Philippians 4:5:** “Let your moderation be known unto all men”

**Ephesians 5:18:** “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit”

**Galatians 5:22-23:** “But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy……..meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

**1 Corinthians 9:25:** “And every man that **striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things….**”

**Matthew 23:25:** “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion (greediness) and excess (lack of self-control or self indulgence)”

In the following article by Joseph A. Cannon he stresses the relationship between self-control and being temperate:

“….When we hear the word "temperance," we often think of the temperance movement, which advocated total abstinence from alcohol. While, indeed, abstinence is a component of temperance, focusing on this narrow aspect limits our understanding of the richness of the concept of temperance.

Temperance is "**the practice or habit of restraining oneself in provocation, passion, desire**; the suppression of any tendency to passionate action. **It is self-restraint** in the indulgence of any natural affection; moderation in the pursuit of gratification" (Oxford English Dictionary). In its early use, temperance was a synonym for chastity. Central to the idea of temperance is the notion of **rational self-restraint**.
In the King James Version of the Bible, temperance is the translation of the Greek word that means "self-mastery or restraint, especially of certain sensual impulses" (OED). One commentator notes that "'self-control' is the preferable rendering of temperance (since) the various powers bestowed by God upon man are capable of abuse (and) the right use demands the controlling power of the will under the operation of the Spirit of God" (Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words).

The central idea of temperance is rational self-control. Since the beginning there has been a war within us between right behavior and our natural inclination to indulge in our passions and gratify our desires. In recent decades it seems that there has been a ferocious increase in our culture of giving way to our passions and appetites. This is due, at least in part, to a radical change in the aims and methods of much of our modern education.

Recently, Princeton professor Robert P. George spoke at Brigham Young University. He commented on this modern reversal of the historic aims of liberal-arts education. "The classical understanding of the goal of liberal-arts learning is not to liberate us to act on our desires, but rather, and precisely, to liberate us from slavery to them. Personal authenticity (consists) in placing reason in control of desire. Learning promises liberation, not liberation from demanding moral ideas and social norms, rather, liberation from slavery to self." In the revisionist world of today, the idea is that reason "is not, and cannot be, the master of desire, but only its servant. In order to arrest and reverse the societal slide into hedonism and return to virtue, we must re-enthrone the idea of temperance, or rational self-control where our appetites and passions are restrained and governed by our better and more rational natures. By Joseph A. Cannon in the Deseret News 2009 END.

Ezra T Benson

“Another attribute described by Peter as being part of the divine nature is temperance. A priesthood holder is temperate. This means he is restrained in his emotions and verbal expressions. He does things in moderation and is not given to overindulgence. In a word, he has self-control. He is the master of his emotions, not the other way around.” Oct 1986

Kent D Watson

“Being temperate is to use moderation in all things or to exercise self-control” “A narrow definition might be “exercising restraint when it comes to food and drink.” “Indeed, this meaning of temperance could be a good prescription for keeping the Word of Wisdom. Sometimes temperance might be defined as “refraining from anger or not losing one’s temper.” These definitions, however, are a subset of the scriptural usage of the word.... In a spiritual sense, temperance is a divine attribute of Jesus Christ. He desires for each of us to develop this attribute. Learning to be temperate in all things is a spiritual gift available through the Holy Ghost. Being temperate is to use moderation in all things or to exercise self-control.” Oct 2009 Ensign