



## **Principle # 5 Abstemiousness**

*“Abstemiousness in diet and control of the passions, will preserve the intellect and give mental and moral vigor, enabling men to bring all their propensities under the control of the higher powers, and to discern between right and wrong, the sacred and the common.”—Ellen G. White, Testimonies, Vol. 3, p. 491*

### **What is Abstemiousness?**

Abstemiousness is an old word that simply means temperance or self-discipline. Abstemiousness is one of the eight SDA health principles and is especially relevant to diet.

### **Why is it Important?**

Self-control or discipline is a predictor of how “successful” you will be in life. Successful is in quotes because there are many different forms of success with the most common one being money and

career status. While self-control can definitely help you reach those forms of success, it also helps you to achieve whatever you put your mind to. It's been shown that children with higher self-control grow up to be wealthier and healthier than their counterparts. While still in school, self-control (even over IQ) can determine how well a student will do academically. Self-control is a huge part of life in whatever field you end up in and it's important for your overall well-being and health.

### **Abstemiousness and Diet**

In diet, abstemiousness is important in avoiding foods and drinks that are harmful to you and your body. Some examples of things that Adventists avoid include animal products, excess food, fast food, alcohol, drugs, tobacco, caffeine, and sugar. The idea here is that it's important to only eat foods that benefit our bodies so that we can be effective in everything that we do. The great thing about temperance or self-control is that by practicing it we can make smarter decisions which will lead to better health and in turn, a better overall lifestyle and longevity.

### **Trying to Lose Weight or Eat Healthier?**

Learning to practice self-discipline in small areas of your life can help you achieve your goals and improve your lifestyle. The best way to "learn" better self-discipline is to focus on only one thing at a time. Very few people do well try to change everything at once. When they become overwhelmed and fail, they feel as if they don't have any self-control, when in reality, they just aren't utilizing it effectively. For instance, if your goal is to cut out all fast food and stop biting your nails then you should just focus on cutting out fast food first. When you have been successful for 30 days straight, then you can start working on not biting your nails. By doing it this way, you will see a positive cycle start to form.