GUT HEALTH

LESSON 2



Self-Reliance in Health Course

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As we continue the analogy of building a strong, healthy body to constructing a home, the walls go up after the foundation is laid. Nutrition is like laying a strong foundation, and gut health can be likened to the walls that will support the function of the entire body.

Remember my story in the introduction about healing the skin condition all over my hands? Well during that time period, which was about five years, my four-year-old was experiencing frequent, high fevers and a myriad of health conditions that would vary from month to month, such as painful rashes, lung and bronchial conditions, ear infections, diarrhea, stomach aches with puking, pink eye, etc. Every month I was in the doctor's office trying to get answers and the results were about the same as my hands, "Take this antibiotic, it might be (fill in the blank with any condition)", the condition was different with each visit and each doctor. In essence, they could not help me. Again, I was left to figure this out through study, prayer and the spirit directing me to truth. Well, the root cause of both of our conditions was the same problem, our gut health. My son received an antibiotic when he was 12 months old to treat a severe sinus infection. Not only did he have an allergic reaction, but it also destroyed his gut flora and with it, his immune system. Every time a virus or bacteria got around him, his body could not fight it, so it went into extreme fever mode. Ironically, the very thing that caused the condition in the first place, antibiotics, was what the doctors wanted me to give him every time I went in. Luckily, I had the Spirit directing me not to fill the prescriptions and so that first dose at 12 months was the only one he ever had.

Every path to health begins with a healthy gut, which refers to the digestive system, primarily the large intestine. The microbiome is the bacteria that populate the gut. In fact, bacteria cells are thought to outnumber human cells, so you could say we are as much bacteria as we are human! These bacteria are key to immune function, working with the body to consume and kill viruses, toxins, and harmful bacteria. They produce vitamins and hormones, and they influence personality and even the way we think. They are tied to our nervous system, communicating with each other and with the brain, which affects mental health.

This microbiome consists of both beneficial and harmful bacteria. The key is to keep the beneficial bacteria more productive and thriving than the harmful. If there are too many harmful bacteria, the beneficial can morph into harmful, and that is where you see many of the health issues common in society today. Most health concerns have a root cause in the gut and once you work on killing off the harmful bacteria, healing the gut from resulting damage and feeding the beneficial bacteria, your body can return to a balanced state of optimal health.

Building the Microbiome

The foundation to a healthy microbiome starts at birth. A baby coming through the birth canal is coated with the first beneficial bacteria he will receive. Mother's milk will continue to introduce more bacteria that will enter the new baby's gut. Nursing provides the best foundation for a strong immune system.

Have you ever noticed how babies put everything into their mouths? This is a natural instinct the baby uses to continue introducing more and more bacteria into their microbiome. Kids love to run around in bare feet, climb trees, play in the mud, pet animals, etc. All this contact with dirt, plants, and animals continues to introduce different kinds of bacteria to the gut.

In his book *Eat Dirt*, Dr. Axe shares a few ways to continue building the immune system once that foundation is laid at birth:

- Toss the hand sanitizer and other sanitizing products and cleaners
- Eat probiotic-rich foods like kefir, yogurt, and sauerkraut
- Consume raw honey
- Get a pet
- Swim in the ocean
- Walk barefoot in the dirt and grass
- Do not wash your garden produce (yes, wash store bought)

Just as the bacteria can grow in the gut, it can also be destroyed. My son's experience with antibiotics is a great example of having an entire colony wiped out and what can happen when we do not have that strong foundation. Even though he had a home birth and was nursed, he was born with a weaker constitution that was discussed in Lesson 1, so I had to be more careful with his diet and lifestyle. Other ways the friendly bacteria can be destroyed is through over sanitizing; as antibacterial chemicals not only kill harmful bacteria but also wipe out the friendly, toxins in our environment, GMO's, pesticides in foods and soil, pasteurized foods, the list goes on and on. While this can be an overwhelming list, just do the best you can and ask the Lord to make up for the rest by strengthening and protecting your body through the efforts you can make.

The way to have a healthy gut and put up supporting "walls" in your body is to follow the suggestions above. If your gut is already damaged and you need to repair those "walls", here is an inspired, simple, gut healing regimen that will kill off and sweep out harmful bacteria, heal and soothe the gut to set a healthy terrain to build and strengthen the beneficial bacteria. In addition to this protocol, it is important to follow a whole foods diet discussed in Lesson 1 on nutrition.

If you are not sure if you have a gut issue, check out this statement from the book*, Eat Dirt* by Dr. Josh Axe: *"The signs of leaky gut can be confusingly varied:*

- *You might feel tired and sluggish*
- *You could get frequent indigestion, heartburn, bloating and gas*
- *You might develop sensitivities to certain foods, foods that you have enjoyed without incident for years (or decades)*
- *You can experience persistent "brain fog" characterized by a cloudy memory and lack of focus*
- *You may notice changes in your skin, such as dark circles under your eyes, or inflamed skin conditions such as eczema, psoriasis, and acne*

If the situation persists, you might start to develop more serious ramifications:

- *Chronic fatigue, adrenal exhaustion, and lethargy*
- *Crippling pain and arthritis*
- *A range of dangerous digestives conditions, including inflammatory bowel disease*
- *Autoimmune diseases like Hashimotos' thyroiditis*
- *Sometimes, frighteningly, inexplicably life-threatening conditions"*

I would add to that list "mystery conditions" such as my son experienced. As always, use your light of Christ to direct you if this may be an answer to a condition you or a family member is suffering with. I always start with the gut when addressing a health issue of any kind.

Gut Healing Program

The program is broken down into the following steps

- Kill Off
- Sweep Out
- Soothe and Heal
- Build and Strengthen

1. Kill Off

The following herbs are used to kill off the harmful bacteria inhabiting your gut. These bacteria can cause addictions, including sugar, alcohol, tobacco, and other substances. They affect mental health and can actually cause depression and anxiety. Because of their affect over hormones and cravings they can cause chemical imbalances, obesity, mystery illness, allergies and chronic conditions. Kill off herbs can be taken alone or in a combination.

Take any of these herbs along with your breakfast in the morning for 4-6 weeks. Dosage would be around 2-3 capsules, 1-2 dropperfuls or 1 cup of tea. Go with what you feel when it comes to dosage, remembering how each body is created individually and may need more or less.

- Black Walnut Hull
- Cayenne
- Clove
- Cinnamon
- Ginger
- Garlic
- Lomatium
- Oregano
- Peppermint
- Sagebrush
- Turmeric
- Wormwood
- Willow
- Four Thieves Blend (recipe)
- Autumn Spice Tea (recipe)
- Dr. Christopher's Intestinal Sweep
- Herbal Detox formula (recipe)

2. Sweep Out

These herbs help the body sweep out the bacteria that are being killed off. They will also help flush out other toxins and cleanse the gut.

Take these herbs in the evening before bed along with the kill off herbs in the morning for 4-6 weeks. Dosage would be around 2-3 capsules, 1-2 dropperfuls or 1 cup of tea. Go with what you feel when it comes to dosage remembering how each body is created individually and may need more or less.

- Dandelion
- Gumweed
- Flaxseed

- Psyllium seed powder
- Fiber flush (from *The Prime*) 1 tsp each of flaxseed and psyllium seed powder stirred into a glass of room temperature water, drink immediately.
- Red clover
- Yellow dock root
- Triphala
- Dried fruits; raisins, dates, figs, prunes
- Blood Purifier formula (recipe)
- Dr. Christopher Blood Stream Formula
- Dr. Christopher Lower Bowel Formula (recipe)
- Redmond clay
- Liver Cleanse and Support blend (recipe)

3. Soothe and Heal

After killing off and sweeping out the harmful bacteria, the cleansed gut needs to be healed. Harmful bacteria cause all kinds of damage including leaky gut, which is where the intestinal wall has been damaged and undigested particles can leak through into the bloodstream. These herbs and foods help seal up "leaks", tighten and firm the intestinal lining and soothe inflammation. They also lay a strong foundation for the beneficial bacteria to adhere to.

Take these herbs for 1- 2 weeks after the kill off and sweep phase, then continue to incorporate into the diet. Dosage for herbs and blends would be around 2-3 capsules with each meal, 1-2 dropperfuls with each meal or a quart of tea sipped throughout the day. Ghee, collagen, and bone broth can be incorporated into meals each day.

- Aloe vera juice (recipe)
- Calendula
- Chamomile
- Chia seeds
- Marshmallow
- Mullein
- Purslane
- Slippery Elm
- Licorice Root
- Bone Broth (recipe)
- Collagen; found in bone broth, certain foods or as a supplement
- Ghee (recipe)
- Gelatin; found in bone broth, gummies or as a supplement
- Olive oil, coconut oil, flaxseed oil
- Frankincense essential oil massaged over abdomen
- Heartburn Blend (recipe)
- Gut Soother Blend (recipe)

4. Build and Strengthen

Now the gut is ready to build up a healthy colony of beneficial bacteria. There are some herbs that will help with this, but most of the building will be done by introducing cultured foods, supplements full of different species of microbes, and "dirt". Now is a good time to incorporate the other ways to build beneficial bacteria that was discussed at the beginning of this lesson. Start slowly with the building process, one item at a time in small amounts. Be mindful of how your body feels. If you get nauseous, head or body aches or just not feeling good, slow it down.

- Alfalfa
- Clover
- Elderberries
- Nettles
- Red raspberry leaf
- Blackstrap molasses
- Yogurt and kefir
- Cultured foods and drinks
- Probiotic supplements or mixes
- Raw honey

Essential Oils for Gut Health

Essential oils can also be used in a gut healing regimen. There is a lesson that covers their history, use, and safety if you'd like to learn more before using them.

These can be used as an abdomen massage and/or in the bath:

- Thyme
- Rose
- Cardamom
- Peppermint/spearmint
- Clove
- Tea Tree
- Fennel
- Oregano
- Tarragon
- Essential oils for digestion (in Lesson 6 Digestive System)
- Digestive Blend (from favorite distributor or blend from Lesson 6)

Conclusion

Once the gut is healed you must continue to populate the microbiome with a regular source of probiotic rich foods or supplements and the "dirt" we talked about that comes through walking barefoot, not washing garden produce, cultured foods, etc. Make the foods listed above part of your regular diet and strive to avoid substances that will destroy your friendly flora such as too much sugar, processed foods, pesticides, and pharmaceuticals.

I just gave a big list of herbs and foods that can heal, repair and build gut health which will now need to be fitted to an individual and their constitution discussed in Lesson 1. Let me give you examples of how I applied this to myself and son to give you an idea of how this protocol might look.

Personal Example - child

For my four-year-old son with the "mystery" illness, all his meals were whole foods with no sugar or processed foods, and I tried to incorporate dried fruits and other foods listed above.

- Breakfast with a ½ cup of kefir, Gut Soother blend and digestives essential oil (eo) blend massaged on abdomen
- Lunch with gut support capsules w/probiotics and digestive eo massage
- Dinner with gut support capsules w/probiotics and a ½ cup of kefir
- Bedtime - two dropperfuls of Gut Soother and digestive eo massage

It took three months of this simple schedule to completely heal his gut. He no longer had fevers and his body returned to a balanced state with no more mystery conditions.

Personal Example - adult

My gut healing was a bit more intense. As an adult my gut had more opportunities for weakness and I have a stronger constitution than my son. This was the protocol I had to use to use for healing a nasty case of psoriasis all over my hands and ankles which began moving up my legs and arms. I incorporated other herbs and foods specific for the skin condition I was dealing with in addition to this gut healing protocol.

- Herbal Detox 3 caps, 3xday for 6 weeks with a 1 week break at week 3
- Sweep out with Liver Cleanse and Dr. Christopher's Lower Bowel, 3 droppers each, every evening before bed, 1 quart of Redmond Clay water daily taken at different times than the supplements so not to interfere with absorption.
- After 7 weeks I began the Soothe and Heal phase for 3 weeks
    - Gut Soother 3 droppers, 3xday
    - Aloe vera juice, 1 cup daily
    - Collagen, 1 scoop daily

    - Frankincense massage over gut each evening
    - Incorporated soothing foods like chia seeds, marshmallow tea, bone broth, ghee and olive oil
- Build and Strengthen phase for 6 weeks
    - Probiotic supplements in morning and evening
    - Collagen, 1 scoop daily
    - Probiotic drinks or food, 1 cup daily
    - Gut Soother, 3 droppers, 3xday

Assignment

Using the resources below or others you feel directed to, study and seek the Lord's will for yourself and family regarding gut health. Make some bone broth and/or a cultured food such as kraut or choose one from the Cultures for Health website. Replace chemical antibacterial hand sanitizer and soap for a natural one. I have included recipes if you'd like to make your own.

Resources for Further Learning

- Eat Dirt by Dr. Josh Axe
- The Complete Idiot's Guide to Fermenting Foods by Wardeh Harmon
- The Prime by Kulreet Chaudharey
- The Three Brain: How the Heart, Brain and Gut Influence Mental Health and Identity by Karen Jensen
- The Body Ecology Diet: Recovering Your Health and Rebuilding Your Immunity by Donna Gates
- Cultures for Health https://www.culturesforhealth.com/
- Traditional Cooking School https://traditionalcookingschool.com/

You can easily grow or forage your own herbs which is the best way to go but there are also many great places you can purchase bulk herbs or readymade herbal products. I will list my favorites here but this is not an exclusive list. When purchasing herbs make sure they are organic, and sustainably and ethically sourced. I trust and use Mountain Rose Herbs for what I can't grow or forage. We will discuss more about herbs in Lesson 4.

Purchase herbs and ready-made products:
Dr. Christopher's Herb Shop https://drchristophersherbshop.com/
Health Saves https://healthsaves.org
Home Folk https://homefolk.com
Mountain Rose Herbs

Lesson 2 Formulas & Recipes

FOUR THIEVES BLEND

This antimicrobial herb blend can be made into a simple tea, a tincture, or the traditional use of an herbal vinegar. Herbal vinegars are easy to incorporate into the diet by using as a vinaigrette on salads and in marinades or adding a splash of it into drinks.

1 Tbsp sage leaf
2 tsp lavender flowers
2 tsp rosemary leaf
1 tsp thyme leaf
½ tsp black peppercorns, crushed
4 cloves garlic, chopped
16 oz raw apple cider vinegar or
water (for making a tea) or
Vodka (for a tincture)

Turn this blend into a delicious vinaigrette (recipe from Mountain Rose Herbs)
1 part four thieves vinegar (above)
1 part olive oil
½ part mustard
salt and pepper to taste
Add ingredients to a blender or whisk vigorously until well blended.

FOUR THIEVES ESSENTIAL OIL BLEND

40 drops clove
35 drops lemon
20 drops cinnamon bark
15 drops eucalyptus
10 drops rosemary

AUTUMN SPICE TEA

4 parts red rooibos herbal tea
3 parts cinnamon chips
2 parts orange peel
1 part dried ginger root
1 part whole cloves

Mix all ingredients together. Fill a pan with a quart of water, add 3-4 tablespoons of the tea blend, depending on how strong you like it - I make mine strong with about 1/4 cup of tea blend. Place the pan over medium heat, stirring herbs into the water. When the water starts to bubble turn down and let it simmer about 5 to 10 minutes. Remove from heat, strain the herbs out

and add some raw honey to taste and little bit of raw cream. Mmmm, it is so good!

Purchase: Home Folk Bulk Herb Store Creamy Pumpkin Pie Tea

HERBAL DETOX

3 parts wormwood
2 parts black walnut hull
2 parts clove
2 parts chaparral leaf
2 parts burdock root
1 part lobelia
1 part barberry root

Make into capsules, tincture, tea, and salve. Not only does this kill off harmful pathogens, it cleanses, detoxes and supports the immune system. Use at the onset of any illness, for parasites, infections, and moving toxins out of the body. Typical dosage is 2-3 capsules, 3xday up to 5 capsules, 5xday. 1 cup tea, 3xday (1 tsp per cup water infused for 24 hours), 5 drops several times a day. Take a 1 week break every 3 weeks until body is balanced.

Purchase ready made: Health Saves HMCTN formula

BLOOD PURIFIER

5 parts red clover
2 parts red raspberry leaf
2 parts alfalfa (replace with nettle leaf if you are on blood thinner medication)

Make into a tea, capsules or tincture. Typical dosage is 2 droppers for tincture, 2 capsules or 3 cups of tea, 3 times a day until symptoms subside and/or you start to feel better.

Purchase ready made: Dr. Christopher's Blood Stream Formula

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S LOWER BOWEL FORMULA

2 parts cascara sagrada bark
1 part barberry bark
1 part cayenne
1 part ginger
1 part goldenseal root
1 part lobelia
1 part red raspberry leaves
1 part turkey rhubarb root
1 part fennel

Mix the powdered herbs together for capsules or make as a tincture.

This formula is meant to be used as a food to strengthen the colon and remove hardened, dried, fecal matter and accumulated filth. The amount you take depends on the condition of your colon, so it is important to be in tune with your body. Start with 2 capsules (or dropperfuls), 3 x a day and increase or decrease from there. I have a person in my home (not to be named ;) that had a major constipation issue, it took him about 25 capsules before things started to move. Note that it wasn't all at once. I had him take about 3 capsules every hour with plenty of water. Dr. Christopher also noted that he had a patient that had 40 capsules before things started to move, so it's important to gauge where your body is. Continue using this formula until your bowels are regularly moving, at least once a day, but you should know what your regular is. Some people will take up to six months to completely eliminate all the built-up fecal matter and rebuild the bowel structure, which can be damaged as it is stretched and weakened when constipated. After that just take the formula as needed. Please note this is not a laxative, it is a colon-building formula so look at it as a food, not a medicine.

Purchase ready made: Dr. Christopher's Lower Bowel Formulas

LIVER CLEANSE & SUPPORT

Use this formula anytime you need to cleanse, build, or support the liver so it can effectively remove toxins, hormones, and heavy metals from the body.

3 parts nettles
2 parts catnip
1 ½ part milk thistle seed
1 part yellow dock
1 part Oregon grape root
1 part dandelion root
½ part ginger

This formula can be made into a tincture, capsules or tea. Typical dosage is 2 droppers for tincture, 2 capsules or 3 cups of tea, 3 times a day.

Purchase ready made: Dr. Christopher's Liver & Gallbladder Formula

ALOE VERA JUICE

Cut one aloe leaf off the plant and set upside down in a jar of water for 15 minutes to drain the latex. Cut all the green leaf off so only the clear gel is left. Place in a blender with 1-2 cups of water and blend to desired consistency.

BONE BROTH

This is a basic recipe for broth that can be adjusted for what herbs and vegetables are available in your fridge, garden, or pantry. Anything you toss in the pot will have its nutrients and properties pulled out into the water, leaving you with a healthy, healing broth.

Fill a pot with bones of choice, including any parts like gizzards, feet, neck, etc. You can also use a whole chicken.

Then add:
2 Tbsp of apple cider vinegar (this helps pull the marrow from the bones where most of the goodies are)
1 large onion
2 carrots
3 stalks celery
4 cloves garlic
1 Tbsp fresh ground pepper or peppercorns
Any vegetable scraps or herbs. I love to add thyme, oregano, rosemary, and medicinal mushrooms. Forage through the garden or yard for "weeds" such as alfalfa, dandelion, lambs quarter, plantain, sorrel, etc.

Place your bones in a large stock pot and fill up with water. Chop all your veggies and add everything to the pot. Use one of the options below for simmering your stock, the longer it simmers the more will be extracted from your bones, vegetables, and herbs. Always go at least overnight. Sometimes I even go two or three days. When ready just strain and enjoy.

<u>Stove Top</u>
Set your stove to med-high heat and bring to a boil, then lower to a simmer. Cover and let simmer 6 -24 hours.

<u>Slow Cooker or Instant Pot</u>
Add everything to your crock pot or instant pot. Crock pot set to low heat, Instant Pot set to slow cooker and the time as high as it will let you go.

GHEE

- Start by melting a pound of unsalted butter (I like Kerrygold or make my own from raw milk) in a pan over medium heat.

- The butter will melt then get foamy, then start to sputter and turn golden. This process takes about 15-30 minutes.

- Once the sputtering has stopped, remove from heat.
- Let it cool for just a bit and then place a small strainer over a jar, pour and strain.
- As the ghee cools it will turn more solid at which point you can put on the lid and store it in the cupboard or fridge.

GUT SOOTHER

3 parts plantain
3 parts calendula
3 parts spearmint (or other mint species)
3 parts chamomile
2 parts ginger

For every cup of boiling water use 1-2 tsp. of the herbal blend and steep for 10-15 minutes or make into a tincture or capsules.

HEARTBURN TEA

Even though I call this Heartburn Blend, the herbs in it are suited for any type of indigestion. It works best when taken as a tea so that it can run down the digestive tract, coating and soothing as it goes.

Equal parts of the following herbs:
Marshmallow
Chamomile
Catnip (or any member of the mint family)
Fennel seed (crushed)
Calendula

Blend all the herbs together and use to make a soothing herbal tea. 1 tsp per cup of water or 3 Tbsp per quart of water. Let steep for 10 minutes or so and then drink as is or add some raw honey to sweeten. Optionally you can also add a couple of stevia leaves to sweeten.

NATURAL HAND SANITIZER

2 oz spray bottle
2 oz aloe vera liquid or distilled water
10 drops Four Thieves essential oil (40 drops clove, 35 drops lemon, 20 drops cinnamon bark, 15 drops eucalyptus, 10 drops rosemary) or antibacterial blend from your favorite brand.

Add liquid and essential oil to the bottle then shake up

NATURAL HAND SOAP

A foaming soap dispenser bottle
Liquid castile soap
Essential oil of choice – use the Four Thieves blend above or you can use a single or blend for a particular scent such as citrus or floral. This is the fun part of making your own soap.

Fill your foaming soap dispenser a quarter full of liquid castile soap. Depending on the size of your bottle and how strong you like your soap to smell, start with 10-20 drops of essential oil and adjust from there. Fill the remainder of the bottle with water and screw on the top. Give it a gentle swish around and you are ready to start foaming.