**Self-Reliance in Health Course**

**Introduction and Purpose**

Purpose of the Self-Reliance in Health Course:

Throughout my experiences and those I've seen with family, friends, and society, I have realized the importance of individuals taking responsibility for their own health and knowing how the body works, and how to care for it.  Many have been seeking ways to be more self-reliant in areas of finances, food production, and emergency preparation, but may not have thought about healthcare.  The purpose of this course is to provide knowledge and skills of understanding and caring for our bodies and those of our families by using the light of Christ to discern truth.

Seeking and Receiving Truth:

​Before we start on any journey of learning it is important to understand that each of us has been blessed with the light of Christ, which helps us discern truth. I can share with you information I have studied, learned, and applied with great results.  You can also read about what others have studied, learned, and applied with great results which may be different than what I teach. Both may be right, some may not be for you and some may be in error, so it is up to you to discover truth for yourself.  During this course it will be your quest to discern truth regarding the best way as individuals and families to obtain optimum health.   
   
Let me share part of my story of using that light of Christ to discover the best course of action for myself while struggling with health issues.  After my last child was born, I broke out in a horrible “rash” for lack of a better term, over my hands.  It started as a little itchy spot, that continued to spread across my palms as little blisters that would burst and ooze puss and rendered my hands pretty much useless.  I had to hold them in claws or else they would crack and bleed.  As you can imagine, caring for a baby and having three other children under the age eight, without the use of my hands was quite the challenge.  I went to the doctor and was told it was eczema and was given a prescription for a steroid cream.  “But what is the cause? How did it just start? How do I get rid of it?”  None of these questions could be answered.  I was not about to just cover up a problem, I wanted to get to the cause of it.  And so, my journey began.   
   
For five years I studied, I prayed, I applied, I tried this, I tried that, I followed step by step where that light of Christ directed me.  Through that path I learned about how our bodies were created and how they work.  I learned how plants are created and how they work with our bodies.  I learned about the power of God’s creations and laws.  I learned how to take my body and my health into my own hands and not rely on someone else to tell me how to do it.  I submitted myself to the will of the Lord and found that he had a purpose for me and in order to fulfill that purpose he needed me to go through this trial.  There are many things we can only learn through the trials the Lord places before us.  I was able to heal that skin condition by following the light of Christ. I came out with much more than healed hands; I came out with a self-reliance in health that I feel the Lord now wants me to share with others.

**Lesson 1 – Nutrition and the Body**

We Are Created in the Image of God:

One thing we all have in common is that we are created by God, in his own image. Our body is a gift from God. Each system has a special job and knows what to do to bring balance.

*“And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became of living soul.” Gen. 2:7*

*“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”* *D&C 1:27*

Although we are all blessed with a body that is in the image of God, we are created uniquely by a loving Heavenly Father.

Every”Body” is Different:

Often when we think of a person's uniqueness, it comes in the form of how they look, how tall they are, what color of skin, hair, and eyes they have, personality traits, and skills, etc. What is not often thought of is how unique our constitutional makeup is.  Everyone has been created differently, from their DNA to their personalities and preferences, all the way down to their microbiome (bacteria in the gut).  Some people have a strong constitution, they rarely get sick, and they can eat anything and continue to thrive.  Others have weaker constitutions, making them more sensitive. They are subject to illness, allergies, and other health issues.  This group must work harder on their health habits and be mindful of their environment. I have two sons and each one exemplifies those two constitutions.

Because of this, one person's health habits are not going to have the same results as another.  For example, if all four of my children come down with a cold each one will require a different remedy to aid their body in healing.  One just needs frequent hot baths and liquids, one will take a lot of herbs, one just needs an essential oil, and one needs all the above. This is important to remember when addressing health; what works for one person may not work for another.  This is true for the diet as well as dealing with illness.  Because every"body" is different, we will be exploring a variety of ways to help the body heal and function optimally, thus bringing about better health and vitality.

Another factor to keep in mind is that some health concerns are given to us from the Lord, to allow us opportunities to learn and grow, sometimes for ourselves and sometimes for others. All health and healing is dependent on the Lord’s will for each of us.

<http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/blog/healing-from-the-inside-out>

Foundation of Health:

I recently had a new home built and watched the construction process, starting with a solid foundation and ending with a beautiful, well-built structure that I could live in safely and comfortably. There is an order to follow when building a home, you cannot put a roof on before walls and walls cannot go up until a strong foundation is laid. The foundation is made of cement so it is strong and can hold the entire home securely. Once a foundation is laid, walls are put up, then a roof, then plumbing, electricity, and ventilation systems are put in place. I see that same pattern of order emerge in all areas of creation, including that of the body.

The foundation that we lay for a strong and healthy body is the food we consume.

Nutrition:

There is a lot of confusion about what a healthy diet looks like. We are bombarded with messages on what is the best way to eat; from eating mainly protein to avoiding animal products all together, each one contradicting the other.

Here are few examples of books I own that teach different methods of nutrition:

* **Dr. Christopher’s Herbal Home Healthcare** (Mucusless Diet):
  + No dairy, meat, salt, eggs, sugar, flour or any processed foods.
  + Do not “break-the-fast” until noon.
  + Whole grains (sprouted, low heat only), nuts and seeds.
  + Vegetables and fruit
* **Your Health, Your Choice by Dr. M. Ted Morter**:
  + 45% cooked vegetables
  + 30% raw vegetables and fruit
  + 25% whatever else you want.
  + Does not matter when, but first thing in your stomach each day should be fruit.
  + Decrease caffeinated drinks and stimulants.
* **The China Study** (Whole food, plant based)
  + Avoid animal-based products.
  + Minimize refined carbohydrates, vegetable oils and fish.
  + Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, and whole grains.
* **In Defense of Food by Michael Pollan** (Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.)
  + Do not eat anything your great grandmother wouldn’t recognize as food.
  + Avoid processed food.
  + Eat mostly plants, especially leaves.
  + You are what what you eat eats too (grass fed animal products that have not be given medications or GMO foods).
  + Eat a variety of foods.
  + Eat well-grown food from healthy soils (no pesticides and synthetic fertilizers).
  + Eat wild foods when you can.
  + Have a glass of wine with dinner.
  + Eat three meals a day – no snacking.
* **Eat to Live by Joel Fuhrman, M.D**. (Whole Foods Plant Based)
  + 90% of diet should be unrefined plant foods.
  + 10% can be whatever you want.
  + Use animal products as condiments.
  + Eat mainly vegetables, ½ cooked and ½ raw, then fruits and legumes, then seeds, nuts and avocados.
  + 10% or less should be whole grains, potatoes, poultry, oil, eggs, fish and dairy.
  + Rarely eat beef, sweets, cheese, and processed foods.
* **Nourishing Traditions by Sally Fallon** (Traditional Foods)
  + Consume foods in their whole state (no refined or processed foods).
  + Consume animal products that are from grass fed, pastured animals in the traditional way there were treated.
  + Consume raw dairy as a living food, avoid pasteurized products.
  + Culture foods for gut health.
  + Cook your food from scratch.

*What are your thoughts after reading this list of different diets that have brought great health for the people that teach them and many they have mentored?*

Let’s now take a look at God’s law of health and nutrition as found in Doctrine and Covenants 89, called the Word of Wisdom in my faith:

*“..verily I say unto you, all wholesome herbs God hath ordained for the constitution, nature, and use of man—Every herb in the season thereof, and every fruit in the season thereof; all these to be used with prudence 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;…all grain is ordained for the use of man and of beasts, to be the staff of life.”* D&C 89

This law also counsels against the use of addictive substances such as coffee, tea (black, white, oolong, and green *Camellia Sinensis* plant), alcohol and tobacco.

This one comes from the Bible:

*“He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine; and bread which strengtheneth man’s heart.”*

Psalm 104:14-15

I have found a pattern throughout my life and in the scriptures that shows the way God works. He is simple. Reading some of these books on nutrition overwhelmed me with their complexity. I have even followed some of them in the name of health and found my body lacking in strength and vigor, and every time I came back to His simple law of consuming fresh fruits, vegetables, herbs, grains, nuts, seeds, and animal products (as well as "junk food" and sweets) sparingly, my body has been nourished and given the life force it needs for proper function.  
   
I just want to emphasize that I am not perfect, but I also do not worry about what we eat. I only purchase and keep in my home whole foods and when we go out to eat or to gatherings, we just eat what we want.  We will still go out for ice cream or donuts for a fun family night, but we make it a special occasion, not all the time. I have incorporated many ideas from the books I’ve read and I love the 80% nutritive rich foods to 20% what you want. Please understand the Lord does not want us to be fanatical about our diets, but He does want us to be healthy so that we can be happy and have the strength to fulfill the missions He has sent us here to perform.

*“There are many good fruits to be plucked, to be eaten, to be enjoyed. We believe in enjoying good food. We think that these good things are given us of God. We believe in getting all the enjoyment out of eating that we can; and, therefore, we should avoid gluttony, and we should avoid extremes in all our habits of eating.”*

*Jesus the Christ* by James Talmage

If you or a loved one is experiencing major health problems, then you very well may need to follow one of the outlined diets above or one of the many others that are out there. This is where you can use your light of Christ to discern truth and determine what will be best for you.

Eat a Variety of Foods for Optimum Health:

We have all heard about the “scurvy” sailors of the past who got this disease on long voyages. They would lose their teeth, get spots on the skin, and even die. It was finally discovered that the cause of the disease was a lack of certain nutrients in the body, vitamin C in this case. Before then, vitamins were unknown. This paints a picture of the importance of a variety of foods in the diet, especially fruits and vegetables.

There are certain nutrients our bodies need every day for optimum health that can be found in the “Word of Wisdom” list of foods that God has created for our use and consumption:

* **Vitamins** – Deficiency in these can be the cause of disease and illness.
* **Minerals** – Naturally occurring inorganic compounds that are not produced by plants themselves but are present in the plant as they have taken them up through the soil. Plant minerals are absorbable in the human body whereas taking a mineral supplement will go right through without absorption. Have you ever eaten an “enriched” food (cereal for example) or taken a supplement and your urine came out bright yellow with a strong scent? What you are seeing, and smelling is the body not absorbing the synthetic vitamins and minerals. Green leafy vegetables and root vegetables have a good variety of absorbable minerals in them.
* **Essential fats** – Fatty acids the human body cannot produce on its own, mainly omega -3 and omega-6. These can be found in many food substances including vegetables but are mainly consumed in seeds and nuts like chia, flaxseed, and walnuts.
* **Amino Acids** – Compounds that help in the formation of muscles and tissues and half of which the body cannot produce but must get from other sources. These are found in meat, fish, legumes, nuts, and eggs.

Other nutrients the body does not depend on to live but play a vital role in a balanced, thriving body:

* **Antioxidants** – Target free radicals which can help with cancer prevention. Found in dark leafy greens, berries, grapes, garlic, and pepper.
* **Polyphenols** – Hormone balancing. Found in vegetables such as cabbage, cauliflower, legumes, grapes and berries.
* **Flavonoids** - Help your body function more efficiently while protecting it against everyday toxins and stressors. Found in berries, grapes, citrus fruits, dark chocolate, onions and dark leafy greens.
* **Carotenoids** - Nutrient for vision, plays a critical role in cell growth and in maintaining healthy organs like the heart, lungs, and kidneys. Found in orange, yellow and red foods as well as spinach and kale.

There are thousands of phytonutrients but only a handful have been studied so simply eating a variety of colored fruits and vegetables can ensure you are getting these “non-essential” nutrients into your body.

A Word About Animal Products:

The Lord speaks through his scriptures about blessing us with the gifts of the earth for our use, including animals, but they are to be used with “prudence” and “thanksgiving”.

The definition of prudence in the 1828 dictionary reads, “Prudence implies caution in deliberating and consulting on the most suitable means to accomplish valuable purposes, and the exercise of sagacity in discerning and selecting them. Prudence differs from wisdom in this, that prudence implies more caution and reserve than wisdom.”

Here is what God’s word says about using animals:

Doctrine and Covenants 59:20

“And it pleaseth God that he hath given these things unto man (beasts, fowls, herbs, food, all things that come of the earth); for unto this end were they made to be used, with judgement, not to excess, neither by extortion.”

1 Timothy 4:1-3

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy…forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”

Each of us should ponder these verses and even go on your own search through God’s word to learn about his gifts of the earth and how we should use them. The light of Christ will direct what is best for yourself and family.

If we are to be prudent in our use of animals, we should understand that they are not raised or treated the same way now as they were in biblical times, and we should inform ourselves of how the current food industry works. Man has tinkered with much of the food God has created for us, turning it into a junk food. Milk for instance has a totally different composition once it has been stripped, pasteurized, and homogenized, turning it from a whole, nourishing food, to a “manmade” product that can cause problems in the body. Most of the resources listed below will go in to details about this but I do want to mention the more you have control over your food, the better it will be for your body. This would include growing your own garden, preparing your meals from scratch when possible, having chickens for fresh eggs or purchase locally from those who raise chickens, shop at Farmer’s Markets, local farms and the organic section of your grocery store, purchase meat that has been pastured and not injected with pharmaceuticals, use raw dairy, etc.

While it is important to make changes where you can, do not stress about it or get too fanatical. Part of the Lord’s counsel on food was to receive it with thanksgiving. I believe when we do the best we can with our time, resources and means, the Lord can make up for what our food may lack. We can pray that the Lord will bless our food to work in our bodies as He intended it to. This does not mean we pray that a Cheeto will work like a carrot in our body, but that the meat you purchased at the grocery store that was fed GMO grains and injected with hormones will nourish and not harm. That the conventional produce you purchased because you could not afford organic will act in your body as the organic version will, etc.

Use prudence and thanksgiving in all the Lord has blessed us with.

Assignment:

Using the resources below or others you feel directed to, study and seek the Lord’s will for yourself and family regarding your diet and lifestyle. Try one or more of the following projects to incorporate more produce into your diet if that is a struggle for you or your family.

Projects:

* **Dehydrating** food and herbs <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/drying--storing-herbs.html>
* **Food Powder**: Once you have dehydrated food or herbs, turn them into a powder. Place in spice jars to sprinkle away on food or incorporate into your meals. I love to add powders to pancakes, waffles, muffins, and breads or add to sauces and soups.
* **Food Puree**: Cook, blend and freeze your puree in ice cube trays to easily add to your meals for extra nutrient content.

<http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/preserving-the-harvest.html>

Conclusion:

There is so much information pouring out from all areas: books, websites, social media, television, health clinics, schools, programs, etc. on how we should care for our bodies and bring about balance for optimum health, many contradicting another. I have fallen into some of the "fads" of our day, but the Lord has always brought me back to this thought:

*God has created everything we will ever need for health, healing, sustainability, life force, and balance in our life. He is a God of simplicity, not complication.*

Elder L. Tom Perry, a late modern-day apostle of the Lord said this regarding the creation*, "Now the creation of the world was complete.  There was a place for man to live.  The waters, the dry land, the night and day, the plant and animal life -- all were created for the benefit of mankind.  The supply system had been completed.  All that man would ever need from the beginning of time to the very end, if he was industrious, would be supplied him."*[*(As A Man Soweth, General Conference April 1976)*](https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1976/04/as-a-man-soweth?lang=eng)

Let us keep this in mind as we explore more about food and herbs as medicine.

**Resources for Further Learning:**

Not sure where to begin with changing your diet? Here are some great resources for taking the step to a whole foods diet:

* <https://www.100daysofrealfood.com/>
* <https://traditionalcookingschool.com/>
* <https://minimalistbaker.com/>
* <http://www.anniesplacetolearn.com/in-the-kitchen.html>
* @just.ingredients on Instagram

Learn more about the body:

* *Fearfully and Wonderfully Made* by Dr. Paul Brand (explore more about how our bodies are created and function with the analogy of the “body of Christ” for those of the family of faith.
  + Cells = Body of Christ, working together
  + Bones = laws, commandments & doctrines of the gospel = strength and freedom
  + Skin = love and charity (warmth)
  + Movement; muscles, ligaments, joints & nerves = free agency, order of hierarchy
* *Atlas of the Human Body* by [Takeo Takahashi](https://smile.amazon.com/Takeo-Takahashi/e/B001I7NDZS/ref=dp_byline_cont_book_1) (my favorite anatomy book for those who need a visual of the systems of the body)
* *The Sanctity of the Body*, Oct. 2005 GC Susan W. Tanner <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2005/10/the-sanctity-of-the-body?lang=eng>
* *For Strength of Youth*: How to care for your body and spirit <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/for-the-strength-of-youth?lang=eng>

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