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SEPTEMBER 2024

**GUT HEALTH AND
THE MICROBIOME:
THE UNSUNG HEROES OF
YOUR WELL-BEING**

**It's GREEK TO ME
(GUIDE AND DIRECTION)**

**RETURN TO
SENDER**

**LET YOUR LIGHT
SHINE BRIGHT!**



THIS IS HOW I SEE IT...

Vashti

We have all been blessed to have our own opinion, perspective, or point-of-view.....

It's not necessary that we all agree.

It is my hope that you see the truth within my words for this is how I see it....

bycherylvashti

RETURN TO SENDER

'REJECTING THE FALSE NARRATIVES OF OUR TIME'

In a world overflowing with information, it's easy to become overwhelmed by the flood of messages we encounter daily. From news platforms and social media to television programs, the media continually pushes narratives that shape our thoughts, beliefs, and, ultimately, our personalities. But what if much of what we consume is designed not to inform or uplift but to manipulate and mislead? It's time to reject these false narratives and reclaim our mental and emotional space through the transformative power of God's Word. While doctors diagnose and treat, God is the Master Physician who created our bodies with the remarkable ability to heal themselves. Everything we need is in believing, knowing, and having faith in God and His preordained design for our lives. He established everything for us before the beginning of time. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, we are spiritually connected back to our Father, returning to the way He created us—spiritually, emotionally, and physically whole.

THE POWER OF SUBLIMINAL MESSAGING

The messages we receive daily, often hidden in plain sight, are powerful enough to shape our beliefs without us even realizing it. From advertisements to news reports and entertainment, the content we consume is often filled with subliminal messages that subtly influence our thoughts and actions. **This constant bombardment of information, if left unchecked, can distort our understanding of ourselves, our worth, and the world around us.**

I experienced this firsthand, growing up with misconceptions about who I was supposed to be. My skin color wasn't as light as my siblings', and my learning style didn't fit neatly into society's expectations. These messages led me to feel inadequate and

disconnected from the truth of who God created me to be. I was in desperate need of emotional healing. But everything changed when I realized that God designed us with a “doctor” within us—His intricate design that allows our bodies and minds to heal naturally. The Word of God tells us, **“The fruit is our food and the leaves are our medicine” (Ezekiel 47:12)**. I believe this fruit refers not only to the natural fruits of the earth but also to the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control—which nourish our souls and bring healing from within.

God created our bodies to produce the necessary “medication” to heal and function as He intended. However, this natural healing process can be severely hindered by the stress and negativity we absorb through subtle, damaging messages—from the airwaves to the very environment in which we live. Stress often begins in the mind, with thoughts that are formed, rehearsed, and repeated. It's not just life's external circumstances that weigh us down but also the constant subliminal inputs that amplify feelings of lack, fear, and negativity.

Yet, God's Word offers us a different approach: **“Be anxious for nothing...” (Philippians 4:6)**. He invites us to trust in His peace, shifting our focus away from the chaos of the world and back to His promises. **Understanding the science**

behind our bodies only deepens our appreciation for the miraculous healing processes God has designed. When we allow stress to dominate our thoughts, we compromise these God-given abilities. But when we fill our minds with His truth and elevate our thoughts toward the positive, we align ourselves with the healing God intended for us from the beginning.

THE MEDIA'S FOCUS ON THE NEGATIVE

The content we consume is not neutral; it's curated and crafted to capture our attention, often at the cost of our peace. The phrase “If it bleeds, it leads” drives much of what we see and hear, as sensational stories dominate headlines, while positive and uplifting narratives are drowned out. This relentless focus on the negative has profound effects on our emotional and mental well-being, subtly shaping our worldview.

As someone who once felt defined by societal standards that didn't reflect my worth, I know how easy it is to internalize negativity. It's like a constant whisper that says, “You're not enough.” But God calls us to think differently. **Philippians 4:8** teaches us, **“whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report—think on these things.”** By fixing our minds on what is good, we counter the negativity that tries to shape our identity. **Each time we choose to focus on the good, we take back control over our minds and hearts, realigning ourselves with God's truth rather than the world's**

lies. This mindset shift allows us to rise above the negativity and live in the peace and joy God intended.

REJECTING THE LIES: RETURNING TO SENDER

We do not have to accept every narrative handed to us. By rejecting the lies and misinformation that permeate our culture, we take a stand for truth. Filtering what we consume requires discernment—a skill sharpened by God's Word, which acts as our ultimate guide. **Hosea 4:6 reminds us, "My people perish for lack of knowledge."** When we embrace false truths, we stray from the path God has set before us. But by guarding our hearts and seeking truth, we can find our way back.

Let's be intentional about what we allow into our personal space. **Ask yourself: Does this content align with God's truth?** Does it build me up or tear me down? By setting these standards, we can better protect our minds and hearts from the negative influences around us.

SHAPING A POSITIVE NARRATIVE

Living positively is a choice, one that begins with our thoughts and is reflected in our actions. By curating what we watch, listen to, and read, we can cultivate a narrative that uplifts and inspires. Keeping our emotions elevated through positive thoughts, gratitude, thanksgiving, joy, and a loving attitude does our bodies good. When we focus on what is pure and lovely, we invite healing, peace, and strength into our lives, aligning ourselves with God's perfect design and plan for our well-being.

Make the conscious decision to reject the false ideas that don't serve you and turn instead to God's promises. As we focus on things that are pure, honest, and of good report, we align ourselves with the peace and wisdom that come from above. **By doing so, we not only protect our hearts but also become beacons of positivity in a world overshadowed by negativity.**

In a time when falsehoods travel fast and negativity reigns, returning it to sender might be the most powerful action we can take. **Don't accept what doesn't serve you or align with God's Word. Send it back, guard your heart, and live by the truth that sets you free.**

This Is How I See It!

- Bullet Points for Key Takeaways:
 - Guard your heart against negative influences.
 - Focus on positive, uplifting thoughts and messages.
 - Trust in God's design and healing process within your body.



A PRAYER: REJECTING FALSE NARRATIVES

Heavenly Father, thank You for being the ultimate source of truth and healing in our lives. Help us to guard our hearts and minds against the negative messages of this world. Teach us to focus on what is pure, true, and uplifting, aligning our thoughts with Your Word. Strengthen our faith, renew our minds, and fill us with Your peace. May we always remember that You have designed us perfectly, and may we trust in Your healing power within us. In Jesus' name, Amen.



Let Your Light *Shine Bright!*

by:michaelgordon

“You are the light of the world!” (Matthew 5: 14–16)

I remember a song we used to sing when I was a child growing up in church. The song was titled “Let It Shine,” and the lyrics went, “This little light of mine, I’m going to let it shine, let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!” We sang that song with great excitement and enthusiasm because we wanted to let the light of Jesus Christ shine through our lives so that the world could see Him in us. Just as Jesus came into this world to show us exactly what God is like, we, as followers of Christ, must demonstrate through our lives who Jesus is. Our thoughts, words, and deeds should be a reflection of the life Jesus lived during His earthly ministry. The Bible tells us that Jesus went about doing good to everyone He encountered. He helped and healed all who came to Him. He never hurt anyone, never rejected anyone, and never turned anyone away!

Unfortunately, many Christians today are not allowing their lives to truly represent Jesus Christ. Too often, believers are mean, disagreeable, and quick to argue. Love has left the church building, replaced by internal bickering, disagreements, and competition for titles and positions. If I am honest, I too have missed the mark in representing Christ well. There have been times when I wanted things my way, times when I became frustrated and gave short answers, and times when I failed to treat others with kindness. We have all allowed our egos and emotions to lead us to act impatiently and insensitively. But we must realize that our only job as believers is to show the love of Jesus to everyone we meet. We must “let our light shine” and show others who Jesus is. Our moods or personal preferences should never overshadow the light of Christ. We must always allow the love, life, and light of Jesus to shine brightly to everyone we encounter.

My father often shared stories of his childhood in Mississippi during the Jim Crow era in the South. Despite the difficult and unfair treatment that the Black community endured, they

always rallied together to show love, even to those who mistreated them. He recounted how his mother, a devout Christian, shared their limited resources with anyone in need. Even though they were marginalized, they showed the love of Jesus to everyone, regardless of how they were treated in return.

I also remember the kind and loving Saints from my church as I was growing up. They didn't have much, but they always shared what they had with those in need. If they had a car, they would pick up others for church and take them home afterward. If they learned someone didn't have food, they would buy extra groceries and deliver them. If someone struggled to pay their bills, they would discreetly slip them some money. Even those outside the church were blessed by these acts of kindness as a way to show them that Jesus loves them. They let their light shine no matter the cost!

CALL TO ACTION

Jesus tells us that we are the light of the world. Light always overcomes darkness, and when we step into dark situations, the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ should dispel the shadows. My message to you is simple: it's time to turn on your light! Everywhere you go—let your light shine. Everyone you meet—let your light shine. Whenever and wherever you encounter darkness—let your light shine. It's time for us to shine...



A PRAYER TO LET OUR LIGHT SHINE

Heavenly Father,
Thank You for being the light in our lives and for calling us to be a light in this world. Help us to reflect Your love, kindness, and grace in all we do. Forgive us for the times we have failed to represent You well and have allowed our own desires, frustrations, and shortcomings to dim our light.

Lord, give us the courage to shine brightly in every situation, no matter how dark or challenging it may be. Help us to see others through Your eyes, to speak words of love and encouragement, and to act with compassion, just as Jesus did.

May our lives be a living testimony of Your goodness, drawing others closer to You. Teach us to serve selflessly, to give generously, and to love unconditionally, even when it's hard. Let us be a beacon of hope to those around us, reminding them of Your unfailing love and grace.

Holy Spirit, guide our steps, guard our hearts, and help us to keep our light burning strong. Empower us to shine in our homes, our communities, our workplaces, and wherever You lead us. May our light always point others to Jesus, the true Light of the world.

In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.



It's All Greek to Me!

(“GUIDE AND DIRECTION”)

“hodega,” which refers to a “tour guide”

“However, when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you...”

(John 16:13)

One of the greatest inventions of our generation, in my opinion, is the GPS—Global Positioning System. Before this amazing device, many travelers had to pull off the highway at night, fumble with a bulky map and flashlight just to figure out which direction to go. But thanks to the GPS, travelers now receive step-by-step verbal guidance, helping them reach their destination with ease.

Similarly, the Bible tells us through the Apostle John that each follower of Christ has an internal GPS called the Holy Spirit. John explained that there were many things he wanted to share with his readers, but once they received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they would have all the guidance and direction needed to reach their spiritual destination.

The Greek word for “guide” is “hodega,” which refers to a “tour guide.” Imagine having a tour guide in a place you’ve never been before. The guide knows every detail about that location—the ins and outs, the quickest routes, and the best paths. A tour guide can show you how to avoid dangers and help you fully enjoy your experience, pointing out things you might otherwise miss.

In the same way, the Holy Spirit is our ultimate tour guide in life. He reveals what we need to know, directs us where we need to go,

teaches us valuable truths, and warns us of potential dangers ahead. Our responsibility is simple: listen and be sensitive to His guidance and direction!

The Holy Spirit is always speaking to the believer, always teaching, and constantly introducing truth into our everyday lives. To reach our victorious destination, we must welcome, embrace, and apply the guidance that is always available to us through our divine tour guide, the Holy Spirit!

CALL TO ACTION

Are you ready to embrace the guidance of your divine tour guide? The Holy Spirit is always there, ready to lead you through every twist and turn of life’s journey. Don’t navigate alone—tune in, listen, and let the Holy Spirit show you the way. Invite His guidance into your daily life, and watch as He directs your steps, reveals truth, and leads you to your victorious destination. Start today—pray, be open, and let the Holy Spirit be your GPS to a life filled with purpose and direction!

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of the Holy Spirit, our constant guide and comforter. Help us to be sensitive to His voice, to trust His guidance, and to follow His direction in every aspect of our lives. Open our hearts and minds to the truths He reveals, and give us the courage to embrace His leading, even when the path seems unfamiliar. May we always seek Your wisdom and lean on Your Spirit as our divine tour guide, knowing that You will faithfully lead us to our victorious destination. In Jesus’ name, we pray, Amen.





Gut Health and the Microbiome:

THE UNSUNG HEROES OF YOUR WELL-BEING

by michaelaaronagordon

We often celebrate the heart for its rhythm, the lungs for their breath, but have you ever paused to appreciate the wonders of your gut? Beyond its role in digestion, your gut is a silent orchestrator of your overall well-being, weaving its influence into every corner of your health. Some even refer to the gut as the “second brain” because of its profound impact on our mental and physical health. From boosting your immune system to shaping your mood, the gut is the foundation of wellness. And at the center of this powerhouse lies the gut microbiome—a bustling community of trillions of microorganisms that call your digestive tract home.

THE MICROBIOME'S MARVELS

Your gut microbiome isn't just along for the ride; it's an active participant in your health, engaging in a lively conversation with your body every day. Here's how this microscopic world impacts your life:

- **Immune Superpowers:** Your microbiome is like a personal trainer for your immune system. It helps fine-tune your body's defenses, teaching them to recognize and fight off harmful invaders while keeping inflammation in check.

- **Nutrient Goldmine:** Those little microbes are expert chefs, breaking down your food and ensuring you absorb all the essential nutrients your body craves. They turn your meals into fuel, making sure nothing goes to waste.

- **Mind Matters:** The gut-brain axis is a direct line of communication between your gut and your brain. Your gut microbiome is deeply involved in this connection, influencing everything from your mood to your mental clarity. Ever had a “gut feeling”? That's your microbiome talking! It's no wonder that an imbalanced gut can contribute to issues like anxiety, depression, and mood swings.

- **Weight Whisperer:** Your microbiome also has a say in your metabolism and how your body stores fat. It's like having a team of personal trainers working around the clock. A healthy microbiome can help regulate weight and prevent the buildup of excess pounds.

- **Chronic Disease Defender:** Emerging research suggests that maintaining a balanced gut microbiome can lower

— Hippocrates —
'Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.'

your risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, and even certain cancers. Think of your gut as the body's early warning system, catching potential problems before they take root.

NURTURING YOUR MICROBIOME: A LOVE STORY

Taking care of your microbiome is like tending to a garden—it requires love, patience, and the right nutrients. Here's how you can nurture these tiny allies:

- **Eat the Rainbow:** A diverse diet filled with whole foods, especially those rich in fiber, is a feast for your gut bacteria. Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are like a five-star meal for them, helping your microbiome flourish.

- **Probiotics:** Your Gut's Best Friends: Probiotics are like reinforcements for your gut army. Found in supplements and fermented foods like yogurt, kefir, and sauerkraut, they introduce beneficial bacteria that support and diversify your gut ecosystem.

- **Prebiotics:** Feeding the Troops: Prebiotics are the non-digestible fibers that your gut bacteria thrive on. Foods like onions, garlic, bananas, and whole grains provide the nourishment these bacteria need to keep your gut in top shape.

- **Ditch the Junk:** Highly processed foods, sugar, and artificial sweeteners

can wreak havoc on your microbiome, promoting the growth of harmful bacteria. Think of these foods as weeds in your garden—best to keep them out.

- **Stress Less, Smile More:** Stress is a major disruptor of gut health. Practices like meditation, yoga, and spending time in nature are not just good for your mind—they're essential for keeping your gut balanced and happy.

EMBRACE A GUT-FRIENDLY LIFESTYLE: YOUR PATH TO WELLNESS

Cultivating a healthy gut isn't just about avoiding digestive issues—it's about creating a vibrant, resilient foundation for your entire body and mind. By embracing gut-friendly habits, like mindful eating, regular physical activity, and stress management, you're investing in a lifetime of wellness. Probiotics, prebiotics, and a varied diet are just some of the tools you can use to cultivate a thriving microbiome that will support your health through thick and thin.

Your gut is more than just a part of your digestive system—it's the bedrock of your well-being. By showing it some love, you're not just nourishing your body; you're building a healthier, happier future for yourself.

**AND AS ALWAYS REMEMBER:
IF GOD DIDN'T MAKE IT, DON'T TAKE IT.**



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♥ PRAYER REQUEST ♥

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THE POLICE AND THE PEOPLE
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PRAY FOR ONE ANOTHER

PLAN OF SALVATION

Jesus loved you enough to die for YOU so that you could have eternal life. (John 3:16) If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, He will come into your life now. (Acts 16:33; Luke 13:3) Just do these four things to begin your new life in Christ.

1. Realize that God loves you and has a good plan for your life. (John 3:16; Romans 10:10)
2. Realize that Man is sinful and separated from God and, therefore, cannot know or experience God's love and plan. (Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23)
3. Realize that Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Only through Him can you know and experience God's love and plan. (Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 15:3-6)
4. Realize that we must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives. (John 1:12; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:1-8)

If you are ready, I invite you to pray this prayer and God will come into your life right now: *Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Lord and Savior. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of my life and make me the kind of person You want me to be.*



To view our "Voices of Fatherless Child" project scan the QR code or go on YouTube to:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10y6RXEnM8E>



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