

CHAPTER D9

HOW TO GROW BY FEEDING THE SPIRIT

When the Pilgrims stepped off the *Mayflower* in 1620 they, according to a popular story, had a problem. They tried to grow crops in soil that was infertile. They didn't know the difference between fertile and infertile. Then an Indian came along and saved their crop by teaching them to catch fish and plant them along with the seeds so the crop would have flesh to eat in order to grow. So, what is fertile soil? It is soil with dead things in it called "organic matter." Any dead things will do – leaves, wood, grass, vegetables, ants, crickets, snails, frogs, mice, squirrels, raccoons, turkeys, deer, and even humans.

We learn something from this: In order to live and grow properly, crops need some living thing to die for them in order to become food. In fact, all living things in God's creation, from grass to worms to fish to people, cannot survive unless they eat some other living thing. It's called the "food chain." The carnal, physical, old-man body must eat some other physical life form in order to live and grow. Which brings us to the other body, the spirit body.

The spirit body is a real body. It is the pattern after which the physical body was made. Therefore things that are true about the physical body are types or pictures of something about the spirit body; in order to survive they both need something alive to die in order to become life-giving food. Let's examine the food that sustains the spirit body.

The "Lord's Supper" or "communion" has Roman Catholics and Protestants divided because of confusion over what Christ meant when He said to eat the bread that was His body and to drink the cup of His blood.

Roman Catholicism developed the purest form of idolatry with its doctrine. It says the wafer of bread at communion ceases to be bread at all; it miraculously *becomes Jesus Christ!* It may still look like a wafer but it has physically changed into Christ's flesh-and-blood body. Catholics are taught to adore, worship, pray to, genuflect before, and carry in procession the "consecrated" wafer because *it is God Almighty!* It does not – like the statues of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph – merely serve as a reminder of the actual person; the wafer actually is God. Pagan religions used to make statues that became their deity. The statue was not just an image of their deity; it actually was their deity. That pure idolatry is the essential core of Roman Catholicism; they take a physical object and make it their deity. And while people are no longer burned at the stake for rejecting that idolatrous doctrine, it remains 100% in effect in the Roman Catholic institution today. The Catholic doctrine of communion is incorrect.

The Protestants hang their hat on the word "remembrance" in **1 Co 11:24,25** along with the fact that **v.26** shows that communion is merely a picture of the Lord's death. To them the Lord's Supper is just a reminder that the Lamb of God died for our sins. Curiously, however, they try to turn this simple symbolic ritual into a deeply mystical experience with a theatrical air of mournful gravity. In fact, the way they handle the bread or crackers and wine or Welch's with such formal religious awe is similar to the idolatry of Catholicism. They are not practicing idolatry, but they are trying to artificially create an atmosphere laden with "religious meaning" – just as Catholics do with their sacraments. Protestants are partly right about communion because it *is* a remembrance of Christ's death. But it is more than that.

Spirit bodies, like physical bodies, need food to eat or they will die. But wait, didn't I say spirit bodies can't die? Hold on a minute, don't get ahead of me; we'll get to that.

Jn 6:58 teaches us that the physical manna from God eaten by the Hebrews in the wilderness did not give them everlasting life; it merely sustained, temporarily, their physical bodies. Christ's body, however, is the flesh, the manna, the bread, the food from heaven that, if eaten, will enable us to live forever (**Jn 6:47-58**). Does that mean the Catholics are right, that we should eat the actual physical flesh of Christ? Of course not; *physical* flesh does not profit *spirit* life (**Jn 6:63**). And we are told not to labor for physical meat (such as loaves of bread) with the expectation that physical food will give us everlasting life (**Jn 6:26,27**), but rather to labor for the food Christ will give us (**2 Ti 2:15**). Having to labor for spiritual food, by the way, is consistent with what the Bible tells us to do in order to feed the physical body; we must work to eat physical food (**Ge 3:19a,23b; 2 Th 3:10**). Let's now labor to identify our spiritual food.

One of Christ's names is "The Word of God" (**Re 19:13**). He is also called "the Word", and "the Word" is God (**Jn 1:1**). The Word became flesh (**Jn 1:14; 1 Ti 3:16**) and blood (**He 2:14**). But because Christ's physical flesh as food profits our spirit bodies nothing, we must see if there is a spiritual meaning to Christ's flesh. We already know that spirit means life, that God is both spirit and life, and that Christ is "the living bread" or "flesh" He gives for the "life" of the world.

Christ differentiated between physical water and spiritual water when speaking with the woman at the well (**Jn 4:10,13,14**). The woman wanted some of this water that gave everlasting life, still thinking it would affect her *physical* body by making it thirst no more (**v.15**). Christ tried to get her off the physical and onto the spiritual track (**v.23,24**). Then the disciples showed up with physical food for Christ (**v.31**). But He told them He had food to eat of a different kind (**v.32**). Like the woman, the disciples focused on the physical (**v.33**). So Christ got them onto the spiritual by explaining that doing God's will is the spiritual food He'd talked about throughout the chapters containing **Jn 4:34** and **Jn 6:38**.

Christ the Word brought us the word of God from the Father (**Jn 7:16; 8:28; 12:48,49; 14:10,24**), which constitutes God's will for us as recorded in His Old and New Will and Testaments. These words of God that He has given us are spirit, and they are life (**Jn 6:63**). And that is the spiritual food that nourishes our spirit bodies. The words of Scripture are the meat, the flesh, the milk, and the food for which we are to labor. And we eat that meat by *doing* what it says, by *doing* God's revealed will. So, somehow when we eat by *doing* the word of God, we are eating the spiritual flesh of Christ the Word of God. That is the only way to grow mighty in the spirit. What does that mean? It means we are not called to *learn* the Bible. I say again, our job is not to *learn* the Bible; our job is to do what the Bible says. That requires learning the Bible, but we should only learn the Bible in order to make it part of our lives, hearts, and minds. Let's look at it another way: Learning the Bible does not constitute growth, even though most Christians think it does. Learning the Bible is the prerequisite to growth, but knowledge is not growth. If we do the words in the Bible we will be *working for God* and He will give us growth. That's the only way it happens.

The Lord's Supper has three meanings. The first is His death. He gave His life for the church and we are to do the same. The second meaning builds on that death because He has given us His flesh so we can eat and grow: We are the seed planted in this infertile world and He is the Fish. The world cannot feed us; we must eat the Fish. If we do properly eat Him we'll find our growth is not all that happens. We'll find there is a third meaning because His flesh/word – like the fishes and

loaves – will multiply so we become able to feed/share Christ/the word with others. That is, as mature members of His body/flesh, we find the lesson of the Lord’s Supper is to feed others by dying to self by living for Christ and His church. Therefore, to newborn babes the Lord’s Supper is a reminder of His death. To young Christians it’s about eating/doing so we can grow. To mature Christians it’s about feeding others. This obviously is not to imply that mature Christians no longer have to eat/study/do the word; doth not nature itself show that even mature people must eat to live? I’m just emphasizing our duty to follow Christ’s example by giving our lives for the brethren (**Ro 12:1; 1 Co 11:24; 15:29,31; 1 Jn 3:16**).

Because we must work in order to eat in order to live, we have a works religion. Even *before his fall* Adam had to work to eat to live in the very same way we are to work: He was required to be an obedient doer of **Ge 2:17**. (And this verse still applies to us today. Let them that have ears to hear, hear.) When Adam quit being a doer of that Scripture, he was cut off from the food of the tree of life and he died.

Dying to self means learning to control or overrule the carnal mind and body. That is why we are commanded to occasionally fast from physical food. However, because it is so important to remain spiritually strong and vigilant by feeding daily on the word of God we are never told to fast from our spiritual meat. Eating the word of God is how God nourishes our spirit body and teaches our soul the proper way to think.

If you stop eating the word of God you will, without spiritual nourishment, begin to shrivel on the Vine because backsliders, rather than receiving *nourishment* for their soul, receive “*leanness*” from God (**Ps 106:15**). If you backslide long enough you will fall from the Vine and lose your submissive attitude toward the Scriptures. At that point, without His Headship, without His guiding hand on the tiller, it doesn’t matter what course you take because it’s *you* doing it *on your own*. You are *independent*; you are *carnal*. Therefore, because of **Ro 8:7**, even if a fallen Christian lives by the Bible he is not serving God because it’s not the works themselves that matter, it’s works of *obedience*. If you’re not attached to the Vine, God is not your boss – you are! Therefore anything you do is credited to you (God is not glorified) because now, *whether you realize it or not*, you’re trying to establish your own righteousness – something that comes only from obeying Him. Your spirit body is now a devil, an independent angel. You starved yourself to death even while you were attached to the Vine of Life Himself because you ignored the milk from the spirit body by choosing Reason from the Natural body.

It is important to realize what an independent angel – a devil – is. In order to do so we must remember what Reason is: Reason is carnality, it is thinking independently from God, and it is blindness. Carnal Christians usually do not realize they are offending God by using Reason, because Reason blinds them into thinking the issue God cares about is *right and wrong* rather than *authority*. That makes them think *good works* will justify them and prove they are good servants of God (**Mt 7:22**). But works are only good if they are *obedient works* done while you are in God’s good graces, in the favor of God, attached to the Vine. If you are still attached to the Vine, your works of submissive obedience glorify God and show you to be a good and faithful servant. We can learn a lot about carnal Christians by examining Satan’s service to God.

That’s right, King Satan, the king of the Kingdom of Heaven who is warring against God, is today serving God. Let’s prove that with two quick examples and then get into what’s going on and why.

King Satan still goes before the throne of God, because God is the King of kings. The two of them converse easily, and God gives Satan orders and restrictions about things God wants Satan to do (see **Jb 1:6-12; 2:1-7**, and compare **2 Sa 24:1,2** with **1 Ch 21:1,2**). On the surface it looks like the two of them get along pretty well – but not when you understand Biblical principles like authority and carnality. Understanding those things – and applying them to Satan – allows us to understand what carnal Christians are doing today and why they are so evil in God’s eyes.

Satan is carnal; he uses Reason. He wants to continue to serve God forever...but he also wants a measure of independence so he can have the Freedom to think and have opinions, and he wants the right to have personal possessions. Satan thinks those desires are minor because *in the main he just wants us all to get along with each other*. In other words, Satan thinks the war he is fighting is a gentlemanly one: he and God are civil with each other, God gives Satan jobs to carry out, and Satan performs those duties thinking he is proving he is a worthy servant of God. From a carnal perspective, Satan’s position doesn’t seem all that “bad.” After all, he’s not making hateful faces at God and trying to overthrow or kill Him. But didn’t Satan and his fallen angels fight against God in the beginning when God used the Deep to flood and destroy the earth? Yes, but that battle may not have been the kind of battle in which the combatants were trying to kill each other; it may have been a conflict of ideologies. It is possible Satan was husbanding the garden of God (Eden) to the best of his carnal ability. And he and many angels (the other carnal ones) thought everything was working out pretty well – just like King Saul thought the world’s first Thanksgiving feast to praise God for His blessings was a good idea; just like David thought his idea to replace God’s tabernacle with a “better” temple was a good idea; and just like Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and 250 of the most renowned Christians in the world thought they could make the world a better place (all of which we covered in chapter H2). How did God react to these innocent, well-intentioned, and peaceful ideas? With righteous anger that caught His carnal children by surprise: He violently destroyed Eden, He got rid of Saul, He sent Nathan to rebuke David, and He killed all of the respected Christians and their families.

What this all means, of course, is *ideology* is what God is interested in, and His ideology is all based on authority – not on right and wrong. The forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil made the people above think they had good ideas that would please God. But He was violently enraged because those things threaten to undermine the authority of the one and only God Almighty. And that same forbidden fruit makes Christians today think they are pleasing God. But they aren’t.

When we are carnal, we think the above servants of God had good ideas and good, peaceful intentions. And we think God overreacted with anger and deadly violence. But once we understand and apply the principles in the Bible, which means we understand why the issue of authority makes carnality *violent enmity against God*, we realize why all of the above were and are evil and absolutely unacceptable. That’s why Satan thinks his service to God and his “peaceful” attempts to prevail over the church by getting us to be Reasonable enough to “all get along” are good. And that’s why today’s carnal Christians think they are doing good. But it is all an abomination to God because – on an ideological level and according to the rules of this war – it threatens to displace God’s monarchy with us, a multi-headed democratic beast.

In sum, we must grow into successful servant-warriors. We must eat if we are to live, and we must work if we are to eat. Therefore we must work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (**Ph 2:12**). Learn to discern: The eyes are the windows through which the soul looks and learns. The ears are likewise portals of learning for the soul. But we have two bodies with eyes and ears. We must not let our souls get the wrong inputs. Let them that have ears to hear, hear.