



Connecting With God For a Strong Finish

So we'll be Ready when the Time Comes

PART 2

How to Connect with God for Strength

CHAPTER 8

Eat for Strength

“Do this in Remembrance of Me”

Adam and Eve tasted death because they consumed a forbidden fruit. Their heedless indulgence corrupted generations of descendants with inbred iniquity. It tainted their DNA with fatal genetic variants, which predispose us to sickness, disease, and death.

Jesus came to restore our life with renewed strength and spiritual vitality. He told His disciples:

*“there are some standing here who will not **taste death** until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.”* (Mark 9:1 ESV; also Matthew 16:28, Luke 9:27 and John 8:52)

The name Jesus literally means Savior: He saved us from a fatal end with eternal consequences. We embrace God’s Kingdom and experience His power because Jesus replaced our heritable weakness with everlasting life. Jesus became sin so we might become His glorious bride adorned with exquisite virtue and enduring beauty.

*But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God **He might taste** [geuomai] **death for everyone**.* (Hebrews 2:9 NAS)

The Greek word *geuomai* means to taste, eat, feel, or experience. Bible translators for the NAS, NIV, ESV, NKJ, and NRS consistently translate this word as “*taste*” in Hebrews 2:9, Mark 9:1, Matthew 16:28, Luke 9:27, and John 8:52. By tasting death on our behalf, Jesus restored our noble identity; He suffered and died to reclaim our royal destiny. Jesus deserves praise and worship as we remember who He is and celebrate what He has accomplished for our sake.

A Fitting Reminder

Jesus served food and drink to keep the memory of His presence alive. By stimulating our taste buds, He sustains a tangible reminder of His unprecedented love.

*And when [Jesus] had taken some **bread** and given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is **My body** which is **given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.**” And in the same way He took **the cup** after they had eaten, saying, “This cup which is **poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.**” (Luke 22:19-20 NAS)*

The Son of God came into this world as the Son of Man. He arrived in an ancient city five miles (8 km) south of Jerusalem. In Hebrew and Aramaic Bethlehem means “house of bread”. How fitting that Jesus would identify Himself saying, “*I am the bread of life*”.¹ After feeding 5,000 with five barley loaves, He challenged a grumbling audience with these words:

“Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.” (John 6:49-51 NAS)

¹ John 6:48

In response, contentious Jews began arguing with each another. So Jesus fed them another course of spiritual truth, which was even more difficult to digest:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.” (John 6:53-58 NAS)

Breaking bread and drinking wine provides a graphic reminder that Jesus died for our sins. This basic meal so commonly eaten provides a memorable connection with Jesus. Incorporating simple ingredients through our mouth and into our body reinforces the reality that Jesus Christ lives within us.

But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. (1 Corinthians 6:17 NIV)

Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1 Corinthians 3:16 NAS)

Communion literally means sharing. From the Greek word *koinonia*, it conveys a notion of fellowship with mutual participation. Bible translators use three English words (communion, sharing, and participation) to communicate this truth.

*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the **communion** (sharing, NAS and NRS, or **participation**, ESV and NIV) of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the **communion** (sharing, NAS and NRS, or **participation**, ESV and NIV) of the body of Christ? (1 Corinthians 10:16 NKJ)*

Drinking the cup, we share a spiritual blessing through “*the blood of Christ*”. Eating the bread, we participate in a mutual bond with “*the body of Christ*”.

Edible Props Speak Louder than Words

*For whenever you **eat** this bread and **drink** this cup, you **proclaim the Lord's death until he comes**. (1 Corinthians 11:26 NIV)*

Eating this bread and drinking this cup reenacts an indispensable narrative. It restates God’s passion to redeem His bride the Church. By paying the ultimate penalty for our sins, Jesus satisfied God’s righteous standard for justice.

A Fatal Error in Self-Examination

Before eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Eve failed to examine herself; and she failed to recognize the long-range consequences of her choice. We should take care not to repeat Eve’s fatal error. Participating in Holy Communion requires careful self-examination, which involves discernment and recognition. Paul issued an explicit warning concerning this highly symbolic and effective meal.

*Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to **examine** [Greek=dokimazo] **himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup**. For anyone who eats and drinks without **recognizing** [Greek=diakrino] **the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself**. That is why many among you are **weak** and **sick**, and a number of you have **fallen asleep** [i.e., died]. (1 Corinthians 11:27-30 NIV)*

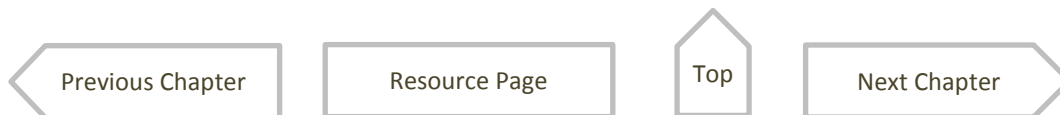
Participating in Holy Communion involves judgments and rewards, similar to those applied in the Garden of Eden. Based on the Greek word *dokimazo*, participants must “*examine*” themselves to determine

whether they are worthy to partake, i.e., whether they are genuine and sincere.²

After considering their worth in Christ, sincere communicants perform a second appraisal. They endeavor to “*recognize*” the Lord’s body, based on the Greek word *diakrino*, which means preferring and choosing its value by making a discriminating distinction.³

As in the Garden of Eden, the judgment associated with heedless consumption involves a penalty: weakness, infirmity, and death. The reward associated with Holy Communion involves remembering Jesus and participating in a life-transforming message. By partaking in the Lord’s Supper, “*you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes*”.⁴

After administering a careful self-examination, we share this special meal with immense gratitude. We are stronger, happier, and healthier because Jesus tasted death for us on a bloodstained cross.



² <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/dokimazo.html> accessed 10/20/15

³ <http://www.biblestudytools.com/lexicons/greek/nas/diakrino.html> accessed 10/20/15

⁴ 1 Corinthians 11:26 NIV