

## Soul Food

### 1 Corinthians 3:1-2

Online Sermon: [http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page\\_id=3567](http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567)

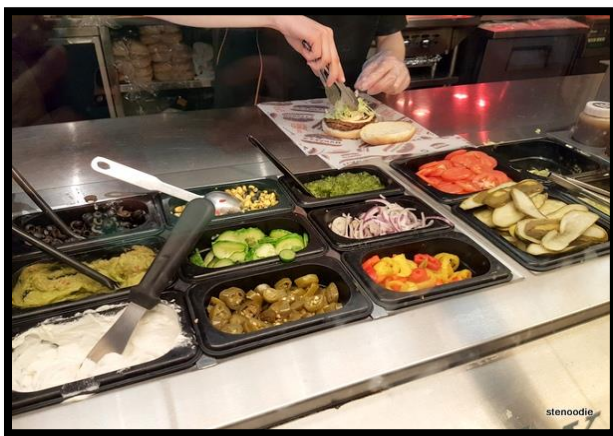
Ever wonder why we as Christ's royal priests (1 Peter 2:9) and ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20) can't seem to get closer to God? Why is it so hard to have a relationship with He who is indivisibly present everywhere (Psalms 139), especially when He promises that those



who seek will find Him (Proverbs 8:17; Matthew 7:7)? Having received the precious gift of salvation (John 3:16) one would think that those who were purchased at a price (1 Corinthians 6:20) would not mimic the lukewarm hearts of the Laodiceans (Revelation 3:15) but would instead easily reject the ways of this world (1 John 2:15-17) and seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33)! While most Christians say they are no longer in love with this world they remain unwilling to make Jesus the lord of their entire being. For most the decisions that they make are often more a reflection of

their love for this world than their love for God! The solution to this problem I am going to argue can be found in choosing the right soul food.

### How to Make the Right Hamburger Illustration



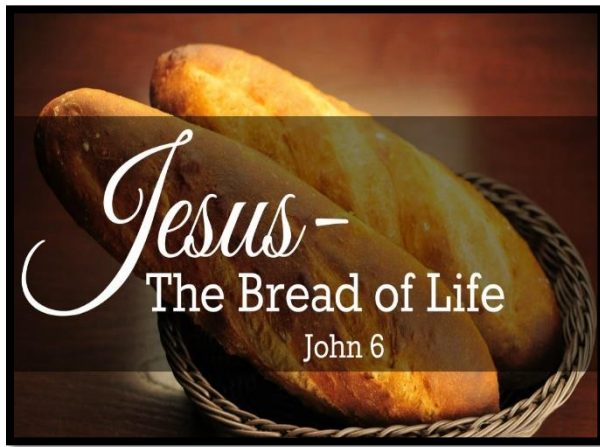
When I say the word "soul food" this brings images of fried chicken, baby back ribs, sirloin tip steak, home-made chili, poutine and a mountain of deserts the variety of which not even the colors of the rainbow can contain. The soul food that I want to focus on today is none other than the traditional hamburger. Since I believe we learn better with picture and words than with words alone, I going to begin this sermon by describing the illustration I did at the beginning of the church service. I set up a table and on it I placed a hot plate and a

frying pan. I then got dressed up as a chef and proceeded to fry the hamburgers. If I had not already had the attention of everyone when they saw me as a chef, I certainly did the moment they smelled those burgers warming up (I precooked them the night before)! I then asked the

children to come forward. Each one was given a turn to wear a chef's hat while they chose how to make their ultimate hamburger. One by one they took a bun and patty in hand and then chose to add from the display table either ketchup, mustard, relish, pickles, tomatoes, cheese, lettuce, mayonnaise, onions, milk and sugar. I then asked the children if they would use their imaginations for I was about to explain how the making of these hamburgers might explain how they are to be fed and grow to become mature Christians.

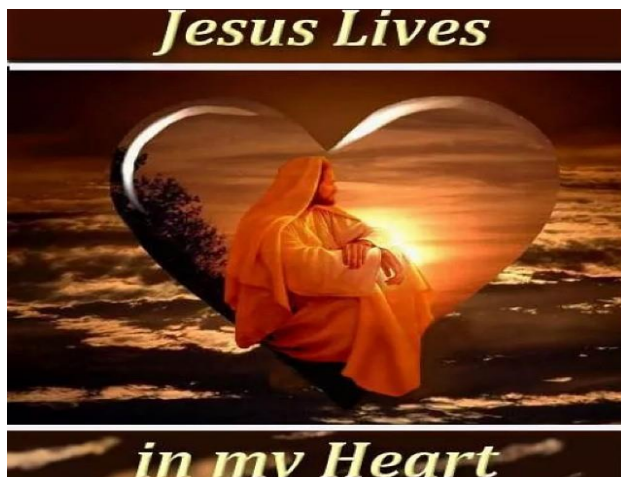
## **Bread of Life**

The bread in this illustration is taken from John 6:35 where Jesus says He is the bread of life. Jesus not only created us but also grants our bodies the ability to live day in and day out (Colossians 1:16; Psalms 139). Every heart beat and breath we take comes from Him! Jesus



knew you long before you were born, and His desire has always been that you might come to believe in Him. Not just to believe that He exists but also to want to become part of His family (John 1:12). So how do you get adopted into God's family? Well, first by saying sorry to Jesus for having not known who He is. When we chose to live our lives without listening and obeying Jesus it proves that we do not yet love Him (1 John 5:2). Your disobedience made God angry to the point that you had to be punished (Romans 6:23). Jesus chose to take your punishment

upon Himself by dying on the cross (John 10:18) so that you might have a chance to say that you are sorry. So, the first step in becoming a member of God's family is to say you are sorry and to believe in Jesus Christ (1 John 5:1).



The next step in becoming a member of God's family is to ask Jesus to come dwell inside of you (Ephesians 3:17). When you do this something truly wonderful happens! The Bible tells us that we are born again, not of flesh and blood but of the Spirit (John 1:13). When the Bible says born of flesh and blood this means that each one of you were born with hands, arms, legs, hair, nose ears and a body. While it is important to have a physical body, Jesus says that this alone does not get a person into God's family (1 Corinthians 15:50). To become part of His family you

must not only say you are sorry and believe in Jesus (John 3:16) but must also invite Him into your heart. Inviting Him in is as simple as saying "Jesus please come into my heart for I am

sorry that I ignored and disobeyed You. From now on I want to live to please you.” The moment that you tell Jesus this you are born again. Not only does His Spirit come live inside of you but from that moment you are part of His family forever (2 Corinthians 1:22)!<sup>1</sup>

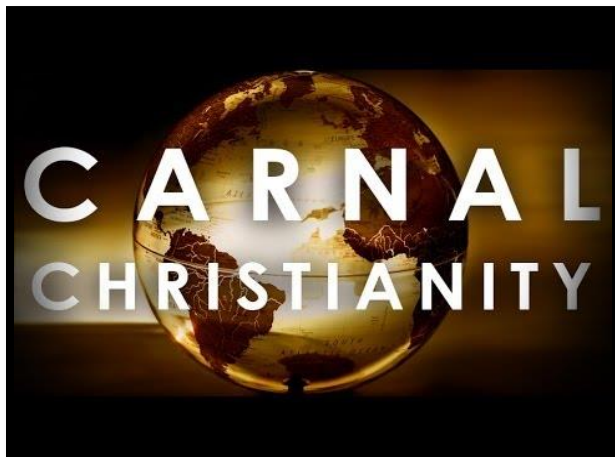
Let’s go back to the illustration, the making of the hamburgers. Where would a hamburger be without the bread? Notice how each of the children started creating their ultimate burger by first selecting a bun? After all, without the bun how could one ever hold the meat and



toppings together? So, why would we ever think we could come to know Christ without having first become saved? You might be thinking what an odd statement to make inside of a church! Maybe, but think about what Jesus told the Pharisees. They believed their knowledge of the Law and their lineage with Abraham guaranteed them forever a place in God’s family. What did Jesus tell them? Did He not call them a “brood of vipers” destined for the fires of hell (Matthew 3:7-12)? While learning more about God might impress your friends and family, it does not

mean entrance into God’s kingdom because that requires confession, belief in the atoning sacrifice of Christ and the surrender of one’s heart! So, without the bun, that is the bread of life, the most one can ever hope is to hear Christ’s say the words “I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!” (Matthew 7:21-23)

## The Meat of the Gospel Message



**Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. <sup>2</sup>I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready.**

**1 Corinthians 3:1-2, NIV**

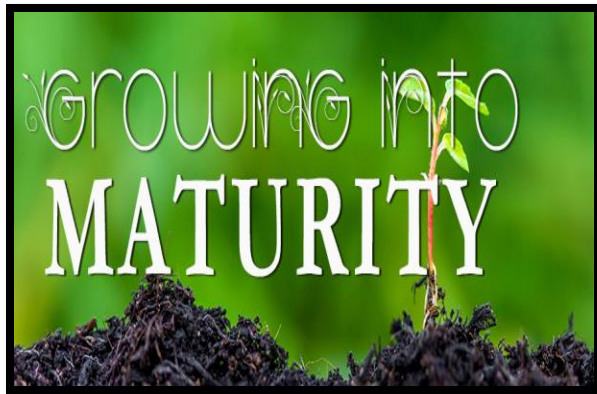
In today’s passage we are told the born-again believers of the church of Corinth were struggling to spiritually grow. When a person is born-again it does not mean that they start off their journey in God’s kingdom as a

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<sup>1</sup> This section was worded with the children specifically in mind. Several of them have come to the age of understanding and I trying to communicate to them the Gospel message in a way they might understand. The subsequent sections are meant for the adults to spur them on to get closer to God.

spiritually mature Christian! Every believer starts off as infants who continue to struggle to put off the evil desires of the old-self (James 1:14). While they know that they are to seek the will of God in all things that they do (1 Peter 4:2), they continue to struggle to give up the worldly ways that used to bring laughter and joy. For Christians who are still dominated by their sinful natures<sup>2</sup> all they can digest is milk, the first principles or elementary truths about Christianity (Hebrews 5:12). While their fixation on obtaining advanced knowledge of God’s word was honorable, Paul told them that they were not ready to apply these teachings due to their focus not being on heavenly but earthly ways.<sup>3</sup>

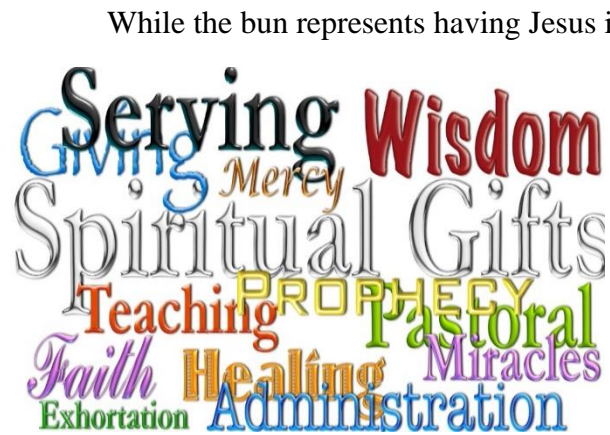
The meat in the illustration represents spiritual maturity. While milk is necessary for those who first become Christians, when it remains the main source of divine sustenance it limits



future spiritual growth! What if one of the children in the above illustration decided to take the milk on the table and pour it onto the bun? Would it not get soggy and mushy? Do not the lukewarm Christians of today’s church represent nothing more than a watered-down form of religion without having any real salt (Matthew 5:13) or power (2 Timothy 3:5)? Spiritual maturity does not come from clinging to the evil desires of the old-self but in surrendering them to a loving God who can drive them away from us as far as the east is

from the west (Psalms 103:12)! The meat of the Bible is found not only in surrendering worldly ways but also in embracing God’s truth to live holy lives.

### Spiritual Gifting



While the bun represents having Jesus in our lives and the meat spiritual maturity, the toppings represent the unique spiritual gifts given to each new believer. While God has given each person the “right to do anything,” not all things are beneficial (1 Corinthians 10:23). In the illustration I brought the traditional toppings of ketchup, mustard, relish, pickles, tomatoes, cheese, lettuce, mayonnaise, onions; but also brought a strange ingredient ... sugar! No one would ever think about putting sugar on their hamburger so then why would

<sup>2</sup> Craig Blomberg, [1 Corinthians](#), The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 72.

<sup>3</sup> Douglas J. Moo, [“The Letters and Revelation,”](#) in *NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 2332.

believer's eye consider adding "sweet" sugar of worldly desires into their lives? What truly makes the burger in this illustration become divine soul food is when one embraces the gifts they have received by God to accomplish His will in their lives. When a person becomes a new creation in Christ they receive (according to His grace) "special abilities"<sup>4</sup> (1 Corinthians 12:7-11) that enable them to accomplish specific, divinely assigned roles. When a believer exercises their spiritual gifts, they see the fruits of the spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and the performance of miracles greater than Christ ever did (John 14:12-14) occur in their lives. When this happens, their lukewarm hearts are soon replaced with a passionate desire to seek first the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33)!

## **Challenge**

When is the last time you spiritually grew in the Lord? Are you a lukewarm Christian who has not spiritually grown in your relationship with Jesus beyond that of an infant? Are you like the church of Corinth and are still drinking milk when by this time in your walk with God you should be craving the meat of His message? In what ways are you still chasing after the ways of this world that might seem sweet to the carnal desires but deadly to the spiritual soul? So, this is the challenge that I give. This week take a couple of hours to examine your soul. First, ask Jesus to show and remove those areas of your heart that are still carnal. And second, ask Jesus to show you one way to use your spiritual gifts to serve in His kingdom.

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<sup>4</sup> Christian A. Schwarz, *The 3 Colors of Ministry: A Trinitarian approach to identifying and developing your spiritual gifts* (Saint Charles, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 2001), 42.