

The World's Best Bread

(This English version is for reference only - it is not an exact translation of the Japanese due to later editing, but it will give you an idea of the content.)



This mini-book was written by Daniel Ellrick. He was raised on a farm in Missouri and served twenty years in the Marine Corps before he and his wife Karen came to Japan as missionaries in 1996. For more resources, visit danellrick.com or L4JP.com, or email dan@proverbs2525.org or karen@L4JP.com.

Do you like bread? Have you ever wondered where to find the world's best bread?

When I was growing up on a farm in Missouri, the best bread I knew was Grandma's homemade bread. I would walk through the cow pasture behind our house, across the stepping stones in the small creek, through the woods, and across a cornfield to Grandma's house. She was always making delicious bread and pies. If you want to try Grandma's skillet bread, here is a recipe. It is easy to make.

After I left home, it was thirty years before I tasted bread as delicious as Grandma's again. I found it in Israel, when my wife and I went on a tour to celebrate our twentieth wedding anniversary. We wanted to see the places where the Bible stories happened and to walk where Jesus walked. The Bible came alive for us in a new way as we visited many places we had read about.



In Israel, one nice surprise was the delicious bread. We ate lots of bread from the hotel buffets and bought loaves on the streets of Jerusalem. It was so good! My wife and I agreed it was the best bread we had ever eaten. (Sorry Grandma, some of the bread in Israel was even better than yours.)



Why is the bread in Israel so delicious? Is it some difference in the recipe? Or is it something else?

Bread is an ancient food. For example, the Bible tells us about a man named Abraham who ate bread nearly four thousand years ago. This is no surprise since clay tablets from that time record the details of grain production in Abraham's hometown of Ur, located in southern Iraq.

God spoke to Abraham^a and led him out of Ur to a new land.

Grandma's Skillet Bread

1. Mix in a bowl:
 - 2 cups bread flour
 - 20 grams baking powder
 - 1/2 teaspoon salt
 - 2 tablespoons white sugar
2. Stir in 3/4 cup milk.
3. Divide into five 1/2 cm thick circles. (It is easier if you put a little flour on your hands.)
4. Pour a thin layer of canola oil into a skillet and heat to about 210°C.
5. Fry the bread about 1 minute on each side, until lightly brown.
6. Top with honey, butter, or jam.
7. Eat—tastes best fresh and hot!

See video at danellrick.com

Fun Facts #1

- ▶ Can you see the "pan" in companion? The Japanese word for bread, "pan," comes from Latin (via Portuguese). The English word, "companion," also comes from Latin—it literally means, "one who eats bread with you."
- ▶ Bread made from corn or wheat is the staple food in many lands. Rice bread is also popular in some countries.
- ▶ China is the world's top producer of wheat and rice. The USA is number one for corn.
- ▶ The Gopan bread machine includes a milling motor to grind rice, so it easily makes rice bread.

There, a man named Melchizedek, who was king of Salem and also a priest of God, came to meet Abraham with bread and wine. Salem is an older name for Jerusalem, so we know they have had bread in Israel for a very long time.



Could a place with such a long history of bread-making know some secret about making good bread? Maybe this ancient bread culture is the reason bread in Israel tastes so good. Or maybe the reason is deeper—just as Grandma baked bread with love, bread in Israel is baked with thanksgiving to God.

Bread is important in the Bible. It was the staple food and it also had deep symbolic meaning. In ancient times when starvation was common, to have bread was to have life.

Perhaps you have seen a movie about Moses and the Exodus. After Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt, they were afraid they would starve in the desert wilderness. But God fed them each day with manna from heaven—which the Bible calls the bread of angels.^b That must have been wonderful bread!

Jesus often ate bread with His followers and even with sinners—the people who did not follow God. The religious people criticized Jesus for eating with sinners, but Jesus replied, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”^c (The Bible also says that all people are sinners because no one does right all of the time.)

On one occasion, Jesus miraculously fed five thousand men with five small loaves of bread and two small fish.^d I think this miracle bread must have been very tasty. Afterward, when the people asked for bread again, Jesus told them that He Himself is the bread of life.

If we lack food for our stomach, we get hungry and eventually die. Spiritual starvation is just as serious. Without good food for the soul, people become lonely, depressed, angry and sometimes violent. In Japan, spiritual hunger is a root cause behind loneliness, divorce, hikikomori, domestic violence, and suicide.

Two thousand years ago in Israel, Jesus said, “I am the bread of life.”^e In Japan, Jesus might say, “I am the rice of life.” The meaning is the same; Jesus meets our spiritual need just as our staple food meets our physical need.



Fun Facts #2

Many famous sayings are originally from the Bible. Here are a few:

- 👉 Scales fell from his eyes (Acts 9:18)
- 👉 An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth (Deuteronomy 19:21)
- 👉 Seek and you will find (Matthew 7:7)
- 👉 Casting pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6)
- 👉 Those who do not work shall not eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10)
- 👉 Enter through the narrow gate (Matthew 7:13)
- 👉 We played the flute for you, but you did not dance (Luke 7:32)
- 👉 You reap what you sow (Galatians 6:7-8)

Taste and See - song by Nolan Morgan

Taste and see how good life can be
When a man sets his heart upon God
Breaking down the walls all around
That set man and his Maker apart



The purpose of man is to walk with his God
To live in His light every day
To seek His face, His knowledge and grace
And learn to serve God from the heart

A friend of mine wrote a song that says, “The purpose of man is to walk with his God.” God created us to have a close relationship with Him—to walk with Him. Sadly, our hurtful words, unloving actions, and the jealousy and greed in our hearts separate us from God. To walk with God, we must be reconciled to Him.

If you have seen any movies about Jesus, you may remember how Jesus shared bread and wine with His disciples on the night before His death. Or maybe you know the same scene from the “Last Supper” painting by Leonardo DaVinci. On the evening before His crucifixion, “While they were eating,

Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.'"^f



At first glance, Jesus' words may seem hard to understand, but Jesus is telling the disciples to rely on Him and His death on the cross to meet their need for forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God. The last supper was a Jewish Passover dinner, which commemorated how God set the people of Israel free from their life as slaves in Egypt. In a similar way, Jesus frees His followers from slavery to sin.



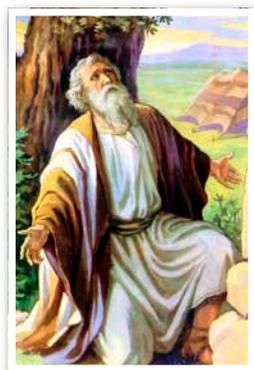
If you have ever visited a church, you may have seen how Christians share bread and wine (or grape juice) in memory of the Last Supper. This communion helps us to remember how Jesus provided for our spiritual needs by paying for our sins through His death on the cross. Communion also reminds us of the fellowship we share with all who believe in Jesus around the world. With thanksgiving to God for His grace and mercy, we receive the bread and the cup. Especially at that time, we feel the presence of God.

Jesus offers salvation to all people.^g On one occasion, Jesus explained Himself with these words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."^h These words touch the cultures of the world. Asian cultures seek the way; European cultures seek the truth; African cultures seek the life.

If Jesus were only a great man or a wise teacher, He would not have the power to save us. But the Bible tells us that God was in Jesus Christ reconciling the world to Himself.ⁱ And the resurrection of Jesus proves that He has power over death, so we can trust His promise of eternal life for all who come to Him.^j Jesus is alive forever, and all who trust in Him will celebrate with Him in heaven—then we will enjoy the very best of all things.

Growing up, I was taught to seek truth and I looked for it in many places. I looked in philosophy, in science, in Buddhism, and finally in the Bible. When I understood that the Bible is true, I became a Christian. For me, the facts of history and the fulfilled prophecies of the Bible were convincing and I knew that the Creator God was speaking to me through the Bible.

For example, Abraham was originally named Abram, but God changed his name to Abraham, which means father of a multitude. Nearly four thousand years ago, God told Abram,



"No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations."^k

Today, we can clearly see how God has fulfilled His Word to Abraham. Christians, Jews, and Muslims, making up over half the people of the world, all claim Abraham as the father of their faith. God has truly made Abraham the father of many nations.

I am sure that God will also fulfill His promise of salvation for all who trust in Jesus. In Jesus, the bread of life, I have found true spiritual food. I was looking for truth and I found Jesus. But perhaps you are looking for life—the power to live abundantly and forever. Or maybe you are looking for the way—the way of harmony and peace for all mankind. Whether we are looking for the way, the truth, or the life, Jesus is the answer.

Fun Facts #3

- ▶ The Bible is the #1 best-seller of all time—over 5 billion sold and 100 million more sold every year.
- ▶ The Bible is like a library. It contains 66 books, divided into two sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament.
- ▶ The Old Testament contains the books from before Jesus came.
- ▶ The New Testament contains the writings recording Jesus' life and the beginnings of the church.
- ▶ The Bible books were written between about 1,500 BC and 95 AD. It took almost 1,600 years!
- ▶ The Bible is the most translated book. Over 500 languages have complete Bibles and about 3,000 languages have some of the Bible.

What is the best bread? For the mouth, some of the bread in Israel tastes better than any other bread I have tried. But there is more to good bread than taste. Good bread also needs to be healthy and nutritious, having everything we need to sustain us. Many kinds of bread can do this for the body, but only Jesus, the bread of life, can sustain our souls and give us perfect spiritual health.

What is the best bread in the world? For me, it is the bread of communion, which represents faith in Jesus, shared with Christian brothers and sisters. Each time we receive the communion bread, we remember that we have peace with God through Jesus and we celebrate that we are brothers and sisters with all who trust in Jesus in every nation. Communion is a simple ceremony, but when we give thanks to the Creator God, the source of every good thing, through communion, we know that He is with us and we enjoy His presence.

Before I came to Osaka, I was living in Hiroshima and attending a small Japanese church. At the church, there was a young girl who wanted to be baptized. The pastor asked her why she wanted to be baptized. "I want to eat the bread," she replied. At first, this answer surprised the pastor, but then he realized that the desire to join all of the believers in eating the communion bread was a simple and beautiful way of expressing faith in Jesus.

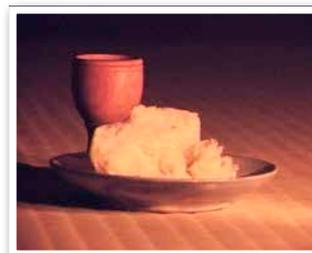
How about you? Would you like to join together with many millions of brothers and sisters from every nation and eat the best bread in the world?

I would like to invite you to learn more about Jesus, and, when you are ready, to come and taste the world's best bread. Jesus told His disciples, "Follow Me." To the whole world, Jesus says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."¹ Jesus gives us rest and true spiritual food, the bread of life.

Thank you for taking the time to read this small booklet. I pray that the Lord Jesus will bless you with His love and grace. I hope we will be able to eat the bread of communion together one day.

Fun Facts #4

- ▶ Taking communion is an expression of faith in Jesus.
- ▶ Some churches offer communion only after baptism, but many churches offer it to everyone who believes in Jesus.
- ▶ At some churches, everyone receives from one loaf of bread and one large cup, but most churches give each person a small piece of bread and a small cup. At a few churches, each person dips their piece of bread in a shared cup.



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- a The story of Abraham is in Genesis 12-25.
 - b Manna is called the bread of angels in Psalm 78:25.
The story of manna is in Exodus 16.
 - c Luke 5:27-32
 - d John 6:1-13
 - e John 6:35
 - f Matthew 26:26-28
 - g Romans 10:9-13
 - h John 14:6
 - i 2 Corinthians 5:17-19
 - j Acts 2:14-41
 - k Genesis 17:5
 - l Matthew 11:28

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