

“Baked Goods”

Do you bake? I love it! I don't do it as often as I used to, but I enjoy it. Part of the joy in baking different treats is seeing the pleasure it brings to people as they eat it. Pound cake. Goopy butter cake. Sweet potato and pecan pies. Turtle cheesecake. Texas sheet cake. Seven-layer cookies. Lemon bars. Seven-up cake. And on. And on.... I am technically the family baker, so I load up the car with all kinds of cakes and pies when I go home for the holidays. It can be expensive, but the joy of it all is worth it.

One thing I've noticed about any cake or pie recipe is that the process is as important as the ingredients. Ingredients require measuring, leveling, sifting, beating, and stirring. The baking temperature is specific, as is the baking time. Items have to be added, one at a time, and usually in a specific order. Imagine dumping the flour, sugar, butter, eggs, and flavoring in a pan, and waiting to see the hot mess you just created!

Our lives are a lot like that. Our maturation in Christ requires specific ingredients, though not usually in any specific order. Without a doubt, salvation is our foundation for new life in Christ. As we grow up in the Lord, we reach different levels of maturity based on our own personalities and personal experiences. Still, there are very specific attributes common to all mature Christians, and we cannot expect to reach maturity without them. Make no mistake – if we try to rush the process, omit the steps, or leave out certain “ingredients”, our lives will wind up being a hot mess as well.

We are works in progress all of our lives. Some of us bake quickly, like the 20-minute Texas sheet cake. It cooks quickly, and it is always good. Others of us take a little longer, like the 70-minute seven-up pound cake. The process takes longer, from the mixing through the baking, but it is time well spent, because it, too, is always good. Think about. Different ingredients. Different processes. Very different finished products. Yet each, in its own way, is enjoyable and pleasant to the taste.

As it is in the natural, so it is in the spiritual. Life provides us with different personalities (ingredients) and life experiences (processes), so we come through in many different ways. But each of us, in our own way, is a finished work in the making, because we are being changed from glory to glory into the image of our Father. Don't rush it. Allow the Lord to add to our lives as His recipe for us dictates. We can't look at how others are baking; that might cause us to come out too soon and fall in the process. But if we keep our eyes on the Master, He knows how to “...keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, ...” (Jude 1:24).

***4: by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises,
that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature,
having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.***

***5: But also for this very reason, giving all diligence,
add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,***

6: to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness,

7: to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love.

8: For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor

unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II Peter 1 (NKJV)

Father, thank You for Your grace. Hallelujah! Thank You that You are continually working on us, changing us, molding us, and making us into Your image. The heat gets a little too hot sometimes, and the mixing and blending of life can be painful. But we know that everything we go through is worth it as You continue bringing us to a point where all we see when we look in the mirror is You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT:

**“GOD GIVES US THE INGREDIENTS FOR ‘OUR DAILY BREAD’,
BUT HE EXPECTS US TO DO THE ‘BAKING’.”**

(Author Unknown)

Be blessed in the Lord!