

# **Eating Jesus, Part 1**

## **Our Spiritual Appetite Awakened**

By Eric Mumford

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Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless you eat** [*Greek: to ‘munch’ or chew*] **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” (John 6:53-57).

### 1. Eternal Life

Eternal life does not merely imply *quantity*, an infinite amount of time; it also speaks of a *quality* of life—the **abundant, relational Life in Agape** (self-giving love) that the Father, Son, and Spirit have shared with One Another from eternity. “God is Agape” (1John 4:8); the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, together, are One *living* God because They share one generous, self-sacrificial nature—One Life! Agape is God’s own self-giving

love that facilitates a relational **nest of rest**, which Jesus called the kingdom of God. The Father, Son, and Spirit each give Themselves to and glorify One Another, never Self. In this **kingdom nest**, Each seeks only to give, never to take or calculate His own advantage [*eros, self-love*]; therefore, no suspicion, fear, deception, pride, strife, accusation or hiding exist among Them. The Father, Son, and Spirit are at *rest* in One Another's self-giving love—one transparent *Life*.

Father's ancient purpose is a “**big-family dream**”—to have many sons and daughters created in the nature and likeness of His only Son (Ro 8:28-30). Into this Family, alive to One Another in Agape, all mankind has been invited; those who identify themselves into the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, forfeiting their self-life (*eros self-love, self-consciousness, self-interest*) for the Son's self-sacrificial Life, enter the incomprehensible, relational joy of that Family nest—the kingdom.

Father's **nest of rest** is securely anchored in the “tree” of His Son's own Cross; therefore, even in the most violent storms, betrayals, and losses of this world “we receive a kingdom which **cannot be shaken**” (Heb 12:28). “Who will separate us from the Agape of Christ? ... Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness or sword? [*Nothing*] will be able to separate us from the Agape of God [*relational, self-giving Oneness of Father, Son, and Spirit*] which is in Jesus Christ our

Lord” (Ro 8:35-39). Now *that* is a nest of rest!

Jesus prayed to Father: “This is **eternal life**, that they might **know You**, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). We *receive* Their Life, become *regenerated* into Their Life, and even *participate relationally* in Family Life by *Eating Jesus*—“**Taste** and see that the Lord is good” (Ps 34:8). Jesus said, “The thief [*Belial*] comes only to steal, kill and destroy; I came that they may have **life**, and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). Though mankind was created to participate in God’s Agape Life by reciprocating in self-giving relationship with Him, we became **dead** in self-love (*eros*), barren and fruitless. Man became a slave of his own appetite for self-gratification.

And you were **dead** in your trespasses and sins [*self-love*], in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world [*Belial’s (Satan’s) domain*], according to the prince of the power of the air [*in Belial’s ‘worthless’ nature*], of the spirit [*eros*] that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly **lived in the lusts [*appetites, cravings*] of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind [*self-gratification*]**, and were by nature children of wrath [*unfit for Father’s nest of rest*], even as the rest. But

God being rich in mercy, because of His great Agape with which he loved us, even when we were **dead** in our transgression, **made us alive** together with Christ... (Eph 2:1-5).

## 2. Origins of Self-gratification

For all that is in the world [*Belial's domain*], the **lust** [*appetite, craving*] **of the flesh** and the **lust of the eyes** and the **boastful pride of life**, is not from the Father, but is from the world (1John 2:16).

Then the Lord God took man and put him in the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it [*life: Father-conscious stewardship, fruit-bearing*]. Then the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may **eat freely**, but from the tree of the **knowledge of good and evil** [*agape and eros; awakening to self-love, self-consciousness, self-interest*] you shall **not eat**, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely **die** [*barren, fruitless, dead*]....

And the man and his wife were both **naked** and were not ashamed [*total absence of self-consciousness, self-focus*]. Now the serpent [*Satan who is called Belial: 'Worthless'*]

was more crafty than any **beast** of the field [*eros predator*]...and he said to the woman, “Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall **not eat** from any tree of the garden?’” The woman said to the serpent, “...from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall **not eat** from it or touch it, or you will **die**.’” The serpent said to the woman, “You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you **eat** from it your eyes will be opened [*in self-focus, self-actualization*], and you will be like God [*your own self-center*], knowing good and evil [*awakening to the eros alternative*].”

When the woman saw that the tree was good for **food** [*‘lust of the flesh’*], and that it was a delight to the eyes [*‘lust of the eyes’*], and that the tree was desirable to make one wise [*a self-center, ‘boastful pride of life’*], she took from its fruit and **ate**; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he **ate**. Then the eyes of both of them were opened [*self-consciousness*], and they knew that they were **naked**...and the man and his wife **hid** themselves from the presence of the Lord God [*alienated from Father, severed from Life-Source, fallen out of His nest—spiritually dead*]... (Gen 2:15-3:8).

The serpent Belial appealed to man's **soulish appetite**, inviting him to begin thinking and acting from *self* as his new center. Adam and Eve acted *against* God and *for* self; they allowed their appetite for self-gratification, self-will, and self-actualization to effectively displace Father-consciousness. Bob Mumford's short definition of the eros appetite is "**me now**." The degenerate self is incapable of denying or even delaying its own gratification for Father's interests—it is dead. T. Austin Sparks explains:

Deception is not something out there that is put upon us willy-nilly, or in spite of ourselves. **All deception has its ground in man**....When Satan interfered with man at the beginning and man consented along the line of his **soul-life** [*self-life*], Satan made man suitable to his own government. It was not that he came and set himself up as man's ruler and subjected man by sheer force to his own government. How did he do it? By breaking into that realm in man's being where man was linked with God, and that was in the realm of **man's spirit**. "He that is joined to the Lord is **one spirit** with Him" (1Cor 3:17), and man was in fellowship and communion with God by means of his spirit, not his soul, not his body. These two were under the government of his spirit.

The enemy, the deceiver, came to man's soul, and **instead of man reacting by his spirit fellowship with God, he dropped down on to his soul**, he came out of his spirit and reacted in his soul. What is soul? It is reason, emotion, feeling, desire, and then, of course, choice, will. And the enemy reasoned through the **desires** and captured the will by deception. You see what happened when man violated the very organ of his union with God, his spirit. He was in the deepest sense, in his unfallen state, a spirit having a soul and body, but he violated that with the result that it was severed from God, and, as a means, an instrument, a vehicle of divine fellowship, it **died**. It does not mean that it was annihilated, or it ceased to have an existence, but it fell out of fellowship with God, and that is **spiritual death**. It fell out of union with God with the result that **the soul has taken ascendancy**, and from that time man is another species from that which God created [*an instinctual, self-gratifying creature*]. He is now a man of soul....The enemy governs man and the whole of the race now through the nature of his **soul-life...self-life** (T. Austin Sparks, Christ the Power of God, chapter 3).

This does not imply that man's soul and body are somehow evil and his spirit is good; there have been many destructive heresies born of that misinterpretation. Rather, it was the *subversion* or displacement of man's spirit, designed to prevail over his soul and body, which led him to become an **instinctual, self-conscious** creature rather than a **spiritual, Father-conscious** one in the image of the Son of God who created him. The soulish man is unable to trust or *receive* from Father the abundant provision He has already laid up to satisfy man's spirit as well as the needs of his soul and body; the eros man must *seize* to gratify himself.

Your emotions, reason, desire, and will, located in your soul, function fruitfully when subjected to your spirit, which is in union and subjection to Father's Spirit. When your spirit governs your soul (your will) this results in a "**willing spirit**" (Ps 51:12), a delight to Father. However, when your soul prevails, you become *unwilling*, "lodged" in self-will. "Leanness of soul" and a body "wasting away" are the death-producing symptoms of an unwilling spirit. Before His crucifixion Jesus said, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! [*eros predators acting in self-preservation*] How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings [*into Father's nest of rest*], and you were **unwilling** [*lodged in*

*self-will*” (Mt 23:37). “But the fruit of the Spirit [*Agape nature*] is...self-control” (Gal 5:22) and is “willing to yield” (James 3:17).

The word of God [*Person of the Son*] is **living** and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and **piercing** as a far as the **division between soul and spirit**, of both joints and marrow [*body*], and **able to judge** the thoughts and intentions of the heart [*is the unwilling soul or the willing spirit prevailing?*] (Heb 4:12).

Paul said, “For God, whom I serve in my spirit...” (Ro 1:9), and “I discipline my body and make it my slave” (1Cor 9:27). Your soul and physical body were designed to serve God: “Present your **bodies** a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your **spiritual** service of worship” (Ro 12:1). Just as your spirit must rule over your soul and its willful appetites, your spirit must also rule over your physical body and its fleshly appetites. “If the **Spirit** of Him who raised Christ Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He... will also give **life** to your **mortal bodies** [*capacity to use your body for Father, not self-gratification*]” (Ro 8:11). Apart from God’s Spirit, man’s spirit lies dormant, barren, dead, while his soulish and fleshly appetites are ever clamoring, a compulsion that rules him.

Each one is tempted when he is carried away and **enticed by his own lust** [*soulish, fleshly appetites*]. Then when lust has **conceived** [*appetite has gratified itself, eaten*], it gives birth to **sin** [*eros, self-love*]; and when sin is accomplished [*lit. is brought to completion, maturity*], it brings forth **death** [*barrenness, fruitlessness, self-focused implosion*] (James 1:14-15).

The serpent Belial knows that eros self-gratification is the most effective method of enslaving us. Acts of self-gratification are “a means to an end,” steps toward our eros goal—**self-satisfaction**. However, self-satisfaction is a myth, Belial’s cruel mirage, the serpent’s original lie that he has successfully perpetuated among each generation of man. “The righteous [*generous son of Agape*] has enough to satisfy his appetite, but the stomach of the wicked is in need [*insatiable*]” (Pr 13:25). Attempts at self-satisfaction are entirely futile since our soulish, fleshly appetites can *never* be satisfied. Belial, a false-father, keeps man on a very short leash having awakened and addicted us to self-gratification.

As one suspends a **carrot on a stick** in front of a donkey, just out of reach, motivating him to walk as long as his master wishes, so Belial cruelly exploits you as his beast of burden by suspending the possibility of self-satisfaction in front of you to lead you where he wants you to go. Your instinct

of self-gratification fixates on the carrot in such way that you are entirely unaware of the direction he is taking you. This is the fundamental ingenuity of all deception. At the dog races, a tasty-looking artificial rabbit is hurled around the racetrack; the instinctual drive to be *gratified* motivates the dogs to run at optimum speed chasing the unattainable goal of self-satisfaction.

Perhaps a more disturbing but useful illustration of Belial's deceptive strategy is a man who recruits penniless girls into prostitution, intentionally addicting them to narcotics as a means of leashing and controlling them for calculated profit. Though these exploited women hate him and would otherwise flee, they have become a slave to the next costly "fix" and therefore remain his captive. Belial awakened in man his own eros nature reducing us to pawns he uses in his envious scheme against God. He knows that human beings made in the image of God are Father's treasure, the "apple of His eye;" therefore, in this **custody battle**, which has raged since the garden of Eden, Belial seeks to move men and women to act as instinctual beasts in his own likeness as a means of robbing God of His glory in them.

### 3. The Son Retakes the Garden "Test"

The serpent tempted Eve by inviting her to indulge her soulish appetite: "it was good for

food” (**lust of the flesh**), “it was a delight to the eyes” (**lust of the eyes**), “and that it was desirable to make one wise” (**boastful pride of life**). Jesus, the Son of Man who identified Himself into all mankind and included us all in His own Person, intentionally faced and overcame these exact three temptations of self-gratification:

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, he became **hungry**. And the devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become **bread**” [*lust of the flesh*]. And Jesus answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live on bread alone [*Father is My Food*].’”

And he led Him up and **showed** Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time [*lust of the eyes*]. And the devil said to Him, “I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me [*by Adam, the steward-heir who abdicated*], and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You worship before me, it shall be all Yours.” Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only [*Father-consciousness*].’”

And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the **pinnacle** of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; for it is written, ‘He will give His angels charge concerning You to guard You,’ and ‘On their hands they will bear You up, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.’” [*Boastful pride of life, appetite for one’s greatness to be publicly recognized*]. And Jesus answered and said to him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test [*My glory comes from Father or I will have none at all*].” When the devil had finished **every temptation**, he left Him until an opportune time (Luke 4:1-13).

### A. Spiritual Appetite

The Son of God came “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Ro 8:3) to **resurrect man’s spiritual appetite**, to awaken in alienated, beastly human beings His own hunger for the reciprocity of self-giving fellowship with Father. Jesus came as an untested, unproven Man. The Son of Man, as the “second Adam,” began exactly where Adam and Eve began before their fall—in innocence; His righteousness had not yet been tested and proven through temptation. He had the same human soul and body with His spirit in ascendancy just as the

first created man had. Jesus was tempted *exactly* as Adam and Eve were to act against that spiritual primacy in self-will chasing self-satisfaction by means of self-gratification. The Son's temptation was more severe, however, because Adam and Eve were well-fed from every other tree in the garden, but He was hungry and weak after forty days of fasting! Nevertheless, Jesus chose to respond in Father-consciousness; He acted for Father.

The "opportune time," which Belial anticipated to tempt Jesus again even more severely, occurred three years later in the Garden of Gethsemane on the eve of His crucifixion. Jesus said to His disciples, "My **soul** is deeply grieved to the point of death" (Mt 26:38). **Jesus' will**, located in His **soul**, was being challenged and breached by **Father's will**—that He must trade places with degenerate man and exhaust the sins of the world into Himself. The Son "fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup [*wrath of God on sin—self-love*] pass from Me; yet **not as I will, but as You will.**'" Jesus found His disciples sleeping nearby and said to them, "Keep watching and praying [*Father-consciousness*] that you may not enter into temptation [*to act in self-will, self-gratification*]; the **spirit is willing**, but the **flesh is weak** [*natural man is ruled by willful, appetitive compulsion*]" (Mt 26:39-41).

In a very real sense, Jesus fought and won the battle for our salvation in this garden of

temptation. Here, before Jesus even entered the **external battle** on the Cross, our Advocate literally sweat blood to secure the victory of our freedom, fighting out the **internal battle** of soulish will within Himself. In Father-conscious resolve that His spirit would prevail over His soul, the Son of Man said emphatically, “My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, **Your will be done**” (Mt 26:42). By yielding His will, the Son was perfected in self-sacrificial Agape as a Man. “The first man, Adam, became a **living soul**. The last Adam [*Jesus*] became a **life-giving spirit**” (1Cor 15:45). Through His own flesh and blood, Jesus is now able to impart to you His own **willing spirit**, enabling you to enter and participate in the Agape life of God.

Death is no longer master over Him. For the death that Christ died, He died to sin [*self-love, self-will, self-gratification*] once for all; but the life that He lives **He lives to God** [*Father-consciousness*]. Even so consider yourselves to be **dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus**. Therefore, do not let sin [*eros, self-love, self-will*] reign in your mortal body so that you obey its **lusts** [*self-gratifying appetites*], and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as members of unrighteousness; but **present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead**, and your members [*body*

*and soul*] as instruments of righteousness to God. For **sin** [*eros, self-gratification*] **shall not be master over you**....But now having been freed from sin and **enslaved to God** [*hungering for Agape*], you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification [*from eros*], and the outcome, **eternal life** [*oneness in the Family nest of rest*] (Ro 6:9-14, 22).

“It was for **freedom** that Christ set us free” (Gal 5:1). What, exactly, did He set you free from? Yes, He unleashed you from Belial (Satan), but in order to accomplish that deliverance, first He had to deal with your eros nature since your enslavement to the deceiver hinged solely upon your appetite for self-gratification, self-actualization, and self-glory. He had to **free** you from self-love and its’ appetites that you might be **free** to give yourself to Father, to hunger for His Spirit. The Son of God became a Man for one purpose—to deliberately act against Himself as a Man on your behalf. He came to deny self-will, to do Father’s will in *your* place. Having secured that tested, proven victory as the Son of Man, He now has the power to set you **free** from appetitive self-love, the compulsive, self-gratifying addiction that Adam and Eve sold themselves into and all of us as their children.

Before Adam and Eve sinned, they were spiritually *alive* to God and at rest; afterward they

were *dead* to Him and *alive* to self—permanently yoked in the ceaseless, merciless compulsion of their own appetites and therefore slave-bearers of a cruel false-father, Belial. Are you exhausted from chasing an artificial rabbit? Wake up to Jesus' invitation:

Come to Me, all who are weary [*lit. Greek: work to exhaustion*] and are heavy laden [*in an endless pursuit of self-gratification*] and I will give you **rest** [*I will take you home to My Father's Agape nest of rest*]. Take **My yoke** [*Father-consciousness*] upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble of heart [*I AM Agape*], and you will find **rest for your souls** [*soulish appetites put to death*]. For My yoke [*Father-consciousness*] is easy and My burden [*delighting Father*] is light (Mt 11:28-30).

Jesus imparts to you His own perfected, self-sacrificial love for Father by giving His very flesh and blood as your **spiritual food**. The essential, regenerative Life in the flesh and blood of Jesus is Agape—the **freedom** to *act against* the tyranny of self-love, self-gratification, and self-will and the strength to *act for* Father, the hunger to do His will, to delight Him. This is an altogether other-worldly appetite, food, and Life, not of Belial's worldly domain. "Take hold of [*eat*] the eternal life to which you were called" (1Tim 6:12). As an

adopted son or daughter, you claim the inheritance of this Life by *Eating Jesus*.

And the testimony [*of God*] is this, that God has given us **eternal life** [*Agape*], and this **life is in His Son**. He who has [*and continually eats of*] the Son has the **life**; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life (1John 5:11-12).

## **B. Spiritual Reality**

The concrete-thinker asks, “Exactly how do I eat (Greek: ‘munch’) Jesus’ flesh?” Because our spirit was slumbering in death and is only just waking up to sensitive awareness (Father-consciousness) through faith, it is not always easy for us to understand spiritual realities. Our old, natural-minded habits keep us from perceiving heavenly reality. “A natural man does not accept the things [*realities*] of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised” (1Cor 2:14). Man’s spiritual incapacity and inability to perceive kingdom reality has resulted in two basic misinterpretations of “eating Jesus.”

First, the Roman Catholic Church introduced a doctrine of **literalism** called *transubstantiation*—the physical elements of Communion, the actual bread wafer and cup of wine consecrated and served by a priest in church, *literally* become the actual human flesh-tissue and the actual human

blood of Christ and only appear to be bread and wine thereafter. The second error, a polar opposite of the first, is a mystical interpretation, thinking of eating Jesus' flesh and blood as **surrealism**, in terms of allegory or make-believe. Both of these come short of truth. The bread and the cup are figurative symbols of a spiritual reality; eating Jesus is a **spiritual reality**.

The essential Life (DNA) of God, Who is Spirit, was incarnated into the natural, physical, flesh and blood Man Jesus so that natural, physical, spiritually-dead men might be made **spiritually alive**. "Although you were alienated [*spiritually severed from God Who is Spirit*] and hostile in mind, engaged in evil [*self-gratifying*] deeds, yet He has now reconciled you through His **fleshly body**, through death..." (Col 1:22). This God-Man bridged the infinite gap between mortal men and the Immortal God, uniting the natural and spiritual in one Human body. Yes, we eat Jesus spiritually, but we are ingesting a real flesh and blood Human, the God-Man Who is both spiritually and naturally real. The Man Jesus spit on blind eyes and into deaf ears to physically heal them; it was Father's *spiritual*, life-giving "juices" working through that *natural* saliva (Mark 7:33; 8:23).

What was from the beginning [*Immortal, pre-incarnate Son*], what we have heard, what we have seen with our [*natural*]

eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—and the life was manifested [*in the tangible Person of Jesus*], and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us (1John 1:1-2).

Though Jesus is a flesh and blood Man, He must be ingested spiritually. “From now on [*in Father’s spiritual kingdom*] we recognize no one according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him in this way no longer [*we ingest Him spiritually*]” (2Cor 5:16). As you “taste” of the goodness of the Lord and begin to spiritually eat and drink Jesus’ flesh and blood, those naturally-spiritual Substances become the most fundamental Reality of life spanning both heaven and earth. Ingesting that “true food and true drink” will make plain to you the fact that everything else in this natural, tangible world is only a temporal reality; all else is passing away. You must awaken to this reality by your *spirit* faculty.

#### 4. Eating Jesus

Do not work for the **food which perishes** [*self-gratification*], but for the **food** which endures to **eternal life** [*self-giving oneness with God*], which the Son of Man will

give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal [*genuine Agape, FDA approved!*]...“I am the bread of life...**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 give for the **life** of the world [*which is spiritually dead*] is My flesh.”

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless you eat** [*lit. Greek: munch or chew*] **the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves** [*dead–barren, fruitless, unable to reciprocate Father’s self-sacrificial Agape*]. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has **eternal life** [*qualitative Agape relationship Father, Son and Spirit have shared from eternity*], and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is **true food**, and My blood is **true drink** [*not the counterfeit fruit of the tree of self-knowledge*]. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him [*oneness, My Life assimilated in you*].”

“As the living Father sent Me, and I **live** because of the Father [*Son ‘eats’ of Father*], so he who eats Me, he will also **live** because of Me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate

[*manna in the wilderness—imperfect type of Son*] and died; he who eats this bread will **live** forever.”

Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said, “This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?” But Jesus, conscious that His **disciples grumbled** at this [*‘lodged’ in self-will*], said to them, “Does this cause you to **stumble** [*affront to self-love*]? ...It is the Spirit who gives **life** [*Agape DNA*]; the flesh [*natural eros heredity*] profits nothing [*fruitless, dead*]; the words I have spoken to you are **spirit** [*spiritual food, not soulish*] and are **life**....” As a result of this many of His **disciples withdrew** and were not walking with Him anymore (John 6:27-66).

The Father and Son hunger for Their Spirit in One Another; the “Father of spirits” (Heb 12:9) hungers for the Spirit (Agape nature, DNA) of His Son in you. He wants you to be spiritually alive to Him through His Son that you might reciprocate in self-giving relationship with Him. **He seeks to resurrect your spiritual hunger for Father-conscious sonship; therefore, He gave His own Son to be your Food.** This spiritual Food perfected in Jesus, “the Son of Man,” is ingested through a spiritual appetite for His flesh and blood; the nutrients of Agape are assimilated

in you by recurrent infillings (meals) of the Spirit of Jesus made digestible, transferable, in His body and blood. Chewing and ingesting something makes it distinctly yours.

**The mind set on the flesh** [*self-consciousness: feeding on self*] **is death** [*toxic food poisoning*], **but the mind set on the Spirit** [*Father and Son-consciousness*] **is life** [*true food*] **and peace** [*rest in Their nest*], **because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God** [*self-will considers Father's will a rival and threat*] (Ro 8:6-7).

“True food” and “true drink” imply there is a counterfeit. The degenerate, self-conscious soul of man craves self-satisfaction; this is altogether different from a *spiritual* hunger to be regenerated in God's Spirit—an **appetite to eat the well-pleasing Son in order that you might become a well-pleasing son or daughter**. The Life in the flesh and blood of Jesus is the enabling power to act against self-love and self-will to do and *become* Father's will. Contained in the body and blood of the Lord Jesus is both the **Seed** (DNA, Life) of God and the essential nourishment for the growth of that Seed unto mature, fruit-bearing Agape. However, the soil of your heart must willingly *swallow* that Seed into the soft, fertile place where it can germinate:

The one on whom **seed** [*Jesus*] was sown on the **rocky places**, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives [*tastes*] it with joy; yet he has **no firm root** in himself [*no moisture, Luke 8:11*], but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away [*acts in self-preservation*]. And the one on whom the **seed** was sown among the **thorns**, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth [*self-gratification*] choke the word, and it becomes **unfruitful** [*dead*] (Mt 13:20-22).

Multitudes were drawn *after* Jesus, but very few *into* Him. Those who went *after* Jesus sought His benefits for self-gratification; those who believed *into* Him sought to be **displaced** by Him, to forfeit their self-life, to lose their spirit, soul, and body *into* Him. The disciples “stumbled, grumbled, and withdrew” because they were lodged in self-love; eating Jesus represented the loss of their own self-focused life, the right to chase self-satisfaction. They perceived that ingesting His flesh and blood represented the **invasion of a Conqueror from the inside out**. To deny their appetite for self was unthinkable. Jesus’ “difficult” words were not unintelligible, they were *unacceptable*. Multitudes

want to benefit from Jesus, some even want to do His noble works, but very few want to be **displaced** by Him.

## 5. Displaced by the Son

Blessed are those who **hunger and thirst for righteousness**, for they shall be **satisfied** (Mt 5:6).

Righteousness is not a set of *static*, moral laws; it is a *dynamic*, well-pleasing Person: “Christ is the goal of the law for righteousness” (Ro 10:4). In sending His own “well-pleasing” Son in the flesh, the supreme Lawgiver imposed on every man His own self-giving, Agape nature as the ultimate standard of our nature, motives, and behavior: “that you may be **sons** of your Father who is in heaven...therefore, you are to be **perfect** as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:45-48). Father’s delightful Son Jesus provides us with a simple definition of **righteousness**: “**I always do the things that are pleasing to Him**” (John 8:29). Our thoughtful Father has provided us with this *dynamic, living* righteousness in the form of Food and Drink.

He is, by God’s rule, the **righteous** man, who is not only just and blameless of wrong [*law-keeping*], but [*naturally, spontaneously*] gentle too and merciful

and loving unto death; **whose heart is moulded on all sides after the image of God's own heart**, so that his life comes up to, and at every point answers, the perfect law [*dynamic Agape*]....Blessed are they who, inflamed by love for such conformity, and feeling all beneath this loftiest standard, themselves not 'right,' not in any true or satisfying sense their 'righteousness,' but utter wrongness, do **aim** at this, and with **unappeased and enduring appetite hunger and thirst after it** [*Son's Agape DNA*]; blessed are they! (J. Oswald Dykes, The Beatitudes of the Kingdom, p 83).

This is not simply the *imputed* righteousness of Christ, which He gave as a gift, covering us with Himself as the legal basis of our justification and acceptance; rather, it is answering the Son's call, "Take My yoke [*Father-consciousness*] upon you and learn [*Agape sonship*] from Me" (Mt 11:29). The orphan child, formerly a captive of the false-father Belial, whose adoption to Father has first been *legalized* must subsequently become *naturalized* into his Father's values, ways, and essential Life. Hunger for righteousness is the child's spirit laboring to assert his born likeness to his Father. Father satisfies this spiritual hunger by feeding you His own righteous Son.

“Hunger and thirst for righteousness” sits in a central and pivotal place among nine beatitudes. The Son came not only as a Man but also as the King of a heavenly kingdom invading Belial’s domain at that point in history. The beatitudes were the preamble of His inaugural address, a kingdom Constitution. As a transparent, Agape King His speech was a full-disclosure–mapping out for us exactly where He planned to lead those who would choose to emigrate with Him out of Belial’s domain and into Father’s kingdom, from death to Life. There is a linear progression to the beatitudes (Mt 5:3-11), an interior, emigrant journey of transformation, regeneration into another Family heredity.

1. **Emptied.** The first three beatitudes describe a necessary process of emptying; the “daily cross” *removes* your eros nature: “Blessed are the **poor in spirit** [*emptied of the self-conscious pride of ‘I am’*]... blessed are those who **mourn** [*emptied by loss*]... blessed are the **humble** [*emptied by humiliation*], for they shall inherit....”

2. **Hungry.** Emptying precipitates the blessed condition of the fourth, pivotal beatitude: “Blessed are they who **hunger and thirst** for righteousness, for they shall be **filled.**”

3. **Filled.** Those who are empty are hungry, and the hungry are filled with the Agape nature of the Son: “Blessed are the **merciful** [*DNA of God*]...blessed are the **pure in heart** [*eros-free,*

*motivated by Agape*]...blessed are the **peacemakers** [*sacrificing self to bring peace among beastly men*], for they shall be called **sons of God**. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness [*tested, proven sonship*]....”

The *roots* of Agape are self-emptying, loss, and humiliation, which precipitate spiritual hunger, a true appetite for righteousness; the *fruits* are the Life of the Son Himself, infusions of His Agape nature, His Spirit. True spiritual hunger is not an appetite to use God to gratify self but a hunger to be displaced by the Son to please Father. By this regenerative process of **displacement**, Father is transforming self-gratifying orphans into *naturalized* children fit to live and participate in His Family nest of rest, the kingdom of God. Consider a few examples of God’s means of displacement:

**Naomi**, Ruth’s mother-in-law, lost her husband and two sons. She said, “I went out **full** but the Lord has brought me back **empty**” (Ruth 1:20). In time, however, Ruth gave birth to a natural ancestor of David and Jesus. The women said to Naomi, “Blessed is the Lord who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. May he also be to you a restorer of **life** and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given **birth** to him” (Ruth 4:13-15). Naomi was filled and

satisfied with God's bountiful purpose—carrying forward the lineage through which His Son would come.

**Joseph** was emptied of his natural family, his own Hebrew name, culture, language, and even the dignity of his own person; he was sold as a slave by his brothers, falsely accused by Potiphar's wife, and forgotten in prison. Through a thirteen-year process, God emptied, transformed, and filled Joseph enabling him to preserve his family and the entire world through severe famine. In a sense, Joseph was made food. When his brothers discovered that the viceroy of Egypt was actually their brother whom they had betrayed, they feared his retaliation, but Joseph comforted them saying, "Am I in God's place?" (Gen 50:19). Joseph was effectually displaced, filled, and used to generously feed.

**Peter**, deluded by self-esteem, considered himself "alive" in self-sacrificial love toward Jesus and "dead" to self saying, "Even though all may fall away because of You, I will never fall away.... Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You" (Mt 26:33-35). When the cock crowed, marking Peter's three adamant denials "I do not know the Man" as Jesus predicted, Peter "went out and wept bitterly" (Mt 26:75). Mercifully, Peter's "I am" suffered fatal loss and humiliation, making room for a hunger to be displaced by Jesus.

The realm of “what I am” is the realm of death. And even though it be the other kind of “I” that thinks itself to be something [*religious pride, counterfeit spirituality*], that is a certain **self-satisfaction, self-fullness**, it is death (T. Austin Sparks, Stewardship of the Mystery, p174).

**Paul** certainly had a voracious, spiritual appetite for the righteous Son. Relating his testimony, he listed the impressive details of his natural heredity, distinguished education, and vocational accolades and then renounced it all:

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as **loss** for the sake of Christ [*displacement*]. More than that, I count all things to be **loss** in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord [*reciprocal Agape relationship*], for whom I have **suffered the loss** [*emptying*] **of all things** [*reputation, aspirations, possessions, my very identity and person*], and count them but rubbish so that I may **gain** [*be displaced by*] **Christ**, and may be found in Him, not having a **righteousness of my own** [*counterfeit*]... but that [*capacity for Father-conscious fruit-bearing*] which is through faith in Christ, the **righteousness which comes from God** on the basis of faith... (Phil 3:7-9).

God is never on the line of reduction, limitation. It may look like that, but it is not so. If we really had His vision, that which looks like trimming and reduction is His way of enlargement, but a spiritual and heavenly enlargement (T. Austin Sparks, Stewardship of the Mystery, p175).

In a parable, Jesus describes men who have not been emptied and displaced, those who are self-satiated:

A man [*Father*] was giving a big dinner [*Food of His Son*], and he invited many... but **they all alike began to make excuses** [*busy chasing self-satisfaction*]. "...I have bought a piece of **land** and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused." "...I have bought five yoke of **oxen**, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused." "...I have married a **wife**, and for that reason I cannot come."...Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, "Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the **poor** and crippled and blind and lame [*the empty*]." And the slave said, "...still there is room." And the master said, "Go out into the highways and along the hedges,

and compel them to come in, so **that my house may be filled**. For I tell you, **none of those who were invited** [*but declined with self-satiated excuses*] **shall taste of My dinner** [*eat of My Son*]” (Luke 14:16-24; compare Mt 22:1-14).

These invited guests would not come to the feast because they were already full, **satiated** with their own self-interests; their soulish appetites made them **unwilling** to come and eat. Father is angry because they dishonor the provision of His Son, Who is Himself the Feast. Therefore, Father searches out, invites, and feeds the “poor in spirit” who have been *emptied* of self by loss and humiliation—the spiritually hungry.

Observe Father’s severe, yet merciful, effective **cure** for feasting on self-love: “Make him drunk, for he has **magnified himself** against the Lord [*self-worship, eating self*]; so Moab will wallow [*lit. splash into*] his **vomit**” (Jer 48:26). Have you ever eaten a certain food, vomited it up all night, and then could not endure even the smell of that food thereafter? The emptying process of the Cross is designed to help you regurgitate self in such an implosive way that you share Father’s disgust with the smell and taste of self-love and begin to hunger, with Him, for the delightful Son. This is *God’s* definition of repentance!

“The backslider in heart [*regressing into self-*

*love*] will have his fill of his own ways, but a good man [*generous son*] will be satisfied with his” (Pr 14:14). “So they shall eat of the fruit of their own way [*self-love*] and be satiated with their own devices [*eros ‘hooks’—schemes to seize*]” (Pr 1:31).

Is this what Moses had in mind concerning the infamous golden calf? “Moses took the calf which they had made and burned it with fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it over the surface of the water and **made the sons of Israel drink it**” (Ex 32:20). A sufficiently acute distaste for self is the only true prelude to hunger for righteousness. When you vomit up self, *blessed* are you for you shall be displaced and filled!

There is pain in hunger, a vacuous sense of deficient need that only Father can fill. He blesses that hungry child by filling him with the body and blood of His own Son, “Christ in you, the hope of glory [*Agape*]” (Col 1:27). He both satisfies that hunger and causes your spiritual appetite to grow. We are never again famished, yet we hunger still; it is the healthy appetite of children for their Father’s table. Growth produces hunger and hunger satisfied produces further growth—“being transformed into the Son’s image from glory to glory” (2Cor 3:18).

Though you are far from perfected in Father’s righteousness, grossly deficient in the mercy and purity of His Agape, Jesus plainly states that mere hunger to be perfected is already enough to bring

Father's blessing upon you like a deluge! Already blessed is the *hungry* son before he ever becomes a *perfected* son. The "poor in spirit" (1<sup>st</sup> beatitude) receive the kingdom right at the beginning of their journey, the very same blessedness that is bestowed upon tested, proven "peacemakers" (8<sup>th</sup> beatitude). Peacemaking sons who have matured by *eating Jesus* inherit the kingdom in increasing fullness.

## 6. Two Appetites

For the **kingdom of God is not eating and drinking** [*gratifying natural appetites*] but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit [*spiritual hunger to ingest the Son of Agape*] (Romans 14:17).

The Lord will not allow the soul of the righteous [*Father-conscious*] to hunger, but He will reject [*lit. thrust away*] the **craving** of the wicked [*self-conscious*] (Prov 10:3).

The essence of faith is *Father-confidence*. A son who is actively being regenerated soon discovers that he no longer has to gratify himself because *eating Jesus* is causing him to *grow* in **Father-confidence**. By the nourishment of the Son's own **faith** in His Father, which is alive and at work in this man through the flesh and blood of Jesus that he has ingested, this growing son **knows with confidence** that Father will feed not only his

spirit but his soul and body also; therefore, he is progressively freed from a self-gratifying instinct and nature. “Father feeds” (Mt 6:26).

### **A. Discerning “Taste”**

As you awaken spiritually and begin to follow Jesus, emigrating with Him into His kingdom, He seeks to equip you with an essential tool for your journey—a spiritual discernment, or “taste,” between two respective foods and appetites. God’s self-giving Agape, “true food,” and the eros self-love man shares with Belial, toxic food, each have their own distinct appetite and “taste.” Your ability to distinguish the sometimes subtle difference is literally a matter of life and death, freedom or cruel enslavement. “Jesus **tasted** [*ate*] **death** for everyone” (Heb 2:9). Jesus drank down to its dregs the “cup” of our natural heredity of toxic self-love, the “sour wine” of our blood (John 19:29-30), that we might thirst for, discern the “taste” of, and drink His sweet, life-giving blood—His Agape nature.

Having drunk to its depths both Father’s Life and Belial’s venom, the Son will equip you with His own discernment, the ability to “taste” in every circumstance set before you that which is Life and that which is sour, toxic death. Further, your Elder Brother will teach you to recognize the source and object of your appetites. The Agape nature you have received from Jesus hungers and

thirsts for righteousness (Agape), for self-giving relationship; eros, both in its religious and lawless forms, lusts and craves for self-gratification.

When you sit down to dine with a ruler, consider carefully what is before you [*snare?*], and put a knife to your throat if you are a man of great appetite. Do not crave his delicacies, for it is **deceptive food** [*e.g. carrot leading a donkey; rabbit at the dog-track*]. . . . Do not eat the bread of a selfish man, or desire his delicacies; for as he thinks within himself, so he is [*a self-conscious predator*]. He says to you, "Eat and drink!" But his heart is not with you. You will vomit up the morsel you have eaten and waste your compliments (Prov 23:1-8).

The following thought-provoking quote from an article called *In Defense of Hunger* is written by a secular author who sought to discern a difference in *natural* appetite. This may help you to understand *spiritual* discernment:

Chances are, you've never been hungry. Maybe you've fasted until sundown for religious reasons or worked straight through dinner on a sales trip to Nowhere, Utah, only to find that every place serving food closed at eight. There have been times

when you wanted to eat, badly. But was that **hunger**? Not necessarily. That was **appetite**. The difference is important....

I learned how to recognize real hunger while writing a biography of Bernard McFadden, America's top health guru during the Great Depression. Appetite, or what McFadden called "**a hunger habit**," is a mild pang in the stomach. Your body is accustomed to receiving hefty doses of calories three times a day and gets crabby when its scheduled shipment doesn't arrive. **Real hunger is felt in the back of the throat like a thirst**. Real hunger occurs only when your body is burning off its stored fat reserves....The average American man would benefit from not stuffing his face every time his stomach rumbles....

McFadden believed **a hungry mind was a focused one**....As a part of my research into McFadden's life, I went on a five-day water fast, which was about as fun as you might imagine. But when I finished, a nagging chest infection I'd been fighting had vanished, as did my difficulty in touching my toes. Once I started back on solid food, my mind cleared as it hadn't for years....To get a handle on my appetite,

I just needed a little fire in my belly. **I needed to be hungry** (Mark Adams, *In Defense of Hunger*).

## B. Contrasting the Appetites

“Eros love is acquisitive, a desire and longing to **gratify itself** (Latin: *appetitus*)...aroused by the attractive qualities of its object. Man in his eros nature is insatiable” (Nygren, Eros and Agape). Man was created with a spiritual appetite to “taste” and be tasted by the Lord in reciprocal relationship, but that spiritual appetite was displaced by self-gratifying lust. I pray you will open your heart and mind wide to the Spirit, allowing Him to refine and “calibrate” the Son’s own spiritual discernment in you, giving you eyes to recognize its deadly subtleties that are abundantly illustrated through the Scriptures.

I will bless [*respond generously and affectionately to*] the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be **in my mouth** [*I will continually eat Him like frequent meals and snacks*]....O **taste** and see that the Lord is good....For to those who fear Him [*Father-conscious sons*] there is **no want**. The **young lions** [*eros predators seeking self-gratification*] **do lack and suffer hunger**; but they who seek the Lord [*‘seek first His’ (Mt 6:33)*] shall **not be in want** of any good thing (Ps 34:1-10).

The self-gratifying compulsions of eros manifest themselves in two creature behaviors—predators and parasites. “Young lions” represent predatory men, mentored in Belial’s beastly likeness, who overcome and seize others and their possessions like prey to gratify their own appetites. For example, a predator might “hunt” and conquer another’s wife, take over another’s business by “romancing” their clients, destroy another’s reputation in order to usurp his position, or absorb and possess the mind, affections, and will of others by baiting and coercing them into his own ideology. Jesus identified the Pharisees and Sadducees, the religious leaders of His day, as “full of robbery and self-indulgence” (Mt 23:25); in other words, as predators they would seize and spend it on self.

Parasites attach themselves to a living host and extract needed resources for self-gratification; they live at another’s expense and contribute nothing in return. “The **leech** has two daughters, ‘Give’ ‘Give.’” (Pr 30:15). Parasites have a welfare mentality, a self-focused entitlement that overtly or subtly exploits generosity. For example, a parasite may embezzle funds or cultivate friendship with a resourceful person under the pretense of reciprocity but concealed is a self-gratifying agenda. Eros appetites are predatory and parasitic: seizing, exploiting, taking, consuming for self; Agape is fruit-bearing generosity. **Agape**

**eats Agape and therefore feeds Agape in fruit-bearing reciprocity;** “it does not seek its own” (1Cor 13:5).

Woe to you, O land, whose king is a lad and whose princes feast in the morning. Blessed are you, O land, whose king is of nobility and whose princes eat at the appropriate time—for strength [*fruitful productivity*] and not for drunkenness [*self-gratification*] (Eccl 10:16-17).

Paul was transformed from a religious predator, “formerly a persecutor and violent aggressor” (1Tim 1:13), into the self-sacrificial likeness of Jesus. He testified, “For the Agape of Christ controls us” (2Cor 5:14). Agape is that which *controlled* Christ Himself—Father-conscious self-giving, the polar opposite of the compulsive appetite for self-satisfaction by means of self-gratification. “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28). In other words, Jesus did not come to be fed but *to feed* and give His life as Food; He came to become Food!

I have spent time in several impoverished nations among people who worship Buddha. Watching starving people lay what little food they have at the feet of that fat-bellied idol—Belial’s effective “carrot” to exploit instinctual beasts, his mechanical rabbit at the dog-races—I have come to

greatly esteem and worship our Lord Jesus Christ, the God-Man who perpetually *gives Himself to me* as Food.

### C. The Jesus-Diet

The disciples were urging Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.” But He said to them, “I have a **food** to eat that you do not know about.” So the disciples were saying to one another, “No one brought Him anything to eat, did he? [*natural food*].” Jesus said to them, “**My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work**” (John 4:31-34).

Living amongst multitudes of dead, self-focused men who either swamped Him seeking His benefits or schemed stealthily to snare and kill Him, the Man Jesus had a secret source of strength, Life, and joyful purpose. He continually feasted on Father, not the eros diet of a taker but an Agape diet—hunger for “true food,” an appetite for Father’s generous nature, to allow Father to *give* through Him. In the very *outflow* of Life from Jesus, He Himself received, ate, and was nourished by an *inflow* of Father. To a predator or parasite this diet is absolute foolishness; nevertheless, it not only worked for Jesus but also for His Spirit-filled disciples, for Paul, Stephen, Timothy and countless other kingdom sons and daughters over

the subsequent ages who discovered “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). In other words, personally, it is more nutritionally sound, strengthening, invigorating, and even flavorful to feed than to be fed.

Before Adam and Eve fell into a self-gratifying appetite, God fed them with this nutritional food—to “cultivate” His garden and “keep it” (Gen 2:15). By serving Him as Father-conscious stewards, they ate bountifully. Doing the work God assigned was itself the nourishment and satisfaction of their spirit, soul, and body.

There is a Divine purpose, and the complete accomplishment of that Divine purpose is the only way of answering to the deepest need and bringing complete satisfaction, of removing the pangs of hunger and transcending all the attendant weakness.... In the doing of Father’s work Jesus needed to be sustained. That sustenance was found in a maintained fellowship with Father.... There was being meted out to Jesus in a secret way supplies of strength, sustenance and nourishment.... **“I live because of the Father.”** How did He live by the Father? By taking the Father’s mind, the Father’s will, the Father’s thoughts and desires and intentions to be the basis of His entire life, and no other. On that ground Father gave Himself in life to Him...Christ our life!

We live by Him. Christ our sustenance!  
In Christ are found all those vital moral  
and spiritual elements which we require  
to live upon. “He that eats Me shall live  
because of Me.” (T. Austin-Sparks, The  
Risen Lord, chap 7).

Agape is an appetite to **delight Father**. Hunger  
for righteousness is hunger for fruit-bearing. You  
haven't lived until you have lived each day for  
Father—that is Life, which is the very ingredient  
in the Person of the Son, our “daily bread.” Jesus  
explained His diet this way: “[A:] Our Father who  
is in heaven, revered be Your name. Your kingdom  
come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
[B:] Give us this day our daily bread...” (Mt 6:9-  
11). To be truly satisfied we must learn how B  
relates to A using *Agape* rationale.

Even in human weakness en route to the  
Cross, Jesus flatly refused Belial's counterfeit  
food: “Get behind Me, Satan! You are a stumbling  
block to Me [*tempting Me to eat of self-pity*], for  
you are not setting your **mind on God's interests  
but man's**” (Mt 16:23). Many believers lead a  
futile, schizophrenic life, attempting to serve two  
masters—God and self. James observed that this  
“**double-minded man**, unstable in all his ways”  
is tossed and bandied by his soulish appetites  
and impulses between Father-consciousness and  
self-consciousness “like the surf of the sea, driven

and tossed by the wind.” He adds, “For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord” (James 1:6-8).

Alas, a **morbid appetite** there is as well as a **healthful**; a craving for **husks** as well as for **mannna**...the righteousness of **doing the king’s will** personally, consciously, joyously; the righteousness of personal perfectness, even as our heavenly Father is perfect: this is the righteousness, and this only, which can satisfy the soul’s true hunger. “For they shall be filled” (Boardman, The Kingdom, p 79).

Fruit-bearing is the essence of Father’s kingdom, receiving and reciprocating, eating Jesus and therefore bearing the fruit of His Agape assimilated in you. Manifesting Father’s Agape is the *work* of the kingdom, the “Family business.” The work of doing Father’s will is itself food. “I will fill the soul of the **priests** [*those who join Me in giving, feeding*] with abundance, and My people will be **satisfied with My goodness** [*assimilated Agape*]” (Jer 31:14). “The fool folds his hands [*refuses to serve or bear-fruit for Father*] and consumes his own flesh” (Eccl 4:5).

The desire of the **sluggard** [*self-gratification*] puts him to **death** [*starvation from fruitless self-interest*], for his hands **refuse to work**

[*serve Father*]; all day long he is **craving** [*eros taker*], while the **righteous gives** [*feeds others*] and does not hold back [*self-giving from an infinite Agape Source*] (Prov 20:25-26).

The chief priests challenged Father's authority manifested through Jesus, and He answered them with this parable:

“A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go **work** today in the vineyard.’ And he answered, ‘**I will not;**’ but afterward he regretted it and went. The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, ‘**I will, sir;**’ but he did not go. Which of the two did the **will of his father?**” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you that tax collectors and prostitutes are getting into the kingdom of God [*Father's nest of rest*] before you” (Mt 21:28-31).

The sleep of the **working** man is pleasant [*Father-conscious rest*], whether he eats little or much; but the full stomach [*lit. satiety*] of the rich man does not allow him to sleep (Eccl 5:12).

“A **worker's appetite** works for him, for his hunger urges him on” (Pr 16:26). This proverb

is true both of eros and Agape, of those who work for self-gratification and those who work to delight Father. The vast majority of people work exclusively for self-interest: “All a man’s labor is for his mouth and yet the appetite is not satisfied” (Eccl 6:7). Paul wrote, “Each man’s work will become evident [*eros or Agape?*]; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work” (1Cor 3:13). Consider the son who hungers for opportunities to please his father, whose appetite to finish the chores before his father returns home becomes his veritable strength. “How sweet are Your words to my **taste!** Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth....**I opened my mouth wide and panted, for I longed for Your commandments** [*to hear and to do Father’s will*]” (Ps 119:103, 131). At eighty-five years of age Caleb said:

I followed the Lord my God fully....The Lord has let me live....I am still as strong today as I was in the day Moses sent me [*to spy out the land, age 40*]; as my strength was then, so my strength is now....Give me this hill country [*occupied by Canaanite giants*]....I will drive them out as the Lord has spoken (Joshua 14).

Caleb retained the vigor of youth because his appetite to accomplish God’s work was itself his very meat, a life-long diet that sustained his

longevity as a bold, godly, Father-confident man. How many elderly believers forfeit the tremendous fruit-bearing potential of their remaining years by *degenerating* into self-focus! Eros self-satisfaction is a mirage, but delighting Father through the Son is “true food” and “true drink;” it is a bountiful, satisfying reality—Life to spirit, soul, and body!

The “Jesus-diet,” an appetite to do Father’s will, provides a fresh perspective on the Scriptures: “If anyone is not **willing to work** [*for Father*], then he is not to **eat** [*of Father*], either” (2Thess 3:10). “The worker is worthy of his support [*lit. nourishment*]” (Mt 10:10). The “Jesus-diet” and “taking Jesus’ yoke upon you” are synonymous.

Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and **we exist for Him** [*to delight Him*]; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and **we exist** [*alive to Father in fruit-bearing*] **through Him** [*by eating Jesus*] (1Cor 8:6).

In your suspicious, willful, eros nature, you may look at this Father-centered arrangement as **utilitarianism**—that your value to God is just as a worker, simply another form of eros usury and enslavement. The self-centered ingrate says, “I knew You to be **a hard man** reaping where You did not sow and gathering where You scattered no seed” (Mt 25:24). When you are deluded by

self-love and consumed by the rationale of eros calculation, you are incapable of seeing past yourself into the extravagant generosity of Father. You have not yet discovered it is simply impossible to out-give or out-work Him. Jesus said “**My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working**” (John 5:17). There is no more rigorous, demanding work than resurrecting fruitless, self-focused men—giving to “takers”—and no one works harder at it than Father.

The kingdom is quite the opposite of utilitarianism; it is reciprocal serving and self-giving in the Family business of bountiful Agape in which all work and all eat together. In this Family endeavor, Father Himself pulls the vast majority of the weight, in fact, *all* the weight! It is Father’s willing labor that makes Jesus’ yoke “easy” and His burden “light,” a restful productivity (Mt 11:30). **Father’s children are not hirelings** compensated on a “commission-basis” of calculated productivity; that is eros rationale. All Father’s kids are **heirs** who eat from and share in the Family inheritance, which *He* has labored to provide, drinking their fill from the vineyard *Father* planted in which they are working side by side with Him.

The essential Life of the Son, made ingestible for you in His flesh and blood, is Father-conscious Agape—Jesus’ own will to do Father’s will becomes *your* will, with all the nourishment, motivation, joy, and rest that are in Him. When you eat Jesus that

nutritional Substance is what is being assimilated in you. Father-conscious Agape, the nature and capacity to delight Father, is all the Son is and has; therefore, that is all He has to give you. He does not have, nor does He offer, counterfeit food—the self-focused blessings many seek from Him.

“Whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving from the strength which God supplies [*through the flesh and blood of His well-pleasing Son*]” (1Pet 4:11). Not only is the *strength* to delight Father supplied by eating Jesus but also the eros-free *motivation* with which to approach and relate to Him and others. “Be strengthened [*nourished*] in the grace that is in [*the flesh and blood of*] Jesus Christ” (2Tim 2:1).

David said, “The Lord has weakened [*displaced*] my strength” (Ps 102:23); “I love You, O Lord, my strength” (Ps 18:1). “David strengthened himself in the Lord his God” (1Sam 30:6). David filled his mouth with the food of praise singing: “I call to You when my heart is faint” (Ps 61:2). In this nourishment, he practiced acting in God’s generous ways; as an under-shepherd he fed God’s people who were entrusted to him, stewarding and “cultivating the garden” of Israel.

#### **D. The Food in your Mouth**

With the fruit [*words*] of a man’s mouth his stomach will be satisfied; he will be satisfied with the product of his lips. Death

and life are in the power of the tongue,  
and those who love it [*either Agape or eros*]  
will eat its fruit (Pr 18:20-21).

One of the primary ways you gratify yourself is through self-referential talk; you are the direct or indirect subject of all your conversations. This is self feeding on self. Jesus said, “The mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart” (Mt 12:34). The mouth of a man ruled by self-love is filled with **self-referential talk**; he has only self to eat. The mouth of a man “controlled by Agape” is filled with **talk about Father**, His kingdom, and the accomplishment of His will; he is eating Jesus. “The mind of the intelligent seeks knowledge [*Father-consciousness*], but the **mouth of fools feeds on folly** [*self-love expressed in words*]....A good [*lit. generous*] heart has a **continual feast**” (Prov 15:14-15).

“I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall continually be [*Food*] in my mouth” (Ps 34:1). Jesus’ mouth was filled with His Father, speaking to Him, from Him, and about Him. As a Man clothed in vulnerable flesh just like you and me, He was satisfied and strengthened mightily with that Food. “From the fruit of a man’s mouth he enjoys [*lit. eats*] good” (Pro 13:2). “A soothing [*lit. healing*] tongue is a tree of life [*bearing Agape fruit*], but perversion [*self-love*] in it crushes the spirit” (Prov 15:4). “The lips of the righteous **feed** many, but fools die for lack of understanding” (Prov

10:21). The unmistakable evidence of the Spirit of Jesus in a man is that there is very little overt or subtle self-referential talk; the Spirit of Jesus simply does not talk from or about Himself.

## 7. “Desiring a Desire”

And the rabble who were among them [*Israel in the wilderness*] had **greedy desires** [*literal Hebrew: ‘desired a desire’*]; and also the sons of Israel wept again and said, “Who will give us meat to eat? We remember the fish which we used to **eat free in Egypt** [*circumstance of their slavery forgotten, irrelevant*], the cucumbers and the melons and the leeks and the onions and the garlic; but **now our appetite is gone**. There is nothing at all to look at [*lit. for our eyes*] except this manna.”...And the anger of the Lord was kindled and Moses was displeased (Num 11:4f).

God tested the soulish appetite of Israel by the *sameness* of manna. He intended to lead them to the Promised Land “flowing with milk and honey” and “vineyards they did not plant,” but could they be *content*, not to mention *grateful*, eating of the bread of His Son? Emigrating out of slavery involved a great deal more than just walking out of the brick-pits of Egypt! Just as Israel’s true slave-master was not Pharaoh, but “**desiring a desire**,”

so Belial is not your true captor; you are enslaved by your own appetite for self-satisfaction, which has addicted you to self-gratification.

On the other side of the Red Sea, Israel's soulish "hunger-habit" of self-gratification was going into serious withdrawals! Even after 400 years of enslavement, they still wanted to chase the mechanical rabbit around the dog track though they had never once caught it; they missed following the elusive carrot though they had never tasted it. "**Now our appetite is gone.**" God's slave-minded people still considered their chances of realizing self-satisfaction to be better under Pharaoh than receiving from God. They sorely missed "desiring a desire" and bitterly resented God for interfering with their futile, self-gratifying quest. "Better is a **dry morsel** and quietness [*peace in a nest of rest*] with it, than a house full of **feasting** [*lit. falsehood*] **with strife** [*predators and parasites*]" (Pr 17:1).

You shall remember all the way which the Lord your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might **humble** [*empty*] **you, testing you**, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not [*self-satiated or hungry to do His will?*]. He humbled you and let you be **hungry**, and **fed you with manna** which you did not know, not did your fathers

know [*foreign, heavenly bread*], that He might make you **understand** [*awaken to reality*] that man does not live by bread alone [*natural, soulish gratification*], but **man lives** [*spiritually*] **by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord** (Deut 8:2-3).

Only two things have ever proceeded out of the mouth of God both in the Old and New Testaments—the Person of His **Son**, Father’s final “Word,” His provision of life-giving Food, and the **Spirit** of His Son sent to feed us who do not know how to spiritually feed ourselves.

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers...all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same **spiritual food**; and all drank the same **spiritual drink**, for they were **drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them**; and the rock was **Christ**. Nevertheless, with most of them God was **not well-pleased** [*unwilling to eat the manna of the Son gratefully, contentedly*] for they were laid low in the wilderness. Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would **not crave evil things** [*self-gratification*] as they also craved (1Cor 10:1-6).

Israel's eros nature, which "desired a desire," caused them to reject and shamefully dishonor God's provision of manna, which represented His own Son. How could God lead them into the bountiful liberty and fullness of His kingdom nest of rest until they could willingly and gratefully hunger for and eat the manna of Jesus?

Now those who belong to Christ [*lit. are of Christ Jesus*] have **crucified the flesh with its passions and desires** [*appetites and cravings*]. If we live by the Spirit [*sustained by our appetite for Jesus*], let us also walk by the Spirit [*manifest His Agape Life*] (Gal 5:24-25).

## 8. Drinking Seawater

Some years ago, Bob Mumford taught a message entitled "Drinking Seawater," which masterfully illustrates "desiring a desire." In Belial's domain, all mankind is adrift on an ocean of salt water. We are parched with thirst, and since we are surrounded by such a vast expanse of easily accessible water we resort to chugging it down, indifferent to the fact that it is "dead" water. Gratifying our thirst from this source quickly intensifies our thirst, so "desiring a desire," we drink again, inadvertently hastening our own death. Until we receive the "living water" in the Person of Jesus, there is no alternative.

There came a woman of Samaria [*captive of self-love*] to draw water. Jesus said to her, “**Give Me a drink.**” Therefore the Samaritan woman said to Him, “How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman?” Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you **living water**....Everyone who drinks of this [*natural*] water will **thirst again** [*drinking seawater*]; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall **never thirst**; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life [*infinite Agape Source*].” The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water, so I will not be **thirsty**....” He said to her, “Go call your husband and come here.” The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You have correctly said, ‘I have no husband;’ for you have had **five husbands** [*drinking seawater*], and the one whom you now have is not your husband...” (John 4:7-18).

The Samaritan woman was an eros captive seeking self-satisfaction in men. She was “drinking”

husbands like seawater. When one man failed or ceased to gratify her, she “drank” another, but each turned out to be the elusive rabbit. “Desiring a desire” operates according to the **law of diminishing returns**; each attempt to gratify oneself must be renewed by a more promising “fix.” The nature of addiction is that a larger dose is required to get the same desired result or “high.” For this woman, five gulps of seawater quickly led to a sixth. Self-gratification leads to death. The woman had become so parched of soul that Father was moved with compassion and dispatched His Son directly to her by a well! Jesus traveled into a land and among a people considered “unclean” and prohibited by the Jews simply that He might quench her thirst with His fathomless Agape.

Hear the good news: Father has provided another water Source! The Agape “well,” which Father has hidden within your spirit-man in the Person of His Son, is an infinite spring of living water that must be discovered and drawn from spiritually in vital, dynamic relationship with Him. Do not drink seawater, “but be being filled with the Spirit” (Eph 5:18).

**Self-consciousness** itself is nothing more than drinking of self-love, gulping seawater. Belial is a counterfeit shepherd, the master of illusions, mirages, allurements, and false promises, leading people deeper into their enslaving eros addiction, guiding them to death. His specialty is baiting

believers with “good” and noble things. When ministry, church, and even worship are pursued for self-gratification they are seawater, and God’s self-conscious people become thirstier and greatly perplexed. New and more satisfying “highs” are zealously sought by exploiting the things of God. Was this not the condition of the religious Jews in Jesus’ day? Is this not the condition of the vast majority of the contemporary church? Our own self-gratifying compulsions work in Belial’s favor. “For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves [*in themselves*] cisterns, **broken cisterns** that can hold no water” (Jer 2:13).

## 9. Soulsh Christianity

If I speak with the **tongues** of men and angels, but do not have Agape [*God’s self-giving nature*]...if I have the gift of **prophecy**, and know all mysteries and **all knowledge**; and if I have all **faith**, so as to remove mountains, but do not have Agape, I am nothing [*fruitless, self-conscious Christianity*]. And if I **give all my possessions to feed the poor**, and if I **surrender my body** to be burned, but do not have Agape [*Father-conscious self-giving*], it profits me nothing [*I am drinking seawater*] (1Cor 13:1-3).

Intent on giving Himself to the world through His sons and daughters, Father's purpose was to *entrust* the gifts of His Spirit to His children as Father-conscious *stewards*, as a means of awakening a spiritual appetite in "dead" men. The spiritual gifts are Father's means of empowering us as believers to generously feed others, allowing them to taste His Agape, to *give* Himself through us. Is this not the motivation and manner in which Jesus employed the gifts of power? However, the grievous reality is that each of the spiritual gifts is commonly exploited by soulish believers to feed a self-focused, eros addiction.

Many who are esteemed as spiritual giants in Christian circles are actually self-gratifying addicts, **gulping the charismata like seawater**. Under the pretense of revealing and serving God, their own names often headline their advertisements for a succession of escalating events; each gathering must become more and more spectacular to achieve the needed eros "fix," to sustain the self-gratifying appetite both of themselves and their followers. It all looks and feels so good; *real* gifts of God operate through *real* faith because "the gifts and calling of God are irrevocable" (Ro 11:29). Now, these men and women are precious to God; they often did not set out to become such as they are; nevertheless, together these leaders and their people are drinking seawater and maturing in soulish, eros Christianity. T. Austin Sparks observed,

We have one of the most serious warnings against **living the Christian life in the realm of the soul instead of in the spirit**. It would seem that the enemy would facilitate such “Christianity” to a tremendous degree. The mental, emotional and volitional **engrossment in “spiritual” things** apart from or beyond a true Holy Spirit energizing will bring its own Nemesis, and the end may be despair [*drinking seawater*]....Then take your stand in your spirit, even against your soul and body if needs be, and against all hell. Stand upon the fact that He in Whom you have put your trust is “greater than our heart.” Keep your eyes outside. **Refuse introspection** [*self-consciousness*], dwelling upon yourself, your condition, your feeling, your symptoms. Look not for hope in yourself, but remember that He is your righteousness [*Son-consciousness*], your surety, your acceptance with God, your merit, your Intercessor (T. Austin Sparks, The Spiritual Clinic).

The type or “brand” of Christianity practiced by those who have not yet been emptied and displaced by the Son may be identified as “Cross-less Christianity.” Like the slave-minded Israelites coming out of Egypt, these eros captives who

have now believed in Jesus remain die-hard self-gratifiers, experts from a life-long pursuit of self-satisfaction. Upon discovering that the world cannot satisfy, and that Jesus and His kingdom are real, they begin to pursue Him in the same manner that they pursued futile worldly things, hungering for Him with the same soulish, eros cravings. This old appetite to gratify self easily adapts itself to the religious, spiritual, “Christian” dimension, seeking what God can give me or make of me.

The “Christian self” substitutes the world with God as the object of its’ soulish desire. Old “hunger-habits” are simply transferred onto the things of God. The Christian predator makes God his prey; the parasite detaches from the world and attaches to God. This craving, however, is not for God Himself but rather for His benefits and effects; it is not the spiritual appetite to eat and be displaced by the well-pleasing Son in order to become a generous, well-pleasing son. This “cross-less” brand of faith is *not* Jesus’ Father-conscious faith, which leads to fruit-bearing Life. In the light of the Holy Spirit, we must ask ourselves as believers, “What, exactly, am I hungry for? What is the source of my appetite?” Man’s soulish appetite, whether lawless or religious, is to gratify self; man’s spiritual appetite is to delight Father.

Man, in his eros nature is **insatiable**....  
Just as God’s love is not appetitive longing

[*self-gratification*]...so man's love [*Agape*] for God signifies that man, moved by this Divine love, gratefully wills to belong wholly to God [*to 'feed' Father*]...a purely theocentric [*God-centered*] love, in which all choice on man's part is excluded. Man loves God, not because on comparing Him with other things he finds Him more satisfying than anything else, but because God's unmotivated love has overwhelmed him and taken control of him [*displacement*], so that he cannot do other than love God (Nygren, Agape and Eros, p 213).

Man's understanding of "salvation" is quite different than God's. A self-conscious interpretation of the "gift" of salvation is based in eros rationale—appraising it as something that is given merely as a benefit to *me*; Jesus intends to save me from self-gratification itself and make *me* the gift. "God raised up His Son [*the Gift*] and sent Him to bless you [*how?*] by turning every one of you from your wicked [*self-gratifying*] ways" (Acts 3:26). *You* are the Son's gift to Father: "the riches of the glory of *His* inheritance in the saints" (Eph 1:18).

The Father-conscious Son came for one purpose—to make you a delightful "gift" to Father the way He Himself is. An Agape interpretation

of the “gift” of salvation is redemption from self-love and regeneration in the Son’s *generous likeness for Father*. **The gift you receive is that you become the gift!** The Lord does not save you from Satan, death, and hell that you might finally realize “true” self-satisfaction as an end in yourself, that which you could not find in the world; self-satisfaction does not exist either in the world or in the kingdom! As a believer you *are* “saved,” but you are also *being* saved—even now Jesus is seeking to save you by feeding you with His own flesh and blood, making you *grow* in His own Agape DNA as a Father-conscious giver—making you Father’s “gift.”

You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive because you ask with wrong motives [*lit. wickedly; eros*], so that you may **spend it on your pleasures** [*self-gratification*] (James 4:2-3).

Soulsh Christianity is often an appetite for the mystical, a spiritually-sensual eros attraction to the effects of the Spirit of God. Jesus said, “An evil and perverse generation **craves** for a sign” (Mt 12:29). Exploiting God’s real spiritual things for self-gratification and fixating on those things as a false center, develops into acute “food poisoning.” In this addiction to “good” things, we cannot understand why we are so weak and sick because, after all, they are God’s *real* gifts, which He gave

us. I have seen each of the spiritual gifts become a source of toxic food poisoning. Making the prophetic an appetitive pursuit or faith, healing, church, or evangelism does *not* lead to Life! God *is not* faith or deliverance or words of knowledge or even worship, but “God *is* Agape” (1John 4:8, 16). Craving true spiritual things as a false center will inevitably lead to serious error.

Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostle’s hands, he offered them money, saying, “Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have no part or portion [*stewardship*] in this matter, for your heart is not right before God [*Father-conscious*]. Therefore, repent of this wickedness [*self-gratification*] of yours, and pray the Lord, that, if possible, the intention of your heart [*eros*] may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness [*drinking seawater, unquenchable thirst*] and in the bondage of iniquity [*Belial’s captive*]” (Acts 8:18-23).

After God miraculously delivered His people through Gideon, Gideon “took the crescent

ornaments [*primitive Islam*] which were on the camel's necks [*of their defeated enemy*]...made it into an ephod [*priestly robe*], and placed it in his city, Ophrah, and all Israel played the harlot with it there, so that it became a **snare** to Gideon and his household” (Judges 8:21-27). They were drinking from a toxic source. Have you eaten of spiritual things that seemed good but weakened your ability to stand firm in Father's will?

The sorrows of those who have hastened to another god [*false center*] will be multiplied; I shall not pour out their drink offerings of blood, nor will I take their names upon my lips [*eat of them*]. The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and **my cup** ... indeed my heritage [*Family into which I have been regenerated*] is beautiful to me (Ps 16:4-5).

My “cup” is the Son Himself, not Father's benefits, His gifts, or His effects. Neither is the cup from which I drink filled with the real tools that God used in the past but has now declared obsolete such as the feasts, prayer shawls, ephods, and other symbolic elements of Judaism all of which were imperfect types of the Son who has since come to fulfill and displace them. Consider how Israel was derailed from God the true Center when they resorted to worshipping the bronze

serpent that He commanded Moses to make as an instrument of their deliverance (2Ki 18:4).

Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me not because you saw signs [*soulish craving for experiential thrills, My miracles*], but because you ate of the loaves and were filled [*your spiritual appetite for sonship was awakened*]. Do not work for the food which perishes [*religious self-gratification, seawater*] but for the food which endures to eternal life [*generative, fruit-bearing Agape*], which the Son of Man will give you (John 6:26-27).

By eating Jesus, our eros appetite to possess God, exploit Him, and even our desire to *be* God is healed and transformed into an appetite to be possessed by Him, to become the gift of food to feed Father and those whom He loves. You are Father's possession, not His possessor. Where do you begin? "Taste and see" that Jesus is Agape, and allow Father to develop in you an appetite for His self-giving Son. Content yourself with the manna of Jesus and allow Him to add all other spiritual things as peripheral blessings. Pertaining to spiritual things, I have not discovered a more helpful portion of Scripture in discerning between the two appetites than God's instruction through Isaiah:

Raise your voice like a trumpet, and declare to My people their **transgression** [*eros religion, self-gratifying 'spirituality'*].... **Yet they seek Me day by day** and delight to know My ways....They delight in the nearness of God [*in eros, exploiting His presence for their own benefit*]. [*Man's response:*] “**Why have we fasted and You do not see?** Why have we humbled ourselves and You do not notice?” [*God's answer:*] “Behold on the day of your fast **you find your desire** [*eros-payoff*], and drive hard all your workers. Behold, you fast for contention and strife [*jealous competition*] and to strike with a wicked fist....Is it a fast like this which I choose, a day for man to humble himself? [*'spiritual' means to an eros end?*] Is it for bowing one's head like a reed and for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as a bed? [*to be seen of men and God; 'earning' and therefore deserving His blessing*] Will you call this a fast, even an **acceptable** day to the Lord? [*God is not pleased*]

Is this not the fast which I choose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free and to **break every yoke?** [*cease eros control over others, exploiting*]

*their self-gratifying addiction*]. Is it not to **divide your bread with the hungry** and bring the homeless poor into the house; when you see the naked to cover him; and not to hide yourself from your own flesh [*Agape generosity*]? Then your light will break out like the dawn, and your recovery [*regeneration*] will speedily break forth; and your righteousness [*My Agape DNA*] will go before you....

And if you **give yourself to the hungry** and satisfy the desire of the afflicted [*act in My Agape likeness*], then your light will rise in darkness and your gloom will become like midday [*false, solemn, self-conscious religion exchanged for true spirituality: celebrating with Father by generously providing a feast of the Son assimilated in you to the needy*]. And the Lord will continually **guide** you [*as you emigrate to Him*], and **satisfy** your desire in scorched places, and give **strength** to your bones; and you will be like a watered garden, and like a **spring of water** whose waters do not fail [*abiding in the Agape Source*] (Is 58:1-11).

Soulsh Christianity is viral and contagious; therefore, you must be careful of the sources from which you eat:

Jesus began saying to His disciples first of all, “Beware of the **leaven** of the Pharisees [*counterfeit spirituality*], which is hypocrisy [*eros masked under the pretense of Agape*]. But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known” (Luke 12:2).

The Life of Jesus is assimilated in you through ingesting His flesh and blood; just like leaven or yeast, it causes the whole “loaf” of your being to be filled with Agape. In a similar way, the influence of those who exploit God for self-gratification can fill you with religious eros and mature you as a “Christian” predator and parasite.

Jesus said to His disciples, “But beware of the **leaven** of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Then they understood that He did not say to beware of the leaven of [*natural*] bread, but of the **teaching** [*eros example, rationale and influence*] of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Mt 16:11-12).

The pervasive influence of the Pharisees is very much alive today—the same old, man-centered, religious ideas working through contemporary leaders. These self-satiated teachers offer their “leavened” bread under the pretense of generosity, but it is an eros hook and snare. Jesus openly confronted and exposed them:

You **hypocrites**, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: “This people honors Me with their lips [*pretending to eat Me*], but their heart [*self-giving affection*] is far away from Me. But in vain [*futility*] do they worship Me, **teaching** as doctrines [*true food*] the precepts of men [*counterfeit food, how to gratify self by exploiting God*] (Mt 15:6-9).

These are the men who are **hidden reefs** [*stealthy predators*] **in your Agape feasts** [*nest of rest*] when they feast with you without fear [*Father-consciousness*], caring for themselves [*self-love*]; clouds without water [*barren*], carried along by winds [*instinctual, self-gratifying appetites*]; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted (Jude 12).

How can you discern and refuse this eros leaven? First, Jesus said, “Do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ” (Mt 23:8-10). There is only One perfect Teacher and yet He has chosen to impart the Word of His Son to the world through His sons and daughters who are eating His Son and manifesting His Spirit. A good, Agape-motivated Bible teacher imparts the

living Christ and never himself. You must never eat from the life of a teacher; rather, eat the Life of Jesus that has been effectively assimilated into that teacher. Paul said, “Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ” (1Cor 11:1).

Second, Jesus taught us to appraise men by their fruit (Mt 7:16-20). We must eat Jesus *through* teachers who evidence Father-consciousness—the unmistakable sign that they are well-nourished from the Life of Jesus. No teacher can live on self-conscious “skim milk” during the days of the week and impart Father’s “cream” through his messages! However, no teacher is perfect; therefore, when “eating and drinking” through the message a Bible-teacher provides, you should listen or read as you would eat a fish—when you come to an unpalatable bone, simply eat around it!

Bob Mumford teaches that the church was intended to serve Father as a “mother” to His children nurturing, cultivating, and maturing sons and daughters of the kingdom *for Father*. However, Bob says, “**mother’s milk has radiation.**” The very breast milk of the church by which believers are nourished may be infected with eros. Toxic milk *appears* to have the right flavor, color, and consistency, yet it is death-producing, imparting the very self-gratifying nature that enslaves that mother church. Instead of grooming sons of the kingdom in Father’s Agape DNA, acculturating them into His Father-conscious kingdom, this

self-focused church rears sons of the “system” in her own eros DNA. By eating from her, these children are acculturated into her self-gratifying ways.

Churches, as well as ministers such as Bible teachers, prophets, evangelists, and missionaries, seem to fall into two categories: type-A people advocate a “**theology of glory**,” that is, a **self-gratifying** approach to God that seeks to gain from Him either by climbing up to Him by “good works” or by chasing and “claiming” Him and His benefits in zealous, spiritually-sensual enthusiasm. Type-B people adhere to a “**theology of the Cross**,” which is a **self-giving** approach to God through self-denial and displacement by the Son through His Cross. A-types *seek* the gift; B-types *become* the gift.

James and John...came up to Jesus, saying, “Teacher, **we want You to do for us whatever we ask of You.**” And He said to them, “What do you want Me to do for you?” They said, “Grant [*lit. Give to us*] that we may sit, one on Your right and one on Your left, in Your **glory**” [*eros theology of glory*]. But Jesus said, “You do not know what you are asking [*genuine glory (Agape) can only be found on the other side of the Cross*]. Are you able to drink the **cup** [*self-sacrificial death*] that I drink,

or be baptized with the **baptism** with which I am baptized [*displaced through the Cross*]?" They said to Him, "We are able [*self-confidence*]." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you shall drink; and you shall be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized [*by this merciful means I will save you from self-love*]. But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared [*I am merely Father's Steward-Son*]." Hearing this, the ten began to feel indignant with James and John (Mark 10:35-41).

Type-A folks, who advocate a theology of glory, "proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than out of pure motives" (Phil 1:17). They are self-conscious, laboring to appear attractive, acceptable, and desirable to men that their church or ministry might grow—a carefully *calculated* numerical growth. The A-type ministry and message appeals to the **soul** of man, propagating "self-help" and prosperity. The B-type message appeals to the **spirit** of man with Jesus' invitation, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his **cross** and follow Me" (Mt 16:24). The mouths of A-types are filled with success-oriented talk: church growth as "mother-growth;" the mouths of B-types are filled with Father-talk: the growth of His kingdom by

accomplishing His will. Type-A folks measure in terms of **quantity**; type-B folk measure in terms of **quality**, laboring to produce fruit-bearing sons and daughters for Father. Paul described the type-A church:

They will not endure sound doctrine [*the Cross*], but wanting to have their **ears tickled** [*craving the spiritually-sensual*], they will accumulate for themselves teachers [*leaven*] in accordance with their **own desires** [*self-gratification*], and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to **myths** [*mirage of spiritual self-satisfaction*]. But you [*my spiritual son, Timothy*], be sober [*Father-conscious*] in all things, endure hardship [*self-sacrificial Agape, embracing the Cross*]. . . . For I am already being **poured out as a drink offering** [*self-giving Agape*]. . . (2Tim 4:3-6).

Type-B teachers and congregations are Father-conscious followers of the “Outcast Son” who “suffered outside the gate;” these maturing sons and daughters “go out to Him outside the camp [*of social acceptability, popularity*] bearing His reproach” (Heb 13:13). They surrender to Jesus hungering to receive, eat, and assimilate His own Agape nature and to bear fruit for Father. Type-A folks do not like the “taste” of the message or spirit

of a Father-conscious (type-B) teacher, in whom the “sound doctrine” of the Cross abides, and are *unwilling* to listen to him. Sometimes type-A believers are initially attracted to the sound, fragrance, and flavor of Agape, “but they have no firm root in themselves [*the Cross*], and are only temporary; then when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately they fall away” (Mark 4:17). Paul was painfully aware of the difference:

Brethren, join in following my example [*type-B*], and observe those [*Father-conscious teachers*] who walk according to the **pattern** [*Agape; theology of the Cross*] you have in us. For many **walk** [*practice eros ‘Christianity,’ theology of glory*], of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, **as enemies of the cross of Christ**, whose end is destruction, whose **god is their appetite**, and whose **glory** is in their shame, who set their minds on [*calculate*] earthly things (Phil 3:17-19).

Type-A ministries reference the Cross primarily in terms of its benefits, a means of getting my blessing or claiming my inheritance from God. They are *unwilling* to see or embrace the Cross as an instrument of subtraction and displacement, a means of emptying that enables me to be filled with the delightful Son, to *become* a gift to Father,

to be *His* inheritance. “If children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, **if indeed we suffer with Him** [*embrace the Cross*] so that we may also be **glorified** with Him [*mature in His Agape nature*]” (Ro 8:16).

Of course, there are gradations of type-A ministries, some with redemptive features and some altogether detrimental, propagating a counterfeit gospel. Before we are tempted in pride to go on an eros “witch-hunt” for type-A’s, we must remember Jesus words:

John said to Him, “Teacher, we saw someone **casting out demons in Your name**, and we tried to prevent him because he was **not following** us [*appetite for Jesus’ works, but not for Jesus*].” But Jesus said, “Do not hinder him, for there is no one who will perform a miracle in My name, and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. For **he who is not against us is for us**” (Mark 9:39-40).

In His magnanimous Agape, Father does bless and use many type-A folks in spite of themselves. Personally, I am able to endure such “soulish” speakers, “self-help” messages, and “glorious” services by remembering Paul’s words, “In every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice” (Phil 1:18).

## 10. Beastly Appetite

All you **beasts** of the field, all you **beasts** in the forest come to **eat** [*pursue God to exploit Him for self-gratification*]. **His watchmen** [*beastly, spiritual leaders of God's people*] are blind, all of them know nothing [*of Agape*]. All of them are mute **dogs** unable to bark [*voice God's warnings*], dreamers lying down, who love to slumber [*in self-focus*]; and the **dogs are greedy** [*lit. strong of appetite*], **they are not satisfied** [*lit. do not know satisfaction*]. And they are shepherds who have **no understanding** [*mentoring others in eros rationale*]; they have all **turned to their own way** [*eros 'hook'*], each one to his unjust gain, to the last one. "Come," they say, "let us get wine, and let us drink heavily of strong drink; and tomorrow will be like today, only more so [*chasing the mirage of self-satisfaction*]" (Is 56:9-12).

### **A. Creatures of Instinct**

Jesus warned us that religious predators would abound. "False prophets" gratify their insatiable appetite by preying on men; they use the name of Jesus and elements of Christianity as a hook and lure. "Workers of wickedness...**eat up My people as they eat bread**, and do not call on the name of the Lord [*eat from Me*]" (Ps 14:4). Since

like-attracts-like, you and I must first crucify these compulsive beastly appetites in ourselves that we may not be found among a religious “herd” or “pride” or “pack,” but among other regenerated children at Father’s table.

Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been **feeding themselves!** Should not the shepherds feed the flock? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock... (Ezek 34:2-3).

Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned [*the Cross*], and turn away from them. For such men are **slaves, not of Christ but of their own appetites** [*lit. belly*]; and by their smooth and flattering speech [*using Bible verses*] they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting (Ro 16:17-18).

The appetite for self, whether it seeks satisfaction through lawlessness or by using God, has one toxic taproot—self-love—to feed self as an end in yourself. Jesus faced down and overcame this human condition: “Jesus was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts” (Mark 1:13). There

are countless Scriptures that vividly illustrate the self-gratifying behavior of humans in terms of beasts—man acting in Belial’s likeness. David testified:

When I kept silent about my sin [*self-gratification*], my body wasted away [*death*] through my **groaning** [*lit. roaring; e.g. beast*] all day long. For night and day Your hand was heavy upon me [*Father’s discipline*]; my **vitality** [*lit. life juices*] were turned into the drought of summer [*drinking seawater*]. I acknowledged my sin to You. . . . **Do not be as the horse or as the mule** [*instinctual beasts, not spiritual sons*] which have **no understanding** [*of Agape*], whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check otherwise they will not come near to you [*intent on chasing self-satisfaction*] (Ps 32:3-5).

Our self-conscious, eros nature is beast-like because it is “**without understanding;**” that is, we are not conscious of spiritual Reality—Father Himself. The *natural* man does not possess the *spiritual* capacity of Father-consciousness; we do not have Father’s spiritual “gene.” As degenerate, beast-like men, we live and function on pure **instinct**, self-conscious impulse. We are only *conscious* of our own immediate appetites and instinctually seek to gratify them like an animal,

which instinctually seeks only to eat, mate, and preserve its own life. Instinctual self-consciousness is our whole universe; spiritual Reality—Father—remains outside our frame of reference. We are like the donkey that can only see the carrot that Belial has suspended just out of reach. Our spirit is sleeping in death while our soulish and fleshly appetites are clamoring to be gratified. As creatures of instinct, we cannot willingly come to Father, much less *know* Him.

I said to myself concerning the sons of men [*born into degenerate, eros heredity*], “God has surely **tested** them to see that they are but **beasts** [*instinctually self-gratifying, self-preserving*]. For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same. As one dies, so dies the other; indeed they all have the **same breath** [*pnuema—spirit, man is spiritually degenerated, dead*] and there is no advantage for man over beast, for all is vanity [*futility; self-focused fruitlessness*].... All came from the dust and all return to the dust (Eccl 3:18-20).

Peter observed that self-gratifying men are “**like unreasoning animals** [*‘without understanding’*], **born as creatures of instinct** [*eros heredity*] **to be captured and killed** [*by the false-father Belial*]” (2Pet 2:12). Belial entices by appealing to our soulish and fleshly desires, appetites for lawlessness,

or even for the things of God; he holds us captive on a leash of instinctual fixation, facilitating our addiction and encouraging us to gratify ourselves literally to death on seawater. This really works. “This is the way of an adulterous woman: she **eats** [*gratifies herself*] and wipes her mouth and says, ‘I have done no wrong’” (Pr 30:20). This woman acts like a beast because her **instinct** for self-gratification dominates and eclipses both her spirit and her conscience. This same instinctual compulsion effectively operates in Christendom among “fleshly” believers (1Cor 3:3; 1Pet 2:11, 18). They will tread you under their feet “for Jesus” and never lose a night’s sleep!

## **B. Moses’ Law: “Tutor” for Beasts**

The sons of Israel made a molten calf in Horeb and worshipped a molten image. Thus they **exchanged** their glory [*promise of sonship, Father’s ‘gene’*] for the image of an **ox that eats grass** [*instinctual beast*]. They forgot God their Savior [*‘without understanding’*]... (Ps 106:19-20).

Israel’s conscious awareness of God was eclipsed by their self-gratifying instinct. They were spiritually dead to Him, and therefore they did not share His likeness. Moses, who was spiritually God-conscious, acted as a deterrent and restraint against Israel’s eros compulsions. Moses

represented the **restraint of the Law**—when fear of suffering punishment outweighs the potential gratification of self-indulgence. A beast-like man instinctually chooses the path of least suffering and is therefore restrained. A beast under Law is not restrained by reason of Father-consciousness or a spiritually regenerated nature but because he is moved by His own instinct of self-preservation to avoid the pain of punishment. Therefore, Paul says, “the Law made nothing perfect” (Heb 7:19), and “the Law has become our **tutor** to lead us to Christ” (Gal 3:24).

When Moses “delayed to come down from the mountain” (Ex 32:1), the “Law” was absent and the people were left to themselves; they instinctually fashioned an idol in their own image, reflecting the likeness of their own appetitive nature—an instinctual, self-gratifying beast [*ox or calf*] without understanding, spirit, or conscience. The golden calf was an indirect form of self-worship, self-expression, self-love; a very revealing piece of artwork! In the presence of this golden calf, “the people sat down to **eat** and to drink, and rose up to **play**” (Ex 32:6). Though they had come out of Egypt and were “baptized” through the Red Sea, they were still slaves of self-gratification who required Law to keep them from manifesting Belial’s beastly likeness. Regenerative Agape had not yet come.

At Father’s prompting, I have now received

more than twenty orphans as my own sons and daughters that He might have opportunity to regenerate them in His own likeness. These children enter our family as “beasts” enslaved by their self-gratifying instinct. Though they are selfish, incapable of gratitude, and behave willfully and destructively, we receive, accept, love, feed, clothe, and educate them because that is how Father continues to receive us! However, for a *long* time **parental “law”** must govern these self-conscious children as a “tutor”—a deterrent and restraint, until they awaken spiritually to Father-consciousness and are **governed by Agape**. As Father gradually regenerates them, they begin to evidence the fruit of His Spirit—**“self-control.”**

Acts of decency and generous behavior we sometimes see among unsaved people who do not know God are the result of training under such “tutors” as parental and societal law. These inherently flawed “restraints” served to cultivate their conscience to discern right and wrong by *external* behavior modification, not an *internal* regenerated nature. “There is none who does good [*Agape*]; there is not even one” (Ro 3:12).

Self-conscious “goodness” is **soulish compassion** born of self-will and a skewed economy of calculated giving motivated by the eros-payoff of various personal advantages. This is not the same as spontaneous, unconditional generosity motivated by Father-conscious Agape

*naturalized* within regenerated children who have hungered for and been filled with the self-giving, compassionate nature of Jesus. Self-conscious “goodness” involves an eros-payoff of gratification: “When I do good things, I *feel* like a good person, and I am *seen* as a good person.” This “calculated goodness” has limits, can be “bought,” and will inevitably fail. Acts of goodness motivated by Agape are not centered in self but in a consciousness of Father’s righteous nature within: “It does not seek its own [*goodness*];” therefore, it “never fails” (1Cor 13:5-8).

The Son was born among instinctual beasts **imprisoned** in a wretched existence—torn between their self-gratifying compulsions and a fear of the Law of punishment. Jesus came to lead us into **freedom**, feeding us with His own righteousness born of the Agape nature He shares with Father. “There is no fear in Agape; but perfect Agape casts our fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in Agape” (1John 4:18).

## **11. Father Feeds Beasts**

Father *is* Agape—an impartial, unconditional Self-Giver. Mercifully, He is willing to generously feed unworthy, ungrateful beasts—self-conscious men so captivated by their instinctual appetites they are wholly unaware that all the blessings they receive are from Him, men who often attribute

their prosperity to other idolatrous sources. Thanks be to our gracious Father Who feeds beasts since that is the only kind of men that exist outside of His Son! God rebuked self-righteous Job, a man who esteemed himself as generous, saying:

Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or **satisfy the appetite of the young lions** when they crouch in their dens and lie in wait in their lair? **Who prepares for the raven its nourishment when its' young cry to God and wander about without food?** Do you know the time the mountain goats give birth? Do you observe the calving of the deer? ...Who sent out the wild donkey free? And who loosed the bonds of the swift donkey, to whom I gave the wilderness for a home (Job 38:39-39:1).

In the generations gone by God permitted all the nations to go their own ways [*instinctual beasts pursuing self-gratification*]; and yet He did not leave Himself without a **witness** [*Agape:*], in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying [*lit. filling*] your hearts with food and gladness (Acts 14:17).

The Father of Agape had graciously sustained beast-like men since the Garden of Eden; but at the right time, He gave His own Son as Food to us:

And she wrapped Him in cloths, and **laid Him in a manger** [*lit. feeding trough for beasts*] (Luke 1:7).

In a consummate act of Self-giving humility, which proceeded out of His own nature, Father birthed His Son into a stable occupied by literal, instinctual beasts. Through Mary's hands, Father wrapped up His tiny Son like an enchilada and laid Him in their feeding trough! The circumstances of Jesus' birth interpret His death.

This Food *from* the Father and *of* the Father was the Self-sacrificial "Lamb of God" born amongst instinctual wolves wholly incapable of recognizing, much less valuing, Who He was. Father gave His only begotten Son for the life of a world inhabited by eros predators and parasites, knowing how ruthlessly we would tear His flesh and spill His blood. Nevertheless, in Agape, **Father sent this appropriate Gift—a life-giving Antidote.** In the hope of the resurrection of the spiritually dead and in the hope of our regeneration, Father provided an opportunity for us to ingest His Son as an Antidote powerful enough to transform an instinctual beast into a son or daughter in His own likeness.

Aware that He was Father's Food, Jesus freely offered Himself to the masses, healing their *bodies*, touching their *souls*, and speaking the Word of God in parables to their slumbering *spirits*. "For He had healed many, with the result that all those who had afflictions **pressed around Him** in order to touch Him....The **crowd** gathered to such an extent that Jesus and His disciples could not even eat a meal" (Mark 3:10, 20). "Under these circumstances, after so many thousands [*lit. myriads*] of people had gathered together that they were **stepping on one other**" (Luke 12:1-2).

Residing in East Africa, these gospel accounts of pressing multitudes remind us of the situation in northern Uganda where countless thousands are hungry and afflicted due to a rebel war, severe droughts, political injustice, and rampant embezzlement. The United Nations distributes food once a month, a ration that only lasts a family about a week to ten days. When these trucks arrive, the crowds press and swamp them. Our family also facilitates mobile medical clinics in northern Uganda, and the biggest problem we face in offering this care is "crowd-control" because desperate multitudes press in to get their needs met. We witness some ugly, beastly behavior.

The crowds who pressed Jesus were not coming to Him as a Person, they did not see *Him*; rather, they saw a means and opportunity for self-gratification, "stepping on one another"

to get their felt needs met. Famished, thirsting multitudes glutted with seawater swamped Him again and again, instinctually seeking to *get* from Him. We might imagine Jesus would be repulsed by their beastly behavior and feel an emotional detachment, but Jesus was *Father's* Son, the Son of Agape: "Seeing the people, **He felt compassion for them**, because they were distressed and **dispirited** [*spiritually incapacitated*] like sheep without a shepherd [*Fatherless orphans*]" (Mt 9:36). Jesus repeatedly poured Himself out and "many followed Him, and He healed them all" (Mt 12:15).

Our Father, Who is Agape, is a Redeemer of enslaved men, a Regenerator of "dead," degenerate men, and a Restorer of marred, dysfunctional men; He did not want to make *all new things*, but rather to make "**all things new**" (Rev 21:5). In His re-creative love, our compassionate Father set out to make the lost found; the dead alive; the unwilling willing; the barren and thorn-laden to bear fruit; the self-gratifying orphans to be transformed into self-giving sons and daughters by re-birthing and regenerating them as a "new creation" in His Son.

I say to you, **love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you [*act contrary to your eros instinct*], so that you may be **sons of your Father** who is in heaven; for

He causes His sun to rise on the **evil and the good**, and sends rain on the **righteous and the unrighteous**.... Therefore you are to be **perfect** even as your heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5:44-47).

The flesh and blood of the God-Man Jesus contains the regenerative power to *displace* the self-gratifying instinct of a predator and parasite with Father's own self-sacrificial nature. You are an instinctual self-gratifier; Father seeks to "tame" you with the Food of His own Son. He must regenerate you from the inside out!

## **12. White Fang**

In his brilliant play, "*The Taming of the Shrew*," Shakespeare provides a hilarious yet insightful look into the reality of beastly behavior. The 1967 screenplay starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton is awesome, don't miss it! Shakespeare's main character, Petruchio, has to chase and wrestle the "shrew" Katarina in courtship saying, "Thou must be married to no man but me. For I am he born to tame you, Kate; to bring you from a wild-cat to a Kate, conformable as other household Kates!"

However, there is no story quite like Jack London's classic novel, White Fang, which serves as a masterful illustration of how Father seeks to "tame" and regenerate us. The main character is a

young man named Jack who inherits a gold mine in the Alaskan frontier from his deceased father. While seeking to claim his “treasure,” Jack adopts a severely wounded animal that is half-dog, half-wolf named “White Fang.”

White Fang’s original masters see in him the potential for great profit by using him in dog fights. These men, who are “beasts” themselves, seek to develop and mature White Fang’s predatory instinct, his wolf-nature, by chaining, teasing, provoking, and abusing him. They cultivate in this animal their own suspicious, self-preserving nature and their own vicious, predatory instinct. White Fang wins many fights, but eventually he is defeated by a beast more deadly than he and severely injured.

Jack feels compassion for White Fang, carries him back to his cabin by his goldmine, and lays the incapacitated animal on a blanket by the fire. Jack’s partner is very uneasy saying, “I’m not sleeping in the same room with a wolf!” He warns, “You are wasting your time.” A few days later, much to the young man’s delight, White Fang gets up. Jack’s partner says, “Congratulations. You’ve got a healthy wolf on your hands. Now get him outside!”

When Jack carefully approaches, extending his open hand to unleash him, the beast lunges, bites him, and recoils. However, Jack is not discouraged saying to White Fang, “I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have

done that; I shouldn't have tried to force you. So you come out when you're ready." Jack's partner says, "Look at him watching my hands. They beat him bad. There's no taming him now." Jack replies, "All he needs is a little bit of kindness."

Leading White Fang outside and leashing him with about thirty feet of free rein, Jack is determined to risk himself in an attempt to establish a relationship with this beast. His plan is to feed this "degenerate" half-wolf to get him to trust his generous intentions, to woo this beast to come near, to touch and love him. Jack lays a sizeable strip of dried meat-jerky on the ground some ten-feet away from himself. White Fang immediately smells the meat, and his hunger draws him into a long process: two-steps forward, one back, one-step forward, two-back, always prepared to flee or bite if necessary. Meanwhile, Jack's partner is saying, "You're crazy! Turn him loose, he belongs in the woods."

Jack's affectionate resolve, unwavering patience, and ample supply of meat eventually pay off. Feeding White Fang with no teasing or reprisals draws the animal near but with his head bowed in fear. With a strip of jerky extended to White Fang in his right hand, Jack carefully reaches with his left and strokes the wincing, suspicious beast saying, "Ain't nobody going to hurt you. We're going to be ok." This is exactly how **Father reaches to you, with the Food of His**

**Son in His right hand and reaching to touch you with His left.** Jesus said, “No one can come to Me [*true Food*] unless the Father who sent Me **draws him**” (John 6:44). “**O taste** and see that the Lord is good” (Ps 34:8).

For both Jack and White Fang, a relationship is born, a redemptive transformation occurs, and true “treasure” is found. The half-wolf’s self-preserving instinct is radically transformed; this beast who initially attempted to bite Jack repeatedly risks himself to protect his new, beloved master, *treasuring* his life more dear than his own. Afterward, Jack continues to excavate his goldmine, which had not yielded any treasure up to that point. The mine caves in on Jack, and without hesitation White Fang bolts into the entrance amidst falling rock and billowing dust to drag him out. Jack and White Fang emerge unharmed, but to the amazement of Jack’s partner, **White Fang is covered in gold dust!** Jack hit the mother-load!

When Jack takes the gold to be tested to determine its value, White Fang’s former owners follow them as “claim-jumpers,” to attack and rob them. One of the thieves aims a rifle at Jack, but to save his life, White Fang runs full speed at the gun and pounces on the man before he can pull the trigger! Jack and his partner intend to go back to the civilized world with their fortune, but a half-wolf cannot come. Jack must release White Fang

back into the wild, but the animal refuses to go. In tears, Jack chases him with a stick to run him off. Afterward, as the young man approaches the boat to depart, he realizes that the true treasure that he found in Alaska was not an opportunity to spend his gold in the civilized world, but his relationship with White Fang itself. Jack returns to his cabin by the goldmine where White Fang is faithfully waiting.

We are dealing with a love of quite a unique kind....It is a Divine love and therefore shares in the **creativity** that is characteristic of all the **life** of God. **Agape is a creative [regenerative] love.** God does not love that which is already in itself worthy of love, but on the contrary, that which in itself has no worth acquires worth just by becoming the object of God's love....Agape does not recognize value, but creates it....**Imparts value by loving**...a value-creating principle (Nygren, Agape and Eros, p 78).

Jesus is Father's **Antidote** that if consistently ingested as prescribed, will transform a beastly taker into a generous son. A Gentile woman cried out to Jesus on behalf of her afflicted daughter, but Jesus said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." However, the woman persisted, bowing down before Him:

And He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” But she said, “Yes, Lord; but even the **dogs feed on the crumbs** which fall from the masters table.” Then Jesus said, “O woman, your **faith is great**; it shall be done for you as you wish” (Mt 15:26-28).

Through David’s prophetic priesthood, the Son foretold how He would be fed to beasts:

Many **bulls** have surrounded me.... They **open wide their mouth at me**, as a **ravening a roaring lion. I am poured out like water**....For **dogs** have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet.... But You, O Lord, be not far off...deliver my soul from the sword, my only life from the power [*lit. paw*] of the **dog**. Save me from the **lion’s mouth**....The afflicted [*lit. poor*] will **eat** and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the Lord [*reciprocate with thanksgiving*]. Let your heart **live forever!** [*eternal life—eating Jesus and reciprocating Father’s affections*]...All the **prosperous** [*lit. fat ones*] of the earth will **eat** [*Jesus*] and worship [*reciprocate with adoration*] ...even he who cannot keep his soul alive (Ps 22).

On the Cross, not only did “Jesus taste death for everyone” (Heb 2:9), drinking down our toxic eros nature (the blood of our degenerate heredity), but as the Lamb of God, He was also eaten, and devoured by beasts.

Jesus said to His disciples, “You know that after two days the **Passover** is coming, and the Son of Man [*Lamb of God*] is to be handed over for crucifixion [*to devourers*].” Then the chief priests and elders [*predators*]...plotted together to **seize** Jesus by **stealth** and **kill** Him (Mt 26:2-4).

The Roman centurion who carried out Jesus’ execution “tasted” the genuineness of His Agape. This instinctual beast witnessed first-hand the Self-sacrificial manner in which Jesus gave Himself up as Food; he awakened spiritually, believed, and “ate” Him. “When the centurion, who was standing right in front of Him, saw the way He breathed His last, he said, “Truly this was the Son of God” (Mark 15:39).

The prodigal son also underwent this merciful conversion:

And he [*prodigal squanderer*] would have gladly **filled his stomach** with the pods that the **swine** were eating, and no one was giving anything to him [*world of*

takers]. But when he **came to his senses** [*Father-centered reason, reality*], he said, “How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough **bread**, but I am dying here with hunger. I will get up and go to my father [*Father-consciousness*], and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son [*emptied of ‘I am’*]; **make me as one of your hired men** [*I am ready to attend to Your interests as a servant-hearted son, to feed You*]” (Luke 15:16-19).

### 13. What’s on Father’s Menu?

Throughout Israel’s history, God continually reached to each generation of His willful, self-satiated people desiring to awaken their spiritual appetite and feed them with Himself:

I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt; **open your mouth wide and I will fill it**....I would feed you with the **finest of the wheat**, and with **honey from the rock** I would **satisfy** you (Ps 81:10, 16).

In an attempt to cultivate in His natural-minded, self-conscious people a “taste” and appetite for “true Food,” and to teach these orphan

children how to eat properly by His own Parental example, Father instituted two meals a day:

Now this is what you shall offer on the altar: two one year old lambs each day, continuously. The one **lamb** you shall offer in the morning and other lamb you shall offer at twilight; and there shall be one-tenth of an ephah of **fine flour** mixed with one-fourth of a hin of beaten **oil**, and one fourth of a hin of **wine** for a drink offering with one lamb...for a **soothing aroma**, even an offering by fire to the Lord...at the doorway of the tent of meeting before the Lord, where I will meet with you, to speak to you there [*sharing this 'Meal' as a means of relationship*]... and it shall be consecrated by My glory [*Agape*] (Ex 29:38-43).

Did God, Who is *Spirit*, really enjoy the *natural* smell and taste of burning animals, grain, wine, and oil? It was not those physical elements that Father hungered for but what they represented. They were types of the Agape nature of His well-pleasing Son Whom He would send to us as the God-Man Jesus—the self-sacrificial Lamb of God, the bread of His flesh mixed with the oil of His Spirit and the wine of His blood. Father has a powerful appetite for His well-pleasing Son, and His enslaved children are set free, regenerated,

and grow as they learn to share this appetite and hunger with their adoptive Father. By eating these two daily meals with His people, Father was giving them a “taste” of His Son that they might anticipate and hunger for their coming Messiah. Old Testament prophets were continually flooded with Father’s zeal, attempting to express Father’s anticipation to give Himself as Food for the world in His Son, to share that Meal with us:

Then the Lord will be zealous for His land and will have pity on His people. The Lord will answer and say to His people, “Behold I am going to **send you grain, new wine and oil** [*in the flesh and blood of My Son*], and you will be satisfied in full with them....Do not fear, **beasts** of the field, for the pastures of the wilderness have turned green, for the **tree has borne its fruit**, the fig tree and the vine have **yielded in full** [*lit. their wealth; God’s glory*]....The threshing floors will be **full of grain**, and the **vats will overflow with new wine and oil** [*DNA in sons and daughters*]. Then I will make up to you for the years that the swarming **locust** has eaten, the creeping **locust**, the stripping **locust** and the gnawing **locust** [*gradations of parasitic, eros degeneration*]....You will have plenty to eat and be satisfied [*ingest*

*Jesus*] and praise the name of your God [*reciprocate in fruit-bearing*]....I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind [*Agape regeneration*]... (Joel 2:18-28).

God was “zealous” to awaken Israel’s spiritual appetite for His Son, a hunger for Him that would displace their self-conscious preoccupation with natural things: “They will be glad in Your presence [*spiritual bounty*] as with the gladness of harvest [*natural bounty*]” (Is 9:3). When a people become spiritually alive, they feast in the presence of God and esteem that *spiritual* provision of Food far more valuable than those *natural* things they had sought in self-gratification; they “seek first His... and all these [*natural*] things shall be added” (Mt 6:33). Among instinctual, natural-minded men seeking and rejoicing in natural provision, David’s *spirit* hungered for God Himself: “You have put gladness in my heart, more than when their grain and new wine abound” (Ps 4:7). For David, the time of natural harvest had an altogether different meaning.

When the Son finally came as the Man Jesus, the vast majority of Israel was self-satiated and indifferent to Father’s “true Food,” and they did not receive Him. However, a few people were hungry for their coming Messiah, and when He appeared they joyfully received and ate Him because they had acquired Father’s spiritual taste

for the “appetizers” (lambs, grain, and wine as types of the Son) that He had provided.

And there was a man whose name was **Simeon**; and this man was righteous [*Father-conscious*] and devout [*spiritually hungry, alert*], looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ [*Messiah*]. And he came in the Spirit into the temple [*hungry*]; and when the parents brought in the child, Jesus [*eight days-old*], to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, then Simeon took Him into his arms, and blessed God, saying, “My eyes have seen Your salvation, [*an antidotal Feast*] which You have prepared in the Presence of all the peoples...” (Luke 2:25-31).

Salvation, known as “the Passover” is something to *eat* (Mt 26:17). In the Old Testament, the Passover was a spiritual intervention of God providing an escape from His judgment of death, which His people obediently participated in by *eating* a lamb. In the new Covenant that has not changed; we still *eat* salvation, but now we have been given Father’s *real* Lamb as our Food, One Who is the Agape Antidote for our death-producing eros nature.

While Jesus and His disciples were eating [*the Passover feast*], He took some **bread**, and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, “Take it, this is **My body**.” And when He had taken a **cup** and given thanks, He **gave** it to them, and they all **drank** from it. And He said to them, “This is **My blood** of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God [*Our nest of rest*]” (Mark 14:22-25).

How is Jesus’ Agape DNA assimilated into His disciples through His flesh and blood? Jesus had warned about the “leaven of the Pharisees” and their eros teaching, example, and influence, but He also taught, “The kingdom of God is like **leaven**, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened” (Mt 13:33).

As **leaven works assimilatively**, so works the leaven of the Kingdom or Christianity....The leaven used by the Jews was fermented, that is, it was dough already leavened. When placed in a larger mass of dough, and under favorable conditions of temperature, it communicated its chemical properties to the mass, assindating it to itself, that is, leavening it. It is so with the

leaven of the Kingdom. Herein lies the special significance of the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion; our partaking of the **bread and wine—assimilating them into our own bodily organism**—symbolizes our assimilation of Christ's personality and work and character into our moral organism; so that in simple virtue of a leavening process, **Christ forms Himself within us**, the new man of Christ's own character. Well may the re-born man, into whose moral nature the leaven of Christ's character has entered and so made him a son of the Kingdom, be called, when ideally surveyed, a Christian, that is, **a miniature duplicate of Christ Himself** (Boardman, The Kingdom, p 268-9).

Kingdom leaven or yeast is the spiritual Life of God, Agape DNA, which Father made ingestible for natural man by serving it to us in Jesus' human flesh and blood. As you eat Jesus, the essential Life of God is assimilated and naturalized in you.

We taste Thee, O Thou Living Bread,  
And long to feast upon Thee still;  
We drink of Thee, the Fountainhead  
And thirst our souls from Thee to fill  
-Bernard of Clairveaux

## 14. “One Cake”

There has been endless speculation about the Trinity: how the Father, the Son, and the Spirit can be One God? Martin Luther, God’s instrument of Reformation, understood the Trinity in this childlike way: the Father, Son, and Spirit are individual Ingredients “baked into one Cake.” Three Persons are “mixed and baked” into One God *by Agape*—a relational oneness, One inseparable Life. “**God is Agape**” (1John 4:8, 16).

The One God is a “*living*” God because each of the Three Persons is *alive* to the Other Two in Agape. Father and Son: Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). Father and Spirit: “It is the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you” (Mt 10:20). Son and Spirit: Father spoke of His Son, the promised Messiah, saying, “I have put My Spirit upon Him” (Is 42:1). The “grain” symbolizing the Son was always mixed with oil, that is, the “Ingredient” of the Spirit. Father called John the Baptist to introduce His Messiah to Israel and prepared the prophet saying, “He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the **One...**” (John 1:33).

For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the **fullness of Deity** [*Father, Son, and Spirit*] **to dwell in Him** [*in Jesus*] (Col 1:19).

Many teach that God created mankind because He was lonely, but this is **eros rationale**—that God wanted to meet a need in Himself by **using** us. Before creation, God was a complete, harmonious Family of Three, perfectly content in One Another’s relational love. However, in the bountiful generosity of Agape Oneness, the Father, Son, and Spirit were so eager to *share* Their One Agape Life that They sought to create a big family to whom They could **give** Themselves. The fullness of Their Agape spilled over into creation, and ultimately, the Father, Son, and Spirit *gave* Themselves to us in the flesh and blood of the Man Jesus as Food. This is **Agape rationale**. “God...is not served by human hands, as though He **needed** anything, since He Himself **gives** to all people life and breath and all things” (Acts 17:24).

In the Person of the Son, Whom Father sent and the Spirit planted as a Seed into Mary’s womb, the Father and the Spirit are “mixed” as One. When you eat the flesh of the God-Man Jesus, you are eating “One Cake”—the **whole Agape Life of God**. By eating Jesus, you become one with the Father, Son, and Spirit; “The one who joins himself to the Lord is **one spirit with Him** [*spiritually alive, assimilated into oneness*]” (1Cor 6:17). This does not mean you will become God. Before creation there existed Three: Father, Son, and Spirit. In the culmination of all things there will still only be Three: Father, Son, and Spirit;

you and I are in the Son as one new Man. God's entire family of regenerated children will be in the God-Man Jesus for eternity, participating in the nest of rest through Him. Paul explains:

For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are **one body**, so also is Christ. For by **one Spirit** we were all baptized into **one body**...and we were all made to **drink of one Spirit** (1Cor 12:12-13).

As "living stones," we who come to Jesus are being built upon the One whom God laid as the "precious cornerstone" of His own house, His big family (1Pet 2:6). Jesus is the "chief cornerstone" because He is perfectly *three-dimensional* having the Father, Son, and Spirit in symmetrical proportion, Agape oneness in Himself. Now, through the Cross, each of us is being shaped, even naturalized, to *fit* into Him as a nest of rest, a kingdom of self-giving priests to God. Jesus prayed to Father:

I have manifested Your name [*God's Family heredity*] to the men whom You gave me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me....For they are Yours; and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine [*one shared Life*];

and I have been glorified [*regenerated*] in them....Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, **that they may be one even as We are**....That they may all be one; even as **You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us**, so that the world may believe that You sent Me [*for the sake of awakening Our other lost children*]. The glory [*perfected Agape*] which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity...that the **Agape** with which You have loved Me may be in them, and I in them (John 17:6-26).

This “oneness” with God, which you have been invited by eating Jesus and assimilating His Agape nature, *is* the kingdom of God, eternal Life in His nest of rest. “Nothing will be able to separate us from the Agape of God [*Oneness of Father, Son, and Spirit*] which is in [*the flesh and blood of*] Christ Jesus our Lord [*‘One Cake’*]” (Ro 8:39).

For Father rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the **kingdom of the Son of His Agape** [*nest of Agape Oneness*]....He [*the God-Man*]

is the image of the invisible God, the **firstborn** of all creation [*a new generation of mankind born into Agape Oneness*] (Col 1:13-15).

**You are assimilated into this Oneness because the Oneness is assimilated into you in Jesus' flesh and blood.** “But if the Spirit of Him [*Father*] who raised Christ Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give **life** to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you” (Ro 8:11). The spiritual Food of Jesus' flesh and blood regenerates and nourishes the whole man (spirit, soul, and body) with the **whole Life of God** (Father, Son, and Spirit). “They shall be called **sons of the living God** [*born into His Oneness*]” (Ro 9:26). When Jesus commissioned His disciples as witnesses of the kingdom, He encouraged them saying, “Do not worry about how or what you are to say...for it is not you who speak, but it is the **Spirit of your Father** who speaks in you” (Mt 10:19- 20).

Blood-lines are the source of natural genetic heredity. God spoke through Moses, “For the **life** of the flesh is in the **blood**, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the **life** that makes atonement” (Lev 17:11). Concerning animal sacrifices, God also commanded, “Only **be sure not to eat the blood, for the blood is the life**,

and you shall not eat the life with the flesh” (Deut 12:23). Though God provided animals as a means of atonement under the old covenant, He did not allow His people to eat the blood because He did not want them partaking of the life of an animal, joining themselves with animals. The only **Life**, nature, and DNA that Father wanted assimilated and replicated in us was His Son’s; therefore, He purposed that we should only drink Jesus’ blood, exclusively. “Unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you have **no life** in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has **eternal life** [*assimilated Agape oneness*]” (John 6:53-54).

Moses called wine “the blood of grapes” (Deut 32:14). Wine represents bloodline and heredity. Jesus had no human father; His human blood originated from and was made up of the DNA of God the Father. When you drink the blood of Jesus, the bloodline and heredity of Father are being assimilated in you, regenerating you into a new creation; you are not just legally adopted but *naturalized* as His child. The blood of the God-Man makes you one with the Father, Son, and Spirit in one Agape Life—“even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us” (John 17:21). It is no coincidence that Jesus’ first miracle recorded in the gospels occurred at a wedding feast where He miraculously turned water into wine:

When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “**They have no wine.**” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with Me? My hour [*to give My blood in ‘transfusion’ to degenerate men*] has not yet come” (John 2:1-4).

His “hour” came three years later. On the eve of His arrest and crucifixion, He gave His blood first to His disciples: “And when He had taken a **cup** and given thanks, He **gave** it to them, and they all **drank** from it. And He said to them, ‘This is **My blood** of the covenant [*familial tie to Father*], which is poured out for many’” (Mark 14:23).

To “finish” His comprehensive work of salvation, sending His own Son to die in the place of beast-like men, Father arranged a “jar full of **sour wine**” to be standing nearby the Cross where His Son was hanging. This sour wine represented our natural bloodline corrupted by eros and the co-genitive spiritual death passed down from Adam to all his subsequent offspring. When Jesus said, “I am thirsty,” they took a sponge of the sour wine and lifted it to His mouth. “Therefore, when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’” (John 19:28-30).

A comprehensive, “finished” redemption for man required that Jesus undergo a thorough “**blood transfusion;**” Jesus drank the sour wine of our degenerate nature, exhausting the curse of our

bloodline into Himself, so that we might drink of His regenerative bloodline and Father's Agape DNA might course through our veins.

“For your **love** to me is better than **wine**.... We will extol your **love** more than **wine**” (Songs 1:2-4) In other words, I choose to ingest Your Agape heredity rather than my own eros heredity. A friend who is a vascular surgeon heard me teach *Eating Jesus* and was overwhelmed by the revelation that it is actually Father's blood that he is drinking from Christ, and he began describing how blood must circulate and flow without blockages. Jesus said, “I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me” (John 6:57). Your *willingness* to eat Jesus allows Father's blood to flow unhindered in you, comprehensively regenerating your spirit, soul, and body.

As the branch **cannot bear fruit from itself** unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him [*draws uninterrupted nourishment from oneness with Me*], he bears much fruit [*manifests the vital Life of Father, for Father*], for **apart from Me you can do nothing**. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned (John 15:4-6).

*Eating Jesus Part Two: Nourished by His Life* introduces practical ways which Father has provided for you to be nourished by His Son. We will learn how to overcome a 'famine mentality' and discover how this Son-assimilated life makes you and me to be 'food' for the life of the world.