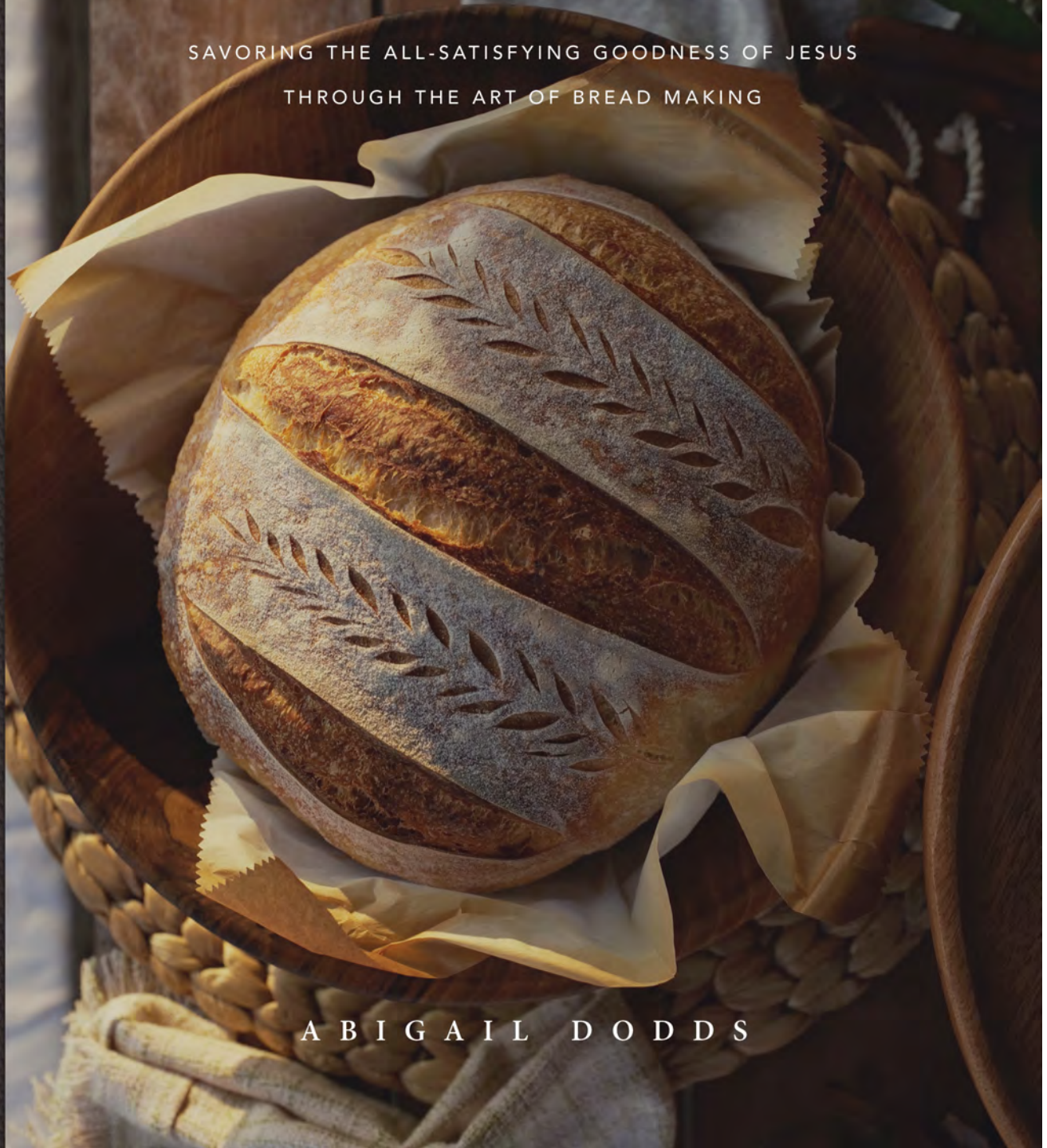




# BREAD OF LIFE

SAVORING THE ALL-SATISFYING GOODNESS OF JESUS  
THROUGH THE ART OF BREAD MAKING



ABIGAIL DODDS



“*Bread of Life* gave me the tools and motivation to get my hands covered in flour and my family feasting on fresh-baked bread. But Abigail’s words go far beyond baking—she compels me to eat and enjoy the bread of life himself. This book is for women who are hungry for something this world hasn’t been able to provide—who want to cultivate an appetite that can taste the Lord’s goodness without an undertone of cynicism, scoffing, and suspicion. I’m so grateful for the words of this sage older sister in Christ.”

**Emily Jensen**, coauthor, *Risen Motherhood: Gospel Hope for Everyday Moments*; cofounder, Risen Motherhood

“If you’re into making bread, this book is definitely for you. If you aspire to be a bread baker, this book will help you get started. And if, like me at this season of my life, it’s highly doubtful that you will ever make bread, you will still be inspired by this book. Wherever you fall on that spectrum, you’ll find the pictures and descriptions of freshly made bread tantalizing. And best of all, Abigail’s devotional meditations will make you hungry for more of Jesus, the bread of life.”

**Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth**, Founder, *Revive our Hearts*; Host, *Revive Our Hearts*

“I admit I know almost nothing about making bread. In fact, since being diagnosed with celiac disease years ago, I don’t eat any bread (I mean delicious bread with gluten in it!). But I do know good writing and good thinking when I see it, and both are here in Abigail’s book. Her devotional meditations are thoughtful, engaging, biblical, and wise. And maybe even better for you than gluten.”

**Kevin DeYoung**, Senior Pastor, Christ Covenant Church, Matthews, North Carolina; Assistant Professor of Systematic Theology, Reformed Theological Seminary, Charlotte

“In the midst of our daily need for sustenance, Abigail delightfully and tenderly calls our hungry souls to what truly satisfies.”

**Ruth Chou Simons**, author, *Beholding and Becoming and GraceLaced*; artist; Founder, GraceLaced Co.

“God has used his word to show me the beauty in the ordinary work I do to serve my family. He has also used the journey of baking bread to show me more of the beauty of the gospel and his kingdom. It is ordinary work, but it is also extraordinary. What is there that is like it? Matthew 13:33 tells us that God’s kingdom is like leaven that a woman hid in flour. Ordinary things, ordinary work, ordinary food, ordinary faithfulness—they all work together to accomplish glorious things. This book is a lovely reflection on this rich intersection of the ordinary and the glorious. I hope it inspires many women!”

**Rachel Jankovic**, author, *You Who?* and *Loving the Little Years*

“This book is such a lovely reminder that God’s word speaks truth and that his world also speaks truth. The physical gift of baking does more than sustain us physically and give us great pleasure—it tells us something about our own sweet Savior, Jesus. The spiritual metaphors of baking are many, and Abigail calls them up masterfully, one by one. It’s so rare to find a book that is both physically beautiful and theologically weighty. In her prose, Abigail brings us something true, deep, and lovely to sink our teeth into. But in her recipes, she’s given us something worthwhile to sink our hands into. What a gift. This book will end up blessing my whole family.”

**Tilly Dillehay**, author, *Seeing Green* and *Broken Bread*; cohost, *Home Fires* podcast

**BREAD OF LIFE**





# BREAD OF LIFE

SAVORING THE ALL-SATISFYING GOODNESS OF JESUS  
THROUGH THE ART OF BREAD MAKING

---

A B I G A I L D O D D S

 **CROSSWAY®**  
WHEATON, ILLINOIS

*Bread of Life: Savoring the All-Satisfying Goodness of Jesus through the Art of Bread Making*

Copyright © 2021 by Abigail Dodds

Published by Crossway

1300 Crescent Street

Wheaton, Illinois 60187

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher, except as provided for by USA copyright law. Crossway® is a registered trademark in the United States of America.

Cover design:

Cover image:

First printing 2021

Printed in the United States of America

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Hardcover ISBN: 978-1-4335-7247-0

ePub ISBN: 978-1-4335-7250-0

PDF ISBN: 978-1-4335-7248-7

Mobipocket ISBN: 978-1-4335-7249-4

---

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Names: Dodds, Abigail, 1981– author.

Title: Bread of life : savoring the all-satisfying goodness of Jesus through the art of bread making / Abigail Dodds.

Description: Wheaton, Illinois : Crossway, 2021. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020051480 (print) | LCCN 2020051481 (ebook) | ISBN 9781433572470 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781433572487 (pdf) | ISBN 9781433572494 (mobi) | ISBN 9781433572500 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Food--Religious aspects--Christianity. | Bread—Religious aspects--Christianity. | Cooking (Bread)

Classification: LCC BR115.N87 D63 2021 (print) | LCC BR115.N87 (ebook) | DDC 248—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020051480>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020051481>

---

Crossway is a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

RRDS 30 29 28 27 26 25 24 23 22 21  
20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*And he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.  
They shall hunger no more, neither  
thirst anymore.*

REVELATION 7:15-16

For my pastor, John Piper,  
whose hunger for God has fed me over and over again.

And for my family,  
who helped me see the glory of bread by their enthusiasm for eating it.  
Let's keep eating together—the bread and the Bread.



# CONTENTS

- Introduction 11
- 1 Why This Book Has Nothing and Everything to Do with Your Diet 17  
*Artisan Bread for Beginners* 24
- 2 From Scoffer to Baker 29  
*No Fuss Focaccia* 38
- 3 Full Yet Famished 43  
*Not Your Average Zucchini Bread* 52
- 4 Our Wilderness Means His Provision 57  
*Weeknight Naan* 64
- 5 When the Manna Isn't Quite What We Were Expecting 69  
*Cheese Bread* 78
- 6 A Little Leaven for Good or Ill 83  
*Sour Dough Country Loaf* 94
- 7 Better a Crumb from the Right Table than a Feast at the Wrong One 103  
*Perfect Popovers* 112
- 8 Baking in Discipleship 117  
*Everyday Cottage Bread* 126
- 9 Kneaded and Shaped by Every Word 133  
*Chocolate Croissants* 142
- 10 The Hunger That Remains 151  
*Better Biscuits* 162
- 11 An Abundance of Glory 167  
*Holiday Chocolate Babka* 176
- Acknowledgments 184  
Recommended Resources 186  
Notes 187  
General Index 190  
Scripture Index 192



# Introduction

This is an unusual book. It's a book, written to women, that is *primarily spiritual* yet has recipes in it. It's not a self-help book. It's not a diet book. It is a book about hunger, bread, the word of God, and Jesus.

I thought it would be fitting to include bread recipes since we'll be talking about bread so much, but it's also a way to help you understand some of what the Bible says about bread in a concrete, hands-on way. Consider the recipes your Sunday school flannel graph, your show and tell. The other benefit of including bread recipes is that you'll have something very tangible to do when you're done reading that actually blesses people and may move you along in obeying God. It's one way to get busy at home, in your kitchen, for the good of your people and your neighbors and anybody who would be blessed by a fresh loaf. Making bread is just one of a million little things that you could do to serve and obey God, to love others, and to delight in God's good gifts.

## A PRACTICAL NOTE ABOUT THOSE RECIPES AND WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED

You may wonder from whence my recipes have come! I don't claim any real originality, although some of the recipes have sort of become my own over time. Each recipe has a source that you can find in the footnotes, even if my version of it isn't all that similar to the source any longer.

You'll notice there are no gluten-free recipes. There is nothing intentional behind this; simply my finitude. I love my gluten-free friends and recognize that some of them can't come near the stuff because of celiac disease or severe sensitivities. As someone who has never made gluten-free bread (I have made gluten-free meals), I figured that those desiring to learn how would be better served by the gluten-free experts. Rather than try to give you something I've never done before, I simply encourage you to seek out great gluten-free recipes online or from friends.

Furthermore, you may wonder why two of the recipes (Sourdough Country Loaf and Chocolate Croissants) give measurements in grams first, then measurements in cups in the parentheses, when the rest give measurements in cups first, then the measurements in grams in parentheses. This is because those two recipes are more exacting than the others, so it would be a real benefit to you if you had a kitchen scale in addition to measuring cups so that you can weigh your ingredients for the best results.<sup>1</sup> In light of the kitchen scale recommendation, I thought it might be helpful to make a list of the things you'll need on hand if you've never made bread before.

#### **FLOUR, WATER, SALT, YEAST**

Flour, water, salt, and yeast make up the basic ingredients of bread. Of course, there are plenty of recipes in this book for which you will need other ingredients, such as butter, oil, chocolate, sugar, eggs, milk, and cheese. But for basic bread, that's what you'll need. I recommend that you start buying unbleached all-purpose flour, as that is the most versatile flour for all kinds of recipes. Sometimes you'll need a different kind of flour like bread flour or wheat flour, but usually the recipe calls for unbleached all-purpose flour.

#### **A BIG BOWL AND A LARGE SPOON**

So very complicated, isn't it? But seriously, you need a big bowl and a large spoon. Only one of the recipes in this book requires an electric stand mixer. The rest are mixed by hand in a big bowl with a large, sturdy spoon (or occasionally a whisk). I usually use something called a "Danish dough hook" to mix my dough, which is my version of a large spoon, but you could use a wooden spoon or rubber spatula. Other tools such as a bench scraper or a bread lame are helpful, but you can get by without them. You can't get by without a big bowl and a large mixing spoon.

#### **AN OVEN**

You thought this would be a tricky list, didn't you? Nope. You need an oven, preferably one that heats up to 500 degrees.

#### **BAKING DISHES**

Different breads bake in different dishes. A Dutch oven with a lid or a cast iron pot with a lid will be needed for some. Loaf pans, baking sheets, muffin tins, and a 9x13



pan are all used at one time or another in these recipes. For sourdough, it's helpful to have proofing baskets, but regular bowls lined with tea towels are an easy substitution.

#### **PARCHMENT PAPER**

You will find that parchment paper shows up all the time! You can buy some at the store. In some cases, a silicon baking mat will work fine as a substitute, but other times you really just need the parchment paper.

#### **A KITCHEN SCALE**

As I mentioned above, a few of these recipes require a kitchen scale. The reason is that when we measure flour, it is easy to get our measurements off. Some presift their flour by fluffing it up with a spoon so that it's not densely packed down before measuring in the cup; some don't. A scale takes all the guess work out and gives you much more consistent results in your baking. If baking becomes a regular thing for you, you'll definitely want a kitchen scale.

Whether you've never made bread before or you already love to make bread, I think you'll find that these eleven recipes will take you from zero to one hundred and everywhere in between. Most of the recipes make two loaves, so take that as a good excuse to give one away!

## TWO OTHER ABSOLUTE ESSENTIALS

Now that we've been over what you need to get started baking, I want to remind you that there are only two things you need to get started with *spiritual bread*, and I could even make the case for only one thing. The one thing is the Bible. You need God's word because that's where you'll find the bread—Jesus. The second thing is God's people. That's it. You don't need colorful highlighters or a formal book study or fancy Bible software or a pretty prayer journal—as nice as those things may be. You need the book and you need the people of the book. God's Spirit works through his word and through his people. If you've got those, you've got what's essential.

I hope you enjoy this niche genre of biblical-theological-written-for-women-all-about-Jesus-bread-making book. If you're reading, I want you to know you've been prayed for—by me and others who care about the outcome of your faith. What deep hopes and desires I have for you, dear reader! I'd like to take a moment and pray for all of us:

*Father,*

*Whatever it takes, have your way in us. Give us a holy hatred for our sin. Forgive us by the blood of your Son for the ways we've sinned against you. Nourish us with the bread of your Son and grant to us to live forever with you in the age to come. Give us the faith of children as we walk on this earth and the joy of eating your word every day. Make us happy, thankful, holy women who hope in God, even when we are persecuted or sick or sorrowful. Be glorified in us, we pray.*

*In Jesus's name, Amen.*

I hope you add your amen to that prayer. It has been a ridiculous amount of fun and a great privilege to put this book together for you.

Savor the words as you enjoy the recipes.



...of how can you  
...and do not seek the  
...that I will seek the  
...from them, for  
...now would I have you  
...his disciples, how will

...the other side of the Sea of Galilee,  
...and he called his following him,  
...with his disciples. Now the  
...toward him, Jesus said to  
...the would they say, 'If I  
...the disciples answer, 'Philip  
...a boat, where I have been,  
...the disciples said,  
...the disciples said,  
...the disciples said,

...thought to take him into the boat, and immediately the  
...and to which they were going.

1643

JOHN 6:4

...the crowd that remained on the other side of the  
...and he got into the boat there, and that Jesus had said  
...with his disciples, but that the disciples did not yet  
...the boat had gotten into the boat, the disciples then had  
...the boat had gotten into the boat, the disciples then had  
...the boat had gotten into the boat, the disciples then had



# 1

## Why This Book Has Nothing and Everything to Do with Your Diet

*Your words were found, and I ate them,  
and your words became to me a joy  
and the delight of my heart,  
for I am called by your name,  
O LORD, God of hosts.*

JEREMIAH 15:16

*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,  
do all to the glory of God.*

1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

**T**he goal of this book is to change your diet. I want you to start eating bread. Every day. Without moderation. I want you awash in gluten—but not the gluten you buy at the store or eat in your kitchen.

I'm not asking you to follow some new gluten-only fad or to research ancient grains or to buy into a method of slow food or fast food. The goal of this book is to awaken your appetite for a different kind of diet—a spiritual diet—that consists of the bread of life, the Lord Jesus revealed in the Bible.

When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, the first thing he did was appeal to Jesus's real and basic need for physical food. "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread'" (Matt. 4:1–3).

Eating isn't sinful, except when it is. Jesus knew this. Eating physical food is part of how God has made us. It isn't sinful to eat. But it is sinful to use physical food as a substitute for spiritual food, in the same way that it is sinful to put *anything* in the place of God. That's what Satan was trying to get Jesus to do in the wilderness, which is why Jesus answers Satan like this: "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God'" (Matt. 4:4).

#### THE SPIRITUAL AFFECTS THE PHYSICAL AND VICE VERSA

Our spiritual diet takes precedence over our physical diet. Not only that, but our spiritual diet rules and reigns over our physical diet—not as a tyrant and taskmaster, making us obsessive control freaks about what goes into our mouth, but as a gratitude-producing, Christ-honoring governor. Our physical diets bow the knee to Jesus because he is the bread of life, who has taught us what true satisfaction is. What we consume spiritually affects all of our life, whether our thoughts, our words, or our actions.





When Jesus answers the tempter in the wilderness by appealing to God's words as his food, he is reminding all of us what our true provision actually is (Matt. 4:1-4)! What is our food? God's words. And who is the Word of God made flesh? The man, Jesus, God's Son.

The goal of this book is to make that Word, the Lord Jesus, who is revealed on every page of the Scriptures, the substance of your spiritual diet. What does that have to do with your physical diet? Nothing! And everything. I'm not here to tell you what you ought to eat for breakfast, lunch, or supper. I have some fun recipes to share, but those will only do you good if you can wield them by faith, in service and with gratitude, not as part of a diet plan! But I do believe all the way to my innards that when we start to be nourished by Christ in God's word, it changes everything about us. No part of our lives goes untouched. Jesus razes and remakes

the whole shebang, including simple things like breakfast, lunch, and dinner. He may or may not change your menu. Taco Tuesday will hopefully endure, but he will change the heart that cooks the beef and shreds the chicken and consumes the salsa. And that heart will be a grateful heart that can eat what is placed in front of it to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31).

Too often we seek solutions to our sin problems by getting a little myopic on what tools are at our disposal. As I've been bent over and sweating in my garden lately, I'm reminded that weeds are persistent. I'm also reminded that, to switch from metaphor to cliché, there is more than one way to skin a cat. Clear as mud?

#### **DRENCHING THE WEEDS RATHER THAN PULLING THEM**

There is more than one way to kill the weeds of sin, but the thing all weed killing has in common is that it is empowered by the Spirit of God, who speaks through the word of God. Sometimes we are trying desperately to pull up a weed from the roots. But the ground is dry, the weed is stubborn, and we just keep ending up with a handful of leaves while the roots remain underneath. What if we tried something new? What if we stepped back and sprayed them with weed killer? What if we put a tarp over them until they suffocated? What if we got out the rototiller and went to town?

I think when it comes to food-related sins such as gluttony or asceticism, we often fixate on the physical food itself.<sup>2</sup> Counting calories and obsessing over ingredient lists and spending all our time on the physical food is not the same thing as killing the sin of gluttony or asceticism. It's a bit like pulling on a stubborn weed when the ground is bone dry and the roots are deep and ending up falling backward with a fistful of stem and leaves. In some cases, the obsessing over the food is actually putting fertilizer on the weeds while you trim back a few leaves with a scissors. You might think you're killing them, when in fact, even as the diet may produce some results of weight loss or gain, the weed of gluttony or asceticism has doubled in size.

What if you tried something else? What if you stopped tugging on the weed and started dousing it with the word of God? What if you drenched it in the truth? As you are tempted to relieve boredom or to distract from work or to comfort stress or to give yourself a feeling of control by food, what might happen if, rather than just tell yourself to "*Quit it! Stop doing that!*" you satisfied yourself with a better food, God's word? What if you followed Jesus's example and ate the word right in the midst of the temptation—opening up your Bible or your Bible app and confronting yourself and your temptation to sin? What if you prayed those potent words back to God and asked him for help in your time of need? I suspect the temptation would shrivel up and die, because the word of God inhabits more than one metaphor! It's not only bread to nourish us; it's also a



sword for killing, as Ephesians 6 and Hebrews 4 remind us (or in this instance, less of a sword and more like weed poison).<sup>3</sup>

In dousing the sin of gluttony or asceticism in the truth, we are shifting our gaze away from the sin itself and onto what really satisfies: the word of the Lord. At first glance this may not seem like dealing with the problem head-on because we aren't addressing your past or the possible reasons behind the impulse to sinfully use food, but let's face it: we rarely are able to fully understand ourselves or why we do what we do. God's word provides a lasting solution because it can slowly untangle the reasons, even as it helps us shift our attention to what's better. So instead of waiting for the weed to succumb to our tugging, instead of believing that we'll be right with God once those pounds come off, or once our home is well-ordered, or once we've established a great prayer routine, or once we've dug through all the problems of our past, we can take up his word as our weapon of offense—our hose of godly, weed-killing poison—and be right with him now.

#### BEGIN WHERE YOU ARE

We must not try to *finish* something when we're actually just beginning. We also must not try to begin as *someone other* than ourselves. And we must not try to begin *where* we aren't actually located. Each of us comes to this book at a different starting point and as a unique person.<sup>4</sup> If we're always seeking to make progress as the person we wish we were on our good days, or from the place we think we might be in five years, or where we were six months ago, we will never truly begin. So, I ask you, in the words of C. S. Lewis, to "begin where you are."<sup>5</sup>

We can be right with God this instant, no matter how totally dried up our appetite is for God and the Bible, no matter how out of hand the envy and bitterness have become, no matter how much apathy has infected our soul but we're pretending doesn't exist, no matter how out of whack our current physical diet may be, or how embarrassingly large any outward or inward sin may have grown. I invite you to go to the Lord now, to confess and repent of the sins that you're aware of, and to begin where you are. You can begin to wield his word in this battle—both as the food that truly satisfies and the weapon by which we kill sin.

### *Discussion Questions*

- 1. What is your spiritual diet like right now?*
- 2. What would it look like for you to start wielding the word of God in the battle against sin?*
- 3. How can you begin where you are rather than stalling out because you wish you were further along from the start? What other Christian can you link arms with as you begin?*



# ARTISAN BREAD FOR BEGINNERS

*Note that this is an overnight recipe.<sup>6</sup> If you want low-risk high-reward bread, this is it. This isn't too hard! Try it!*

6½ cups (884 grams)  
of unbleached  
all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon (3 grams)  
instant yeast

1 tablespoon  
(17 grams) salt

3 cups (708 grams) water

*\*makes two loaves*

Variations: You can turn these loaves into all sorts of wonderful variations: add parmesan and thyme; or feta and sun-dried tomatoes; or rosemary, parmesan, and kalamata olives. For a sweet version, add chocolate chips! Those ingredients can be folded into the loaves right after you've divided the dough in two pieces. If you're wondering how much to add, eyeball it. That's what I do.

## THE EVENING BEFORE BAKING:

Whisk the flour, yeast, and salt in a large mixing bowl.

Add the water and mix until a dough is formed. It might look shaggy.

Cover the bowl and let it sit on the counter for 12–18 hours (overnight).

## ON BAKING DAY:

Put a Dutch oven or a cast iron pot with lid in the oven and preheat to 500 degrees. (If you have two Dutch ovens, you can put both in the oven and make two loaves at the same time; otherwise you can bake them consecutively.)

Turn the dough out onto a floured counter; divide it in two pieces with a bench scraper or knife. Shape each piece into a round loaf (the dough is sticky, so make sure your hands are floured and simply fold the dough onto itself as best you can—don't worry if it looks messy).

Transfer the loaves to heavily floured parchment paper.

Let the loaves sit until oven is fully preheated.

Pick up the parchment paper with the dough on it and place it in the Dutch oven. Cover it with the lid.

Turn the oven down to 450 degrees and bake for 30 minutes.

Remove the lid and bake for another 15 minutes.

Remove the bread from the pot and cool it on a cooling rack.



ARTISAN BREAD FOR BEGINNERS *In process*





