



# Soul Food

Pablo Yoder



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# Introduction

## The Bible: A Food Mart for the Soul

I look at the breakfast my wife lovingly prepared for me, and I smile. On the platter are two eggs fried to my liking. A serving of black beans with a dash of hot sauce on top. A freshly fried tortilla. And a fresh cup of black coffee. How can you top that!

Not only is Euni's breakfast a treat for my palate, it's healthy! I know every morsel will give me strength I need for the day. Several hours later I will be ravenous again, but that delicious breakfast is a great start.

The Apostle John wished for his friend and brother, Gaius, to be as healthy physically as he was spiritually. "Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 1:2). I wish I were as healthy spiritually as I am physically right now.

To be spiritually healthy, Gaius no doubt spent time with the Scriptures. He was filled with the truth. He loved the Lord. He loved His Word. And he obeyed Jesus.

Dear reader, I want you to be healthy. Hopefully, your physical health is good. But most of all, I hope you are doing well spiritually, growing and becoming more and more like the Master. To do that, you need to dig into the Word. You need a diet like Gaius had.

*Soul Food* is a random collection of healthy morsels from Genesis to Revelation with some thoughts of my own. It doesn't in any way replace your personal time with the Bible, but my prayer is that these morsels can be an inspirational supplement, helping you become a healthier, happier Christian. This book could also be used for family worship.

Each devotional has a song. Songs and singing belong in every Christian's heart. In the family. In the church. Wherever there are Christians, there should be singing.

Ready? Pick up your spiritual spoon and fork and let's have some wonderful meals with Jesus!

"Heavenly Father, may *Soul Food* help both the weak and the robust Christian grow spiritually stronger and more useful in Your kingdom.

"For Your honor and Your glory!

"In the name of Jesus,

"Amen!"

—Pablo Yoder

## A Note About Songs

*Soul Food* includes song selections, mostly chosen by the author, to enhance worship. Effort was made to avoid unfamiliar or hard-to-find songs. If you do not know a song or are unable to locate it, you may choose one you do know or take the opportunity to learn a new one. Many of the songs are included in the following songbooks, with approximately half of them in *Hymns of the Church*.

- *Christian Hymnal*
- *Christian Hymnary*
- *Church Hymnal*
- *Favorite Songs and Hymns*
- *Heartland Hymns*
- *Hymns of the Church*
- *Praises We Sing*
- *Zion's Praises*

God bless you as you read and sing!

—The Publishers

## “In the Beginning God”

**Choice Morsel:** *In the beginning God... – Genesis 1:1*

It was dark. Very dark. Was there ever a darker place in history? Could the lapping of water be heard on that immense black ocean? Could the Spirit of God be seen moving on the face of that murky sea? No human was there to see or hear. Was there any hope for that vast emptiness?

Suddenly a great voice thundered across the absolute silence and the inky darkness. “Let there be light!” And light flooded over the dismal scene, turning the darkest night into brilliant day. That was the beginning of all we know of the earth and its features and inhabitants.

Great numbers of God’s creatures have dedicated themselves to discrediting and eradicating this marvelous story. Many theories have been devised to prove the Bible wrong and to convince mankind that his origins have nothing to do with God. Why, oh why?

Allow this to sink into your heart: “In the beginning God.” He existed then. He still exists! And He will exist throughout all eternity.

The evidence that God is real is indisputable. Don’t ever allow Satan to snatch this important truth from your heart. This truth is not only food for the soul, but also an anchor for your soul and spirit in the storms of life. What beautiful and comforting words! “In the beginning God . . .”

The unchanging, eternal God was present at Creation. He is with you today, wherever you are, and He always will be. As we look into the Bible, seeking nourishment for the soul, let’s keep God and His eternal Word where they belong, in our hearts and lives. We commit our lives to always be filled with the almighty Creator.

**My Daily Bread:** Acts 17:22-31

**My Song:** Our God, He Is Alive

My Prayer

“Almighty God, Creator Lord, beside You I am small and helpless. Thank You for holding me safely in Your heart. Help me always remember who I am and who You are. From now until You take me home, I will love and follow You!”

# “God Created the Heavens and the Earth”

**Choice Morsel:** *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. – Genesis 1:1*

We can only imagine that first glorious week when almighty God created the heavens and the earth. God, who had been “hovering over the face of the waters” planning and preparing, brought His marvelous plan to fruition.

Every day for six awesomely spectacular days, God created. Each day almighty God spoke, and absolutely amazing things happened. Stars suddenly studded the dark skies. Galaxies. Planets. Moons. The majestic sun ruled the day. Somewhere in the center of this swirling, circling mass of celestial bodies, a single planet received God’s special attention.

Earth. God chose Earth to be the special habitation of man. God approached the earth with joy as He continued His work of creation. Suddenly the world had springs, rivers, and oceans. The bare ground was dressed with an incredible range of flora—from the giant kapok tree to the finest moss. Creatures of every color, size, and shape appeared—from butterflies to giant whales.

The vastness and variety of God’s creation is astounding. Observing it is a lifetime of discovery. It doesn’t stop with plants, animals, mountains, and sunsets, and all that can easily be seen. A microscope will take you to an amazing world too tiny to see with the naked eye. A telescope will reveal the heavens and all their splendor. If you grab a snorkel and slip into the sea, you’ll find more wonder and beauty. The human body, so fearfully and wonderfully made, will awe you. You can go on and on in a never-ending life of discovery. I embrace it all and count it a privilege to discover and learn more.

I am not a scientist, but the incredible detail, complexity, and design of creation convinces me that it was created by God and did not happen accidentally over millions of years. I could never be an atheist. Nothing can be born from nothing! It is so much better and easier too, to believe what the Bible says: “God created the heavens and the earth.” And that’s why every time I discover something new in nature, my faith and my love and my worship for God grow even more.

**My Daily Bread:** Genesis 1

**My Song:** It’s Bound to Be the Lord

My Prayer

“Thank You so much, God, for creating the world with such a variety of delightful things just for us. Thank You for giving us the desire and ability to explore it. Because even as we make discoveries, we learn to know You better, and our worship grows by leaps and bounds. Thank You! Amen.”

## “Indeed It Was Very Good”

**Choice Morsel:** *Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. – Genesis 1:31*

The twin royal palm crowns were silhouetted against the soft peachy sunset glow. Above them the sky faded to a darker dusky blue. And to make the scene even more breathtaking, this palm centerpiece was reflected upside-down in the water before me.

I shook my head as I drank in the dazzling sight. Maybe that’s a little how God felt after finishing His wonderful creation, when He whispered, “Indeed it is very good!”

How is God’s creation good? Even with the sad effects of the Fall, creation is good in so many ways! Like the sunset, the creation is good in its incredible beauty. The creation is good in its intricate design, from the vastness of space to the most microscopic organisms. It is good in its self-sufficiency, in how many things take care of themselves. Good in its balance, working to keep an equilibrium. Good in its power, ever showing how mighty God is. Good in its order, in that the planets, the sun, moon, and stars wheel through space at incredible speeds in predictable orbits. Good in its reproduction, in that species continue unless man interferes and things go awry.

My heart rejoices that nature glorifies God by doing what it’s supposed to do. Robins sing. Flowers bloom. Waves crash onto the shore. Kangaroos hop. Bees buzz. One part of God’s creation does not always glorify Him. And that, of course, is man.

Of all creation, God gave only mankind the freedom of choice. He allows us to choose whether we will glorify Him. Will you choose with me today to do what we were made to do? To love God and obey His commandments? Will you join the great, beautiful crowd of Christians who live to glorify God?

**My Daily Bread:** Psalm 8; Ephesians 2:10

**My Song:** God Is Love, His Mercy Brightens

My Prayer

“Dear Heavenly Father, I’m reminded that everything You created for us to enjoy is very good! Although creation groans under the curse, it glorifies You. You also created me to do Your will but gave me the choice to obey or not. Forgive me for many times taking my own way. I bow my head again in full surrender to do Your will. Thank You for giving me a willing heart. Amen!”



## “The Breath of Life”

**Choice Morsel:** *And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. – Genesis 2:7*

Surrounded by grass, trees, and flowers and the sounds of bird songs and animal calls, a form lay still and silent on the ground. The clay figure was pale, lifeless, and cold.

Suddenly an amazing change came over this being. Its heart began beating, sending blood coursing through its veins. The nerves tingled as they awoke for the first time. The brand-new lungs expanded, and fresh air swooshed in. The pale skin began turning a healthy color. The hands and legs first twitched—and then moved.

The first man was waking and beginning to sense his surroundings. His eyes opened and saw for the first time. What did he see? Did he see his Creator who had just breathed into his nostrils the breath of life?

Did Adam smile? Did God smile back? We can only imagine.

But Adam was very alive as he rose to his feet and looked at the new world all around him. He had become a living being, created in the image of God, a creature who could think and learn, make decisions, feel emotions, and offer worship. As Adam named the animals later, he must have realized how unique he was.

In addition to man's mental and emotional capacities, God created us with a spiritual dimension so that He could have a special relationship with us. Within us there is an emptiness, a desire that can only be fulfilled in God.

And that's how we can be friends of God and can talk to Him freely, forming an intimate relationship that no other creatures here on earth can attain.

**My Daily Bread:** Genesis 2:1-14

**My Song:** I Was Born to Serve the Lord

My Prayer

“Thank You, my Creator God, for placing in me a little piece of Yourself, a spiritual longing that draws my spirit to connect with You. I can never thank You enough that this connection is available 24/7 for everyone in the world. I pray that You'll help me always stay connected! Amen!”

# “It Is Not Good That Man Should Be Alone”

**Choice Morsel:** *And the LORD God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.” – Genesis 2:18*

Adam was alone, the only human in the whole, beautiful new world. God already knew Adam needed a companion, someone to help him, to talk with him, and to enjoy life with him. When Adam named all the animals, it became obvious that not one of them was a creature like Adam. Was Adam disappointed? Did he feel lonely? He could have felt that way.

One moonlit night when I was almost twenty and single, I stopped by our pond on the way home from church. A soft breeze stirred the surface of the pond. The temperature was pleasant. It was the perfect evening. Or was it?

I felt a longing. A need. I was sort of happy, but my lack put a damper on my joy. I needed a partner. I bowed my head and prayed for my future wife. Is that how Adam felt so many years ago?

Would God leave Adam’s need untended? Late on the sixth day, God met Adam in the Garden and caused Adam to become very sleepy. When he woke from his deep sleep, Adam had the surprise of his life. Eve was there to greet him! This was *not* an animal, but bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. Adam was surely filled with emotion when he named this creature. Woman, he called her.

God gave Adam a gift he would never forget. His Eve. His helpmeet.

I imagine Adam later sharing with Eve God’s instructions for cultivating the Garden. But now there was a great difference in Adam’s work. He had a companion, a supporter, and a willing helper. He would care for her too.

Sometimes when I lie sleepless, burdened about a problem and trying to pray, I reach over and lightly touch my Euni, careful not to wake her. Just knowing she’s there comforts me, because, after the Lord Jesus, she’s my best supporter. Eventually I fall asleep again, whispering, “Yes, God’s plan is very, very good!”

**My Daily Bread:** Genesis 2:15-25; Ephesians 5:22-33

**My Song:** O Perfect Love

My Prayer

“O God, my heart swells today, as I thank You for my wife. From the start You knew it was not good for man to be alone. You chose Eve for Adam, and Euni for me. Life is so much richer since I found my Euni. Your plan is perfect. I thank You from the bottom of my heart! Amen.”

# Sin Brings Guilt and Fear

**Choice Morsel:** *Then the eyes of both of them were opened . . . and they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. – Genesis 3:7, 8*

I walked nonchalantly to the refrigerator and carefully opened the door. Maybe the ruler of the kitchen would not catch on. But just as I feared, my mother suspected her eight-year-old son. “What are you after, Paulie?” she asked.

“I want some carrots, Mama. I’m hungry,” I answered.

“You’re sure you’re not getting carrots for the pony?” my mother questioned. “I don’t mind if you eat carrots when you’re hungry, but we can’t afford to feed them to Flicka!”

“No, the carrots are for me,” I lied.

I grabbed a big one from the veggie drawer and hurried outside, my conscience already haunting me. I quickly took a bite so my reply would be partly true. *Mama doesn’t understand how much I love Flicka*, I argued as I fed the pony. *I won’t do it again.*

Late that night my conscience wouldn’t let me sleep. Finally I slipped out of bed and ran to Dad and Mom’s bedroom and confessed my lie. I felt so much better!

The day Adam and Eve sinned against God, two things struck them squarely: the fear of a holy God and the voice of their consciences. When God’s voice called them for their evening fellowship, instead of running toward their Benefactor as usual, they ran into the woods to hide. Their hearts were filled with guilt, fear, and remorse. *Why, oh why, did we disobey God?*

God has given each of us a conscience to serve something like a compass that points toward true north and lets a pilot or a hiker know he’s off course.

Like a compass reading, the prick of the conscience and the misery of our sin provokes and invites us to return to God and His ways. Our consciences don’t help God find us; He sees when we fall. But our consciences do help us find our way back to God.

**My Daily Bread: Genesis 3**

**My Song: My Faith Looks Up to Thee**

My Prayer

“Thank You, Heavenly Father, for my conscience, that when I drift away from You, my misery and fear drive me back to You for forgiveness and freedom. Thank You for never letting me go. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”

# “Am I My Brother’s Keeper?”

**Choice Morsel:** *Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?” – Genesis 4:9*

Cain must have been miserable with fear and guilt. Was anger still smoldering in his heart? Was he dreading a meeting with God? Then it came—the voice of God.

“Cain, where is your brother Abel?”

“I don’t know,” Cain lied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

God did not answer Cain’s vile question. It wasn’t necessary. God knew the answer. Cain knew the answer. And you and I know the answer.

“Am I my brother’s keeper?”

The answer is, “Absolutely!” Why? Because God commands us to love. And when we love our brother, we are his keeper. We care about him and try to protect him and make sure his needs are met.

So, what was Cain’s problem? God had confronted Cain earlier. “Why are you angry?” God asked.

Cain didn’t answer. But 1 John 3:12 gives God’s conclusion. “Your problem, Cain, is that you’re angry and jealous because your brother lives a good life, and you don’t. Do well, and you’ll be accepted too.”

Did Cain accept his Creator’s correction and repent? No! He only grew more angry and bitter until it erupted. And he murdered his brother.

What does that have to do with you and me? An awful lot. Look deeply into your heart. Is there any anger? If so, why? Allow God to ask you the very question He asked Cain. Then, if you are ready to change, ask God to help you figure out the answers. Then you will find peace. And, praise God, you will become righteous like Abel!

**My Daily Bread: Genesis 4**

**My Song: Let There Be Light**

My Prayer

“O Heavenly Father, help me be sensitive to any jealousy or anger in my life. Anger means trouble for me just like Cain’s anger did for him. If I get angry, ask me why. Help me ask You for help to calm down before I do or say anything rash. Thank You for helping me get over it and find peace. Amen.”

## “Enoch Walked With God”

**Choice Morsel:** *After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. – Genesis 5:22*

If Enoch walked with God for three hundred years, shouldn't we be able to walk with God for a mere sixty or seventy or whatever time God gives us?

What does it mean to walk with God? I believe walking with God meant for Enoch much the same as what walking with God means for us.

On one level, Enoch's life was like many of ours. He got up in the morning. He earned a living. He got married and raised a family. He learned how to get along with his wife and how to raise his children. Sometimes he had a belly-ache. He ate and took naps. Sometimes he got upset. He lived his life the best he could.

But Enoch was very different from most people. He cultivated a close relationship with God for three hundred years. He obeyed God. Whenever he sinned, he made things right. Like Noah and Abraham who came after him, he communed with God.

What about you? Are you walking with God? Have you found your all in Jesus Christ? The new birth is only the beginning. Do you read the Bible and pray every day? Have you kept your life clean from sin? Do you love God enough to obey Him rather than your flesh?

Walking with God for the rest of your days requires cultivating a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. And just like cultivating your garden, that takes time. You can be sure Enoch spent time with God every day.

What our loving God asks of us is always doable with His help. You can do it. I can do it. Every person can do it. So, if God wants to walk with you, and you take the time, then just like Enoch, you can walk with God, maybe not for three hundred years, but for the rest of your days. Praise the Lord!

**My Daily Bread: Genesis 5**

**My Song: Ere You Left Your Room This Morning**

My Prayer

“Dear Lord, I'm thrilled to know You want to walk with me. And not just for one day or a week, but through my whole life. And though You are that lofty, almighty, holy God, You have provided a way for me to walk with You. Amen.”

# The Progression of Sin

**Choice Morsel:** *Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. – Genesis 6:5*

The Bible says sin is like leaven, or yeast. A few grains in your dough, and soon the whole batch rises, saturated with the ever-growing yeast. That's the way sin works. It doesn't sit still; it always progresses and grows.

When people don't fear God, they will sin. And not only once, but again and again. And more and more. We saw how Cain took a wrong road and did not repent. His children sinned worse than even he did. Then their children were worse yet. Seven generations after Cain, wickedness was great throughout the earth. Lamech, one of Cain's descendants, expressed delight in killing a young man who wounded him. Lamech said, "If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold" (Genesis 4:24).

Occasionally a wise, courageous person breaks sin's progression. Remember Manasseh, the wicked king of Judah? His son Josiah broke the progression and led Judah back to God. Josiah became one of Judah's best kings. But that kind of break with sin is rare. Usually, once sin gets going, it snowballs.

But let me share some good news with you. It is also possible for *good* behavior to progress and grow. After Cain killed Abel, God gave Adam and Eve another son, Seth, who followed Abel's righteous footsteps. It was after Seth married and had a son Enosh that "men began to call on the name of the LORD" (Genesis 4:26). Four generations later, Enoch was born, the man who walked with God.

Think about yourself. If you choose the wrong road, where might your descendants spend eternity? How much better to choose good, and like Seth, let your righteous influence saturate the whole clan, blessing future generations.

Even if you find yourself in a spiraling progression of evil, by God's help, those awful chains can be broken. You can turn to the Lord like Josiah did and break the bondage of evil. Righteousness blesses your children and your children's children with protection from evil. It provides them with opportunities to hear and respond to God's call and the privilege to meet you in Heaven.

**My Daily Bread:** Genesis 6, 7

**My Song:** You Can't Do Wrong and Get By

### My Prayer

“O God, help me be surrendered and obedient to You. Help me be a good influence to my family, my church, and my neighbors. I tremble at the thought of Cain and his evil descendants. Help me live like Seth so that in future generations, men and women like Enoch can be found among my descendants. So, help me, Lord!”