

JESUS, THE MASTER BAKER, AND BREAD

Jesus talked a lot about bread. In fact, Jesus said **“I am the Bread of Life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty” (John 6:35)**. At the Last Supper with His disciples, He “broke bread” with them and used this picture of broken bread as a symbol (explanation) for the sacrifice that He was about to make for them (and us). This was His suffering and death on the Cross. He talked like this to them and all of us since that day with pictures, so we can understand spiritual things in a clearer way.

So, using the bread making process as our picture, we can see that after the ‘punching down,’ bread dough rises again! This shows us that through our relationship with Jesus (the Bread of Life) the hard times can be changed into something good in our lives. This is our *promise* in Romans 8:28 that **NONE** of our hard times, sorrows and sufferings are wasted! With Jesus, we can choose to ask Him to make something **GOOD** come out of it for us and for others around us. With Jesus, each of the hard times can help us be changed into a better version of ourselves. We can learn patience and endurance. Our faith and our trust in Jesus can grow and be built up by these painful “punching down” processes. In fact, our very ‘texture’ and ‘taste’ becomes improved as we yield to Jesus, the Master Baker, and the Holy Spirit! We are promised in the Bible that if we submit (humble ourselves) to the process, we will be “risen up” like a wonderful loaf of bread. **“So, humble yourselves under the mighty power of God,**

and at the right time, He will lift you up in honor” (1 Peter 5:6 NLT).

HOW DO I GET TO KNOW JESUS?

It is simple really. You can get to know Him right where you are, right now. Simply **ASK** Him to come into your life right now. He already made *THE* way to God, His Father for you. He already died on the Cross and paid the price for you. **“For God loved the world so much that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16 NLT)**. Isn’t that the *BEST* news you have ever heard?

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in you heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart, one believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9-10 World English Bible). Now, just thank Him. Thank Him every day. Ask Him to get you through your life and be **IN** your life **WITH** you. He will! He promised! He **NEVER** breaks **HIS** promises! Then, read the Bible. Jesus left His written words for us to read to encourage and teach us every day. Start by reading the Gospel of John, then, keep reading. Talk to Him (pray) every day. He is here waiting for you.

You will never regret it!

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All about Bread

To punch it down or not to punch it down: that is the question



TIPS FROM THE MASTER BAKER

BREAD AS A STAPLE FOOD

Many or perhaps most of the people in the world eat bread as part of their daily diet. There are two basic types of bread: bread *without* leaven and *with* leaven. Here, we will look at how to make bread *with* leaven. First, let us start with how to make yeast (leaven) bread. Then, let us answer the question: Why is 'punching it down' part of the process of making the perfect loaf of bread?

THE PROCESS OF MAKING BREAD

The basic ingredients you need for making bread are: flour, butter, salt, sugar, water and yeast. Today, people can use machines to make bread. The traditional way to make bread is by hand. To do it by hand, you start with the yeast, warm water and sugar. At the same time, you put all the dry ingredients together in another bowl. At the right time, you mix ALL the ingredients together in a bowl. Next, you put it on a hard, flat place that has flour on it. You work it into a ball with your hands over and over. Then, you place it in a large bowl (much bigger than the ball of dough you have made), cover it with a moist towel, and put it in a warm place to rise again. Then, you punch it down, take it out of the bowl and roll it into a ball again. Then you place it in the bread pans and let it rise again before you bake it. Finally, you bake it, and eat it fresh, hot from the oven! Yummy!

WHY PUNCH IT DOWN?

Well, when you punch the bread dough down, they say that the old, trapped gases are pushed out (expelled). New sources of oxygen then come into the dough (yeast). Some people say that the gluten in the dough holds onto the gases better. 'Punching it down' allows the yeast to be better spread out in the dough and get closer to the sugar in the dough and, in this way; the yeast gets 'fed.' (Yeast *loves* sugar). 'Punching it down' twice ensures that there are not huge holes in the bread.

Simply put, bread looks better (texture) and tastes better (flavor) because of 'punching it down' once (or twice).

THAT'S NICE, BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME?

Well, life can be hard, and without Jesus in your life, these hard times can "punch you down" and destroy your life. Bad times can leave a lasting memory that runs over and over in your head and you live without peace. Bad times can ruin our lives and the lives of the people around us. In the hard times of pain and suffering, loss and grief that we all go through, we can choose to ask Jesus to go through them **WITH** us! If we do, we can have lasting **peace even while we are still in the hard times!** This is *NOT* a surprise because we have His promises in the Bible. "The godly face many dangers, but the LORD saves them from each one of them" (Psalm 34:19 NET). Troubles come upon **ALL** people of the Earth, but we get to choose if we want to go through them *ALONE*, or *WITH* Jesus!

WHAT JESUS SAID ABOUT TROUBLES

While He was here on Earth, Jesus said "I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on Earth you **WILL** have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world" (John 16:33 NLT). In the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible instead of "take heart" He said we should "be of good cheer." It seems crazy to think that anyone could "be of good cheer" going through trauma and sorrow and hard times. But, it doesn't mean that people laugh their way during hard times! It **DOES** mean that we **KNOW** that Jesus **WILL** work **ALL** of it out for our good and that He is **WITH** us right there as we are going through it. "For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28 KJV).

THE APOSTLE PAUL: OUR EXAMPLE

Paul went through many hard-to-bear "punching down" times. He was beaten, whipped, shipwrecked and put in jail. He was cold, hungry and lonely at times. But no matter what, he **NEVER GAVE UP!!** How could he do that? Well, he had a relationship with God, and Jesus and the Holy Spirit. He prayed and believed that God would get him through. God did, and Paul actually called what he went through *light and momentary afflictions/troubles*. "**For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever!** (2 Corinthians 4:17 NLT)