

**From the Altar to Glory: The Table of Shewbread: Fed in His Presence  
A Spirit-Filled Journey Through the Temple Sanctuary**

Dr. John Carmichael

**[1Co 3:16-17 NASB95] 16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God and [that] the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.**

**[Exo 25:23-30 NASB95] 23 "You shall make a table of acacia wood, two cubits long and one cubit wide and one and a half cubits high. 24 "You shall overlay it with pure gold and make a gold border around it. 25 "You shall make for it a rim of a handbreadth around [it;] and you shall make a gold border for the rim around it. 26 "You shall make four gold rings for it and put rings on the four corners which are on its four feet. 27 "The rings shall be close to the rim as holders for the poles to carry the table. 28 "You shall make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold, so that with them the table may be carried. 29 "You shall make its dishes and its pans and its jars and its bowls with which to pour drink offerings; you shall make them of pure gold. 30 "You shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before Me at all times.**

**[Lev 24:5-9 NASB95] 5 "Then you shall take fine flour and bake twelve cakes with it; two-tenths [of an ephah] shall be [in] each cake. 6 "You shall set them [in] two rows, six [to] a row, on the pure [gold] table before the LORD. 7 "You shall put pure frankincense on each row that it may be a memorial portion for the bread, [even] an offering by fire to the LORD. 8 "Every sabbath day he shall set it in order before the LORD continually; it is an everlasting covenant for the sons of Israel. 9 "It shall be for Aaron and his sons, and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it is most holy to him from the LORD'S offerings by fire, [his] portion forever."**

- After the priest passed the brazen altar and the laver, he entered the Holy Place.
- Inside the Holy Place were:
  - The golden lampstand - light, oil, witness, and the Spirit's fire.
  - The altar of incense - prayer, worship, and intercession.
  - The table of shewbread - covenant, fellowship, nourishment, and communion.
- The table held twelve loaves continually before the Lord. These loaves represented the covenant people of God living before His presence. The table reminds us that God does not only forgive us and fill us; He also feeds us.
- Pentecostals love the fire of God; and we should. But a Spirit-filled life cannot be sustained by moments alone. We need the Word. We need Jesus, the Bread of Life.

**How does God feed His people in His presence, and what does the table of shewbread teach us about becoming Spirit-filled, Word-fed believers?**

**The table of shewbread teaches us that God's people are not only called to be forgiven, cleansed, and filled with fire; we are called to be continually nourished by the Word and satisfied in Christ.**

**I. God Sets a Table Because His People Must Be Fed**

- a. Exodus 25:23–30; Leviticus 24:5–9
- b. The table of shewbread stood in the Holy Place. The bread was placed before the Lord continually. This was not occasional bread. This was not emergency bread. This was not "when I feel spiritual" bread.
- c. It was continual bread before the Lord. The table shows that God's people need continual nourishment.

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- d. The altar gets you forgiven. The laver gets you cleansed. The lampstand keeps you burning. But the table keeps you nourished.
- e. Application: Do not treat spiritual nourishment as optional. Build a daily rhythm of feeding on God's Word. Read Scripture for communion, not just information. Ask the Holy Spirit to make the Word alive. Do not live spiritually underfed.
- f. A starving soul will eventually feed on fear, offense, anxiety, entertainment, or deception.

**II. Man Shall Not Live by Bread Alone**

- a. [Deu 8:3 NASB95] 3 "He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD.
- b. [Mat 4:4 NASB95] 4 But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"
- c. God allowed Israel to hunger in the wilderness. Then He fed them with manna. He taught them that man does not live by bread alone.
- d. Jesus quoted this verse when He was tempted in the wilderness. Jesus was hungry. Jesus was tempted. Jesus was full of the Spirit. Yet He answered the enemy with the Word.
- e. This shows us that the Word is not only comfort for devotion. The Word is strength for warfare.
- f. Bread can keep your body alive, but only the Word can keep your soul alive.
- g. Being Spirit-filled does not make us Word-optional. The more Spirit-filled we are, the more Word-governed we should become.
- h. Application: Fight temptation with Scripture. When fear comes, answer with the Word. When condemnation comes, answer with the Word. When weariness comes, answer with the Word. When the enemy lies, answer with what God has already spoken. Choose several Scriptures this week and speak them over your life.
- i. Do not just read the Word. Stand on it.

**III. A Famine of the Word Produces Spiritual Malnutrition**

- a. [Amo 8:11-12 NASB95] 11 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "When I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the LORD. 12 "People will stagger from sea to sea And from the north even to the east; They will go to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, But they will not find [it.]
- b. [Act 2:42 NASB95] 42 They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.
- c. Amos warned of a famine in the land. Not a famine of bread. Not a thirst for water. But a famine of hearing the words of the Lord.
- d. That is a terrifying thought.
- e. A famine of food affects the body. A famine of the Word affects the soul.
- f. Today, we have more access to the Bible than ever before. We have Bible apps, podcasts, sermons, livestreams, and devotionals. But access is not the same as appetite. We can have endless content and still lack holy hunger.
- g. The first Pentecostal church in Acts 2 devoted themselves to: The apostles' teaching. Fellowship. Breaking of bread. Prayer.
- h. The church born in fire became a church devoted to truth.

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- i. A Spirit-filled church must also be a Scripture-saturated church.
- j. Application: Ask honestly: Am I spiritually malnourished? Am I hearing the Word? Am I receiving the Word? Am I obeying the Word? Am I letting Scripture correct me? Am I letting Scripture shape my thoughts, emotions, family, decisions, and future?
- k. We must never become a church that is high on atmosphere but low on Scripture. We want fire, gifts, prophecy, healing, and revival. But we also want the public reading, preaching, teaching, and obeying of Scripture.
- l. No famine here. The table must stay full.

**IV. God Does Not Want Us Merely to Hear the Word — He Wants Us to Eat the Word**

- a. [Eze 3:1-3 NASB95] 1 Then He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." 2 So I opened my mouth, and He fed me this scroll. 3 He said to me, "Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll which I am giving you." Then I ate it, and it was sweet as honey in my mouth.
- b. [Rev 10:8-10 NASB95] 8 Then the voice which I heard from heaven, [I heard] again speaking with me, and saying, "Go, take the book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the land." 9 So I went to the angel, telling him to give me the little book. And he said to me, "Take it and eat it; it will make your stomach bitter, but in your mouth it will be sweet as honey." 10 I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter.
- c. In Ezekiel, God told the prophet to eat the scroll. In Revelation, John was also told to eat the scroll. This is a powerful image.
- d. God does not only want His Word in our hands. He wants it in our hearts. He wants it in our mouths. He wants it in our lives.
- e. The Word must be internalized. It must become part of us. The Word is sweet because it comforts, strengthens, and reveals God. The Word can also be bitter because it corrects, confronts, and calls us to obedience.
- f. Both are necessary. Both are nourishment.
- g. God does not just want you to carry the scroll. He wants you to eat it.
- h. Application: Do not rush through Scripture. Learn to feed on it. Read the passage. Pause over a phrase. Pray it back to God. Carry one verse with you through the day.
- i. The Bible on your shelf will not feed you. The Bible opened, believed, prayed, received, and obeyed will feed you.

**V. Christ Is the Bread of Life Revealed Through the Word of God**

- a. [Jhn 6:35 NASB95] 35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.
- b. [2Ti 3:16-17 NASB95] 16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
- c. [2Pe 1:20-21 NASB95] 20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is [a matter] of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.
- d. [1Ti 4:13 NASB95] 13 Until I come, give attention to the [public] reading [of Scripture,] to exhortation and teaching.
- e. [Mat 24:35 NASB95] 35 "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.
- f. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." The table of shewbread ultimately points to Christ.

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- g. The goal is not just to read more. The goal is to come to Jesus and be nourished by Him.
  - h. Scripture leads us to Christ. The written Word reveals the Living Word.
  - i. We receive the Bible as the Word of God because: Scripture is God-breathed. The prophets spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Jesus affirmed the authority of Scripture. The apostles preached Christ from Scripture. The early church devoted itself to the apostles' teaching. The Word continues to convict, convert, renew, and form God's people. The Bible is not merely inspirational literature. It is not merely religious history. It is not merely moral advice. It is the Word of God.
  - j. The Spirit who inspired the Word still illuminates the Word.
  - k. Application: Trust the Bible. Read the Bible. Hear the Bible. Obey the Bible. Build your life on the Bible. Do not separate the Spirit from the Word. The Holy Spirit will never lead you away from the Scriptures He inspired. Come to the Word to meet with Jesus. Let Christ feed your soul.
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- **God does not only want to visit His people with fire; He wants to feed His people with the bread of His presence.**
  - He is not only calling us to the altar.
  - He is not only calling us to cleansing.
  - He is not only calling us to burn.
  - He is calling us to eat.