

Preserved by Purpose – Hot Water Cornbread Faith

“Girl, I can make that...and I can’t cook!” laughed one friend as I explained my difficulty making hot water cornbread one day over lunch. What puzzled me was that I was able to make so many other things...with or without a recipe: turkey and dressing, red velvet cake, red beans and rice, etc. Ever since I was in 5th grade and learned how to make no bake cookies, cooking has always been relaxing for me. That was until I came up against hot water cornbread. I even waited until after I was 30 years old to try making hot water cornbread for the first time. It seemed like no matter how many times I tried, it never came out right. I finally accepted the fact that I would never be able to make it.

My first attempt fell apart while still in the skillet. Rookie mistake, I figured and tried again a few weeks later. This time, they not only fell apart, but they also turned pitch black in minutes. Not to be discouraged, I decided that the next time I visited my parents; I’d get the “secret” to hot water cornbread from my mama.

One day I noticed she was getting ready to make some hot water cornbread. I told her my problem and she encouraged me to watch her. She very patiently explained in detail how to make it as I stood next to her. She even let me mix the next batch (flavored with jalapeno peppers)...under her supervision. She said the key is having the right amount of each ingredient. “Perfect,” she said as she took the first golden brown pieces out of the hot grease. I was happy because I’d conquered the mountain. Or so I thought.

Next time I tried to make by myself, they didn’t break apart. But the first batch turned out so hard and flat that I threw the uncooked mixture away and vowed to never make hot water cornbread again.

6 years later, I got the courage to try again. This time after consulting with my mama another three times (including while the water was boiling), I made the hot water cornbread. This time, they came out wonderful: golden brown on the outside and moist on the inside.

Successfully making hot water cornbread depends on whether the water is hot enough, the grease is fresh and the corn meal is mixed with the right amount of sugar, flour and salt. The key is learning how to balance each one. When it comes to our spiritual growth, Romans 5:3-5 explains how "suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." Each is a new level of spiritual maturity that comes by learning to better balance the various areas of your life...and seeing things God's way.

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