

Open Your Mouth Wide!

by Coty Pinckney

For the last month we've had the blessing of having three children five and under living with us. Isabelle (5), Ezra (2), and Levi (6 months) have reminded us of the joys and challenges that were such a big part of our lives when our six children were young.

In particular, we've had the opportunity of feeding little ones. Levi, of course, needs the most help. But not because of lack of appetite! He is a tremendous eater. When the spoon stops coming because his plate is temporarily empty, Levi registers his disapproval in no uncertain terms. He feels hungry. He wants to satisfy that hunger. So he opens his mouth wide, again and again and again. He loves to eat.

Some little ones aren't like Levi. They're hungry, and accordingly fussy. They sit in their chair, crying because of hunger, but they keep their lips and teeth pressed tight together. They won't open their mouths.

In Psalm 81:10, God instructs His people to be like Levi. He says, "Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it." Just like Levi, we are to long for that spoon full of digestible goodies to enter our mouths; just like Levi, we are to close our lips around that spoon and savor its sustenance; just like Levi, we are then to open our mouths wide once again, and long for the next spoonful.

The Psalmist helps us to understand the nature of this longing for spiritual food. Verse 10 begins with God saying, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt." That is, "I have provided for you in times past. Remember who I am!

Remember my goodness! Remember my strength! And know that I am the same Provider I was then!"

How do we open our mouths spiritually? In verse 13, God says, "Oh, that my people would listen to me!" We open our mouths when we listen to Him through His Word. We go to the Bible seeking to hear from God, to have our hunger satisfied by God. We pray, seeking insight into His Word, and asking for His daily presence with us. We sit under the preaching of the Word to participate in the means He provides for our gaining understanding. We eagerly listen to others in the church as they relate the impact of God's Word on them. In all these ways, we open our

But we do more than listen. Listening is the equivalent of Levi closing his mouth around the spoon and tasting the food. That's a first step to eating – but it's not enough. Many children then spit the food back out. That tasting does them no good. They must swallow.

Just so with our listening to the Word. In verse 13, God continues, "Oh, that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways!" God wants His people to listen – and then to follow up on that listening. The Word we hear needs to go down into our inner beings; it needs to affect our thoughts, our attitudes, our actions. We open our mouths so that we might taste, swallow, and digest His Word, and so that

that digested Word might nourish, strengthen, and change us.

Have you been hungering for God's Word lately? Are you sitting in your high chair, mouth open, longing for that next spoonful? Or are you hungering and thirsting, but nevertheless clamping your teeth shut, refusing the only sustenance that will satisfy?

Remember God's past provision. Remember that He never changes. Confess that you can't satisfy yourself. Acknowledge that nothing other than God and His Word will satisfy. Open your mouth wide – and God will fill it.