

BIBLICAL INSIGHTS #124:

OPEN WIDE!

By John Temples

The title of this article sounds like something you'd hear at the dentist's office. But I assure you, it is a Bible subject. Read Psalms 81:8-16. Here it is in the NLT:

"Listen to me, O my people, while I give you stern warnings.

O Israel, if you would only listen to me!

9 You must never have a foreign god;
you must not bow down before a false god.

10 For it was I, the Lord your God,
who rescued you from the land of Egypt.

Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it with good things.

11 "But no, my people wouldn't listen;
Israel did not want me around.

12 So I let them follow their own stubborn desires,
living according to their own ideas.

13 Oh, that my people would listen to me!
Oh, that Israel would follow me, walking in my paths!

14 How quickly I would then subdue their enemies!
How soon my hands would be upon their foes!

15 Those who hate the Lord would cringe before him;
they would be doomed forever.

16 But I would feed you with the finest wheat.

I would satisfy you with wild honey from the rock."

God is using imagery from nature: He is telling His people they ought to be like hungry baby birds, whose mouths are always open wide, pointing up, waiting to receive food from their parents. Shouldn't that be the state of our minds as Christians toward God? Here are Albert Barnes' comments on verse 10: "The meaning here is, 'I can amply supply all your needs. You need not go to other gods, the gods of other lands, as if there were any deficiency in my power or resources; as if I were not able to meet your necessities. All your needs I can meet. Ask what you need what you will; come to me and make any request with reference to yourselves as individuals or as a nation to this life or the life to come

and you will find in me all abundant supply for all your needs, and a willingness to bless you commensurate with my resources.” Sadly, though, just as the Israelites did, we too often turn for sustenance to the “weak and beggarly elements of the world.”

So that’s one lesson for us: We should be in a constant state of the attitude of gratitude as we go to God and His word to be filled. But here’s another lesson: It’s significant that *if my mouth is wide open, I can’t be talking*. It might do us good to do more *receiving* and less *sending*! Do we sometimes exhaust ourselves, droning endlessly to God or other Christians about all our problems? Maybe we just need to be still and know that He is God. Maybe sometimes our prayer ought to be, “Lord, my mouth and ears are open. I’m not here to make request after request—maybe I don’t even know what to ask for—so I will be silent, and I will wait for you to fill me with whatever treasures you have for me.”

And here is still another lesson:

GOD WANTS US TO OPEN WIDE NOT ONLY TO RECEIVE, BUT TO GIVE

The Lord commands those who are in positions of power or judgment: “**Open your mouth** for the speechless, in the cause of all who are appointed to die. **Open your mouth**, judge righteously, and plead the cause of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:8,9). In Ephesians 6:19, Paul said, “[Pray] for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may **open my mouth** boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel....” Our mouths need to be open not only to stand up for others. Our prayer should be, “O Lord, **open my lips**, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise” (Psalms 51:15). The model prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) begins with praise to God. Do your prayers begin with praise? And of course, we should open our mouths to teach others. “Then Philip **opened his mouth**...preached Jesus” (Acts 8:35).

Paul also said, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers” (Ephesians 4:32). The Bible says of Jesus, “So all bore witness to Him, and

marveled at **the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth**" (Luke 4:22).

WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE OPEN?

Our hands. Deuteronomy 15:11 says, "For the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, You shall **open your hand wide** to your brother, to your poor and your needy in your land."

Our eyes, to see God's blessings and His hand in our lives. When Hagar and her son Ishmael were cast out by Abraham, they found themselves in a desert area. Hagar despaired for their lives, but Gen 21:19 says, "Then God **opened her eyes**, and she saw a well of water." Similarly, Elisha was once in danger from the king of Syria, who sent horses and a great army to surround the town where Elisha and his servant were. The Bible says, "And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, 'Alas, my master! What shall we do?' So he answered, 'Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.' And Elisha prayed, and said, 'Lord, I pray, **open his eyes** that he may see.' Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" (2 Kings 6:15-17). The Psalmist prayed, "**Open my eyes**, that I may see wondrous things from Your law" (Ps 119:18).

Our hearts. The Corinthians had been swayed by Judaizing teachers and were withholding their affection from Paul. He pleaded in 2 Corinthians 7:2, "**Open your hearts** to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have defrauded no one." In chapter 12, he says, "Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you.... And I will very gladly spend and spent for your souls; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved" (Vs. 14 & 15). Is there someone from whom you have been withholding your affections? Is there someone who is aching for you to open your heart to them? Do it before it is too late.

Our Bibles. After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus. As they went along the road, Jesus passed the time by explaining all the Old Testament prophecies concerning Himself. Luke 24:31-32 says, "Then their

eyes were opened and they knew him; and he vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, 'Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us on the road, and while he **opened the Scriptures** to us?'" Revelation 10:8 speaks of a book which is open. That should be the normal state of our Bibles--open! One of the greatest privileges on earth is to be able to open the Scriptures to discover their meaning or to explain their meaning to someone searching for truth.

SO...OPEN WIDE!

- Open your **mouth** to praise God and to speak His word to others.
- Open your **ears and minds** to receive God's teachings.
- Open your **hands** to the poor, the lowly, and the downtrodden.
- Open your **eyes** to see God's providence in your life.
- Open your **lips** to praise God.
- Open your **hearts** to fellow Christians and others who crave your love.
- Open your **Bible** to enrich your own life and to share the knowledge of God with others.

Remember Psalms 81:10--"I am the Lord your God.... **Open your mouth wide** and I will fill it." --John Temples