

Psalms 119:131

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments.

Analysis

I opened my mouth, and panted (פִּי־פָעַרְתִּי וְאֶשְׁאַף, pi-fa'arti va'esh'afah)—Vivid imagery of desperate gasping. Pa'ar means to open wide (like a bird's gaping mouth waiting for food, Isa 5:14), and sha'af means to pant, gasp for air. The physical desperation illustrates spiritual hunger.

For I longed for thy commandments (כִּי לְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ יֵאָבֵד, ki l'mitzvoteka ya'avti)—Ya'av means to long, yearn intensely. This isn't casual interest but consuming desire. Jesus pronounces blessed those who 'hunger and thirst for righteousness' (Matt 5:6). Spiritual appetite indicates spiritual health.

Historical Context

The image of panting for God echoes Psalm 42:1 ('As the deer pants for water brooks'). In the ancient Near East's arid climate, desperate thirst was a powerful metaphor for spiritual longing. This intensity contrasts with casual religiosity.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. Does your desire for God's Word resemble desperate panting, or casual browsing?
2. What spiritual disciplines intensify your hunger for Scripture rather than merely satisfying duty?
3. How can you cultivate the kind of yearning for God's commandments described here?

Interlinear Text

פִּי	פִּי עָרַתִּי	וְאֶשְׁאַ פֹּה	כִּי	לְמִצְוֹת יְיָ	וְאֶבְרָתִי:
my mouth	I opened	and panted	H3588	for thy commandments	for I longed
H6310	H6473	H7602		H4687	H2968

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 42:1 (Parallel theme): As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.

Psalms 119:20 (Parallel theme): My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments at all times.

1 Peter 2:2 (Word): As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

Hebrews 12:14 (Parallel theme): Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

Psalms 81:10 (Parallel theme): I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.

Psalms 119:162 (Word): I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.

Psalms 119:174 (Word): I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight.

Job 29:23 (Parallel theme): And they waited for me as for the rain; and they opened their mouth wide as for the latter rain.

