

## Cry like a baby

Rev. John Belden

I think God gave me children so I can use them for sermon illustrations, especially my latest, Caroline Anne. She was born right around the time I was preaching on I Peter 2:2. "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby." What timing!

But what does Peter mean? I don't think he is saying his readers are baby Christians. Rather, he is telling us the manner in which all Christians are to desire God's word. We should desire God's word the same way newborn babies desire milk.

How do newborn babies desire milk? Let me tell you how Caroline Anne desires milk. She wants it now! She's fervent, eager, aggressive, and impatient. She cries. She cries loudly. She cries like she is going to die! If you have children, you know what I mean. Any delay in the regular feeding time brings a powerful reaction from this little person. She cries so loudly that you find yourself thinking, "What in the world is that woman doing to that baby? It sounds like she's pinching her."

And she gets extremely impatient if she doesn't get it right away. It never occurs to her to think, "Well, I've made it known that I'm hungry. I'll just calmly wait till Mom is finished with the dishes." Instead, she turns up the volume! Her crying escalates by degrees of intensity and distress. She wants it NOW!

Don't miss the point. This is how God wants all Christians to desire His word all the time. This is the image He wants to pop into your mind to illustrate how you should be longing for His truth.

But there's more. Caroline also wants it frequently, all night long. Those who have had their sleep interrupted by a newborn know exactly what I am talking about. Again, this is how God wants you to want His word. Frequently.

And let's be honest. Some of you go weeks without even reading your Bibles. Many of you read regularly but understand very little of what you read. Babies cannot tank up on one feeding and go for a week-long stretch. Nor can they grow if they merely take milk into their mouths without swallowing it. Can

Christians neglect God's word and expect to grow? The Sunday feeding is not enough. It is not all that Peter has in mind. You are starving yourself!

Some of you have developed an appetite for certain kinds of food that make the "pure milk of the word" unappealing. You've had too much chocolate milk. Preaching for you must be filled with jokes and cute stories to keep your attention.

What can you do about all this? You can start by turning off the TV. You can open the Bible. You can pick up a book to help you understand God's word. You can go to a church that explains the Bible clearly.

But there is something else you must do. You must start crying. Cry out to God for more understanding, more knowledge. When you do not get it, scream. Scream like your life depends on it, because your spiritual life does. Be like a baby. Ask for it frequently. Be impatient, aggressive, and eager.

Be annoying! Do not let heaven get a night's rest until you have glutted yourself on God's word. If it were possible, weary God with your cries. That's what He likes. Don't believe me? Then here's your first assignment. Go read the parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18:1-8. Then cry out in prayer like a baby to know more of His word. He promises to feed you (Matt. 7:11).

One more thing. This is for people who are "born again. . . through the word of God" (1 Peter 1:23). These are people who have "tasted that the Lord is good" (2:3). You cannot desire milk like a baby if you haven't been born. You cannot want more of something you have never really tasted. If you're not a born-again Christian, let the first cry from your mouth be "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."

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