

# Discovering the Gospel - Worksheet 2 - Fishing for Souls

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It was no coincidence that Jesus chose several fishermen to be among his twelve disciples. There are strong parallels between fishing and personal evangelism. Both successful fishing and successful evangelism are based on

1. knowledge and
2. experience.

Jesus knew that Peter's understanding of how to catch fish would be a great starting point for repositioning him as a "fisher of men."

*Question: What parallels can you think of between fishing and fishing for men?*

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After all, fish don't want to be caught. They want to be fed and they are captivated with shiny moving objects in the water (lures). Therefore fishermen use bait and lures to catch fish.

*Follow-up: Using your imagination, think of what you might use as bait to catch souls:*

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Soul-fishing is ministry and it is the most basic ministry of every believer. Yet, you must learn how to do it. I read an internet article by a man who got hooked on fishing after he caught his first fish. He wrote the article in order to teach other people how to fish and have the same joy. How much more joy is available to you if you catch souls rather than fish?

*Look up the following scriptures and comment below on how they relate to soul-fishing: Mat. 18:13; Luke 15:5-9; John 4:35-36; Heb. 12:2.*

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*In what currency do soul-fishers receive their wages? (See John 4:35 again).*

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## **Choosing the right bait: What about me?**

In fishing, the bait you choose depends on the kind of fish you want to catch. The bait in soul-fishing is anything you say to a prospect which will allow you the opportunity to present the gospel to him. Is this trickery? You bet. (See 2 Cor. 12:16.) Fish don't plan on being caught nor do sinners plan on getting saved.

So, where do you start? Once you find a prospect, after checking with the Spirit, and if the person is someone you don't know, a personal introduction is a good starting point. Introduce yourself and ask the prospect his or her name. If it is a man, shaking hands helps by making personal contact.

**Soul Fisher: Hi, my name is John. What's yours?**

**Prospect: José.**

The introduction allows you to get the person's name, which you can repeat as you speak to the person. People like to hear the sound of their own name. That establishes that you are working with him or her personally. You are not blasting an impersonal salvation message at someone. When I heard those before I was saved, my reaction was, "What about me?" The bait must make the encounter about "me." Everyone is interested in their "me" more than anything else.

**Soul Fisher: Glad to meet you, José. (Shake hands). José, do you know that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life?**

People need to know that God cares about them. Everyone wants to have their life mean something. Rick Warren's book *The Purpose-Driven Life* has sold millions for that very reason.<sup>1</sup>

*You know that God loves you, but what is His plan for your life? Pray about this if you are unsure and read the following scriptures: 1 John 4:9-10; Col 1:10; Jer. 29:11*

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Colossians 1:10 gives a general statement of His plans:

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, *being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

*What works would you like to do that could be considered good and in which you would be fruitful?*

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*If we think of good works as ministry in the Spirit, that is where the Spirit works together with you to accomplish the supernatural, how might that change your choices?*

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If you begin to do the works that Jesus did, walking from village to village, proclaiming the gospel of the Kingdom, healing those who came to Him and confronting the verbal abuses and threats of the religious establishment, what new perspective on Jesus and His earthly ministry do you think that might give you?

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<sup>1</sup> This is does not constitute an endorsement of the book.

## **Choosing the right hook**

Did you ever hear the story of the old fisherman who for years has been trying to catch a huge but wily old fish? He concentrates for years on that one fish and never catches it. A captivating tale to be sure, but real fishermen are willing to settle for smaller yet accessible fish.

*Who have you been trying for years to get saved without success?*

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You have used testimonies, metaphors even invitations to church. Would you be interested in winning some souls who are ready to be saved?

## **The Size of the Hook**

Let's take a further look at how the fishermen do things. They say that the size of the hook is vital to catching fish. (For our metaphor, the hook is the gospel.) Do you want to catch lots of fish or do you only want to go for the big ones? If you want to catch a lot of fish, you use a small hook. More fish are caught on a small hook than on a large hook. If you unwisely use a large hook, you eliminate many fish that you could otherwise catch. The big fish are wily creatures who have grown large by avoiding being caught on small hooks. In other words they are the hardest ones to catch.

Since souls are all equal in value, it would be wise to use a small hook, would it not? I use a small hook and catch a lot of souls with it. The simple gospel message in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8 is a small but most effective hook. In fact it contains enough power to catch many souls. See Romans 1:16-17. I am not ashamed to use such a small hook.

## **How do you catch souls?**

Many people pass off soul-winning as some sort of special anointing given to a few in the body of Christ. Actually, every born-again believer has the anointing to win souls. Every believer, however, does not have the knowledge, skills and experience to be successful at it. Again, the metaphor of the fisherman illustrates this truth. If you do a web search for "how to catch fish," you will see that there is not a special gift or talent given to successful fishermen. It is all based on knowledge, skill and experience. That is what the Holy Spirit is saying to us: learn how to catch souls, get your experience in and you will become successful at it.

*What would it take to get you to go soul-winning with someone and at least see how he or she does it?*

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## **Locating Souls is Following Jesus**

What are some of the basic things you need to know to go soul-winning? Let's stick with the fishing metaphor for a while. First you have to know where the fish are. Fish like to hang around what they call "structures" under water. These are often tree branches, sunken vessels and the like. So where do you go to catch souls? Wherever the Spirit tells you to go. Please, no rolling of eyes. You must be directed by the Holy Spirit, but where Jesus went is certainly more than a clue.

Can you say that you are following Jesus if you don't go where He went and do what He did? He went from village to village preaching to the poor, which then was just about every ordinary person. He went out and walked around where people came to Him or He just ran into them in Holy Spirit encounters. Sometimes he visited the sick and healed them. Most of the people Jesus ministered to were outside in public places. You will find that in large American cities door-knocking is usually met with lots of doors slammed in your face. Grumpy, old people will growl at you through a security screen door at the moat around their castle. Outside in public places is the best place to catch souls in large cities.

*Poor people are generally more receptive to the gospel than the rich. Where do you think you could find some poor people in your community?*

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### **Fishing on Mosquito Lake**

Sometimes you will find good soul-fishing in places hard to get to. There was a man years ago who always fished at Mosquito Lake in Wisconsin. The lake is aptly named since the shores are infested by huge swarms of mosquitoes that think mosquito repellent is gravy. Few fishermen venture out on that lake because of the mosquitoes. As a result, the lake is teeming with fish. The mosquitoes were just at the shore, however, so if you could make it through them, you could catch plenty of fish. There are many hidden soul-fishing holes that are unpleasant to get to, but with patience, you can win many to Christ there.

*The enemy likes to meet you at good soul-fishing spots with stinging mosquitoes. If you get through the mosquitoes, you will find some spiritually hungry fish. Can you think of any places like that where you could catch some souls for Christ?*

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### **Review Questions**

1. *What are the qualifications to become a fisher of men?*
2. *What qualifications do you need to acquire in order to become a successful fisher of men?*
3. *How and where can you find souls who are ready to be saved?*