



The  
**FLOW**  
Adult CURRICULUM

#48

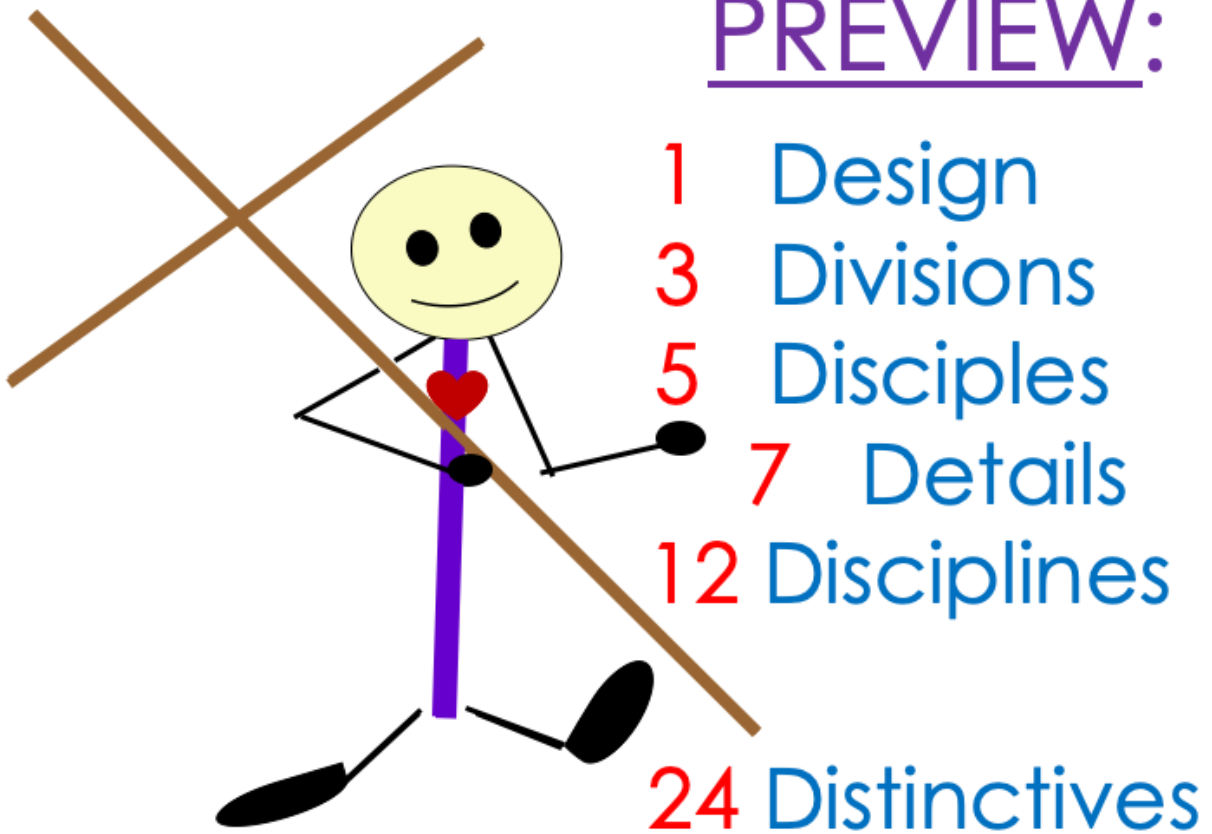
Fishing For Men

Matthew 4:19

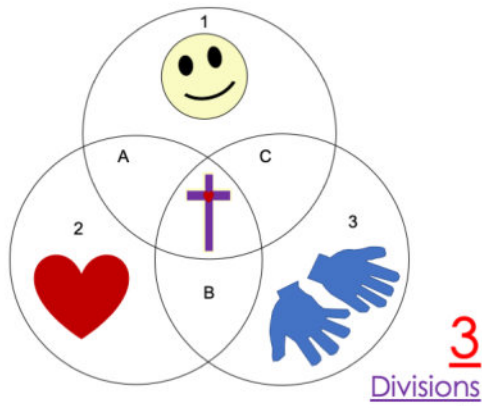
(Come And See Christianity book page 111)

# The FLOW

## PREVIEW:

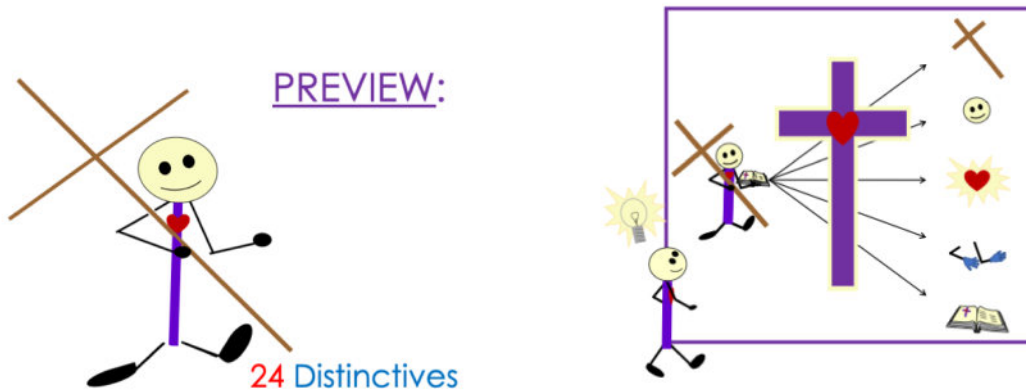


SECTION SIX: 12 Disciplines



**The Disciple's "Hands"** put into **action** the **truth** & **love** of God's Word, God's will, & God's ways. In short, when **each Christian's Head, Heart, & Hands** are united in purpose & power, the family of God is **living** as the **Body of Christ!**

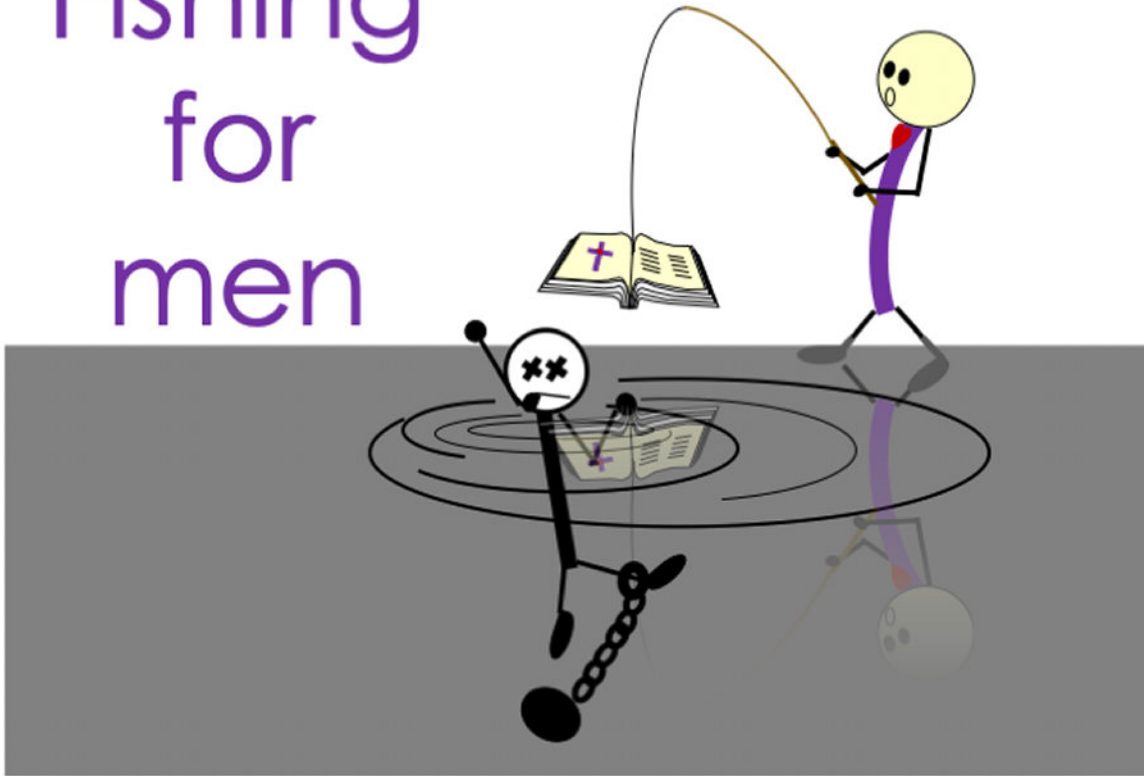
## 24 Family Distinctives:



## **24 DISTINCTIVES:**

The “distinctives” are a family portrait... When you add God’s Word, God’s Spirit, God’s Truth, God’s love, and God’s people all together, the distinctives are what **we look, love, & live like :-)**

# We are... Fishing for men



## INTRO:

As we begin to **see the beautiful, biblical portrait of Christ's faith-filled family** defined and described by God's Word, will, and ways, it is critical to remember that the Holy Bible is to ALWAYS BE our ultimate source, authority, and interpreter in ALL things pertaining to one's understanding of reality and application of truth in love.

**Remember,  
The biblical Church is Christ's missional family...  
Moreover, God's Word reveals our Father's will and His family's ways.**

### **[2 Timothy 3:16-17](#)**

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correction, and for training in righteousness, **17**so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Here are ***24 defining & describing HANDS-on DISTINCTIVES of Christianity:***

True Christians are biblically, miraculously, intentionally, missionally, and imperfectly...

1. ***Responding to grace***
2. ***Repenting of sin***
3. ***Trusting the Bible***
4. ***Obeying God's Word***
5. ***Growing in Christ***
6. ***Living Spirit-led***
7. ***Praying for guidance***
8. ***Following by faith***
9. ***Dying to self***
10. ***Carrying our cross***
11. ***BE-ing The Church***
12. ***Loving one another (truly loving one another)***
13. ***Equipping the saints***
14. ***Exemplifying supernatural unity***
15. ***Ministering as ambassadors***
16. ***Discerning matters shrewdly***
17. ***Worshipping God vertically***
18. ***Experiencing Him horizontally***
19. ***Proclaiming the Gospel (no matter what)***
20. ***Fishing for men***
21. ***Making disciplined warriors***
22. ***Winning spiritual warfare***
23. ***Loving our King***
24. ***Serving His kingdom***

PRAYER:

LORD, we seek to bless You with all that is within us. Help us here, we pray, to be that blessing as we come to better understand You and Your eternal truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Help us to see with Your eyes and love with Your love, all that You would reveal to us through Your Word, Your will, and Your ways. May we grow in our grasp of Your realities, Your means of restoration, and Your mission of reproduction. In the holy name of Jesus, we pray. Amen and Amen

## CONTEXT:

### Macro

**This lesson marks another major transition point** in our curriculum's eye-opening explanation of Christianity. By way of review, we began in Section One with the reality of Almighty God having 1 Divine DESIGN (also known as a biblical worldview and the eternal application of Jesus Christ's Gospel). In Section Two, we addressed the 3 DIVISIONS (Head, Heart, and Hands) that make up the "being" in every human being. Next, in Section Three, we demonstrated how Christianity accounts for, defines, and describes all of humanity, every person, past, present, and future. We noted that all people can be identified as one of the 5 DISCIPLES – Lost, Lover, Learner, Leader, or Lifer. Moving forward, Section Four revealed, engaged, and explained the 7 fundamental DETAILS of God's Divine DESIGN... because **we all need to know what we need to know**. To be more specific, those seven truths are: The Foundations, The Framework, The Facts, The Fight, The Faith, The Family, and the truth about Forever.

Then, in Section Five, which we just completed, our focus shifted from HEAD based truths to 12 HEART shaping exercises or disciplines - each having the potential to strengthen one's personal relationship with Christ, His Church, and their collective mission: bringing God glory by finding & growing more glorifiers.

We used the acronym **J.E.S.U.S.'S. P. S.W.O.R.D.** to outline and harmonize a biblical, missional, and intentional methodology for growing in God's love - & His loving witness. The 12 HEART DISCIPLINES are: **J**ournaling... **E**ating-nothing (fasting)... **S**cripture-intake... **U**nderstudy of Scripture... **S**tewardship... **S**olitude... **P**rayer... **S**erving... **W**orshipping... **O**utreach... **R**elationships... and **D**evelopment.

Now, our curriculum and study will transition to The HANDS. This is where **Christians demonstrate to the world that Christ is in their worship & witness**. Whereas our time spent in the HEAD sections (1-4) focused on the truths that Christians need and seek to LEARN, and our concentration on the 12 HEART DISCIPLINES of section 5 helped us to grow in God's LOVE, our sixth and final section will **walk through the 24 DISTINCTIVES, which explain & exemplify how Christians are to faithfully LIVE... and fully BE The Church... together** – all by God's grace & ALL for His glory!

God's Word puts it this way:

***"Let us not love with word and tongue but in action and truth."*** – 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:18

*And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47](#)praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. – Acts 2:46-47*

## I. **DISTINCTIVES are FRUIT:**

It is important to realize that God’s miraculous and authentic **Christian DISTINCTIVES are the FRUIT of saving grace and faith** (Ephesians 2:1-10). As Jesus described in John 15, people can do nothing outside of their abiding in Him and obeying His Word, will and ways. In short, there will be no fruit unless one remains attached to and provided for by the true Vine and divine Root. With that said, a cautionary note is worth sharing here, beware the counterfeits that abound around the world. ***Plastic fruit is deceptive vs. DISTINCTIVE!***

### Galatians 5:22-25

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. <sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.*

## II. **DISTINCTIVES are FAMILY:**



DISTINCTIVES, by definition, are those “distinguishing characteristics that are notable for having a special quality, style, and/or attractiveness” (Dictionary.com).

When it comes to God’s family, the true Church, each Christian and their individualistic DISTINCTIVES are as unique as their potential. At the same time, in the same way that a billion unique snowflakes can be combined to make a single snowstorm, or countless swatches of scrap fabric can be sewn together to make a single quilt, so it is with God’s family. The LORD creates His Christian family with a both/and combination of DISTINCTIVE uniqueness, as well as DISTINCTIVE love and defining unity.

**Christianity’s DISTINCT family (ecclesia) has a DISTINCTIVE unity (koinonia).**

*“By this all people will know that you are My disciple, if you have love for one another.”*  
– John 13:35



*“The more genuine and the deeper our community becomes, the more will everything else between us recede, the more clearly and purely will Jesus Christ and his work become the one and only thing that is vital between us.”*

*- Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

### III. **DISTINCTIVES are WITNESS:**

The most biblical and healthy understandings of Christianity will include an embrace of two overarching and DISTINCTIVE purposes. Namely, per God’s Word, will, and ways, every Christian has received miraculous, saving grace, as well as the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Spirit, to:

1. Bring glory to God.

1 Corinthians 10:31

*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do,  
**do all to the glory of God.***

2. BE Christ’s witness.

Acts 1:8

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, **and you will be My witnesses** in Jerusalem (locally), and in all Judea and Samaria (regionally), and to the end of the earth (globally).”*

**God’s DISTINCTIVE people have been filled with His Holy Spirit for the express purpose of living DISTINCTIVE lives.** When the world sees the LORD’s loving family living out their divinely empowered and God-honoring worship, work, and warfare, the resulting fruit will serve as a faithful witness, built with supernatural, grace-based, and missional DISTINCTIVES.

*“God created me—and you—to live with a single, all-embracing, all-transforming passion—namely, a passion to glorify God by enjoying and displaying his supreme excellence in all the spheres of life.”*

*- John Piper*

## The Christian Distinctive

What distinguishes Christianity from all other religions is that it is a *revealed* religion. Christianity is not about our search for God or our means of finding him. Christianity is not a religion that works its way upward. It is all about God coming to us — God in grace making himself known to us and making a way for us to enjoy fellowship with him.

And so, at the very heart of Christianity is, simply, a message — a message from God to us about what he has done to bring us to himself.

If Christianity is distinctively revealed religion, then it is also uniquely *authoritative*. It does not offer itself as the best and highest of human thinking about God or even the best or most successful of human efforts to know God. It professes to be nothing less than the unique word from God, his very own self-disclosure and the record of the actions he has taken in Jesus Christ to bring us into fellowship with himself.

One of Rudyard Kipling's characters declares, "The heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone; He don't obey no orders unless they is his own." That is to say, human religions lack authority — they form their own ideas and "discover" their own beliefs.

By contrast the Christian is "under orders," because unlike human religions, Christianity is a revealed religion — divinely revealed. We Christians are not our own touchstone of truth, and we do not confuse our ideas about God with His own self-revelation. We learn truth about God not from "inner lights" within ourselves but from God's own objective Word.

And apart from this external authority, there is no Christianity. This, at bottom, is Christianity's leading distinctive.

And so, we **Christians prize Scripture as God's Word. We joyfully submit to it. And we enthusiastically proclaim its message of grace in Jesus Christ to the world.**

- Dr. Fred Zaspel

Micro

*Jesus said... Jesus commissioned... Jesus commanded...  
As the Father has sent Me, so now I send you...  
Follow Me & I will make you fishers of men.  
Go make disciples of all nations.*

Message

Jesus also said that those who love Him will obey Him (John 14:15), and that a biblical love for one another would be their witness, as well as their undeniable and distinctly recognizable birthmarks (John 13:35). Consequently, Christians are to see people, in part, through one of two prisms... one of two perspectives. In short, every human being's value (having been made in the image of God – Genesis 1:27) is to be respected. Without exception, every person on the planet is to be seen in the light of being either a brother or sister in God's Gospel-cemented, adopted family... OR... they are to be treated as a POTENTIAL, "could be adopted someday" brother or sister in Christ. When we pull all these scriptural truths together, the Christian's missional blueprint and bullseye becomes crystal clear.

***All caught fish are created & called to  
commit to fish... for the express purpose of catching more fish.***

*Genuine (see Matthew 7:21-27), grace-based (Ephesians 2:1-10),  
blood-bought (Ephesians 1:7), Gospel-transformed (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians  
5:17-21) cross-carrying (Luke 9:23) Christ followers (Luke 14:27)  
will right-heartedly (Matthew 15:8) persevere (Galatians 6:9) in  
following Christ (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 11:1), fishing for men (Mark 1:17).  
In other words, God-honoring (John 5:23) proclaiming  
(Mark 16:15) and disciple-making (Matthew 28:18-20)  
is to be a miraculously empowered (Acts 1:8),  
genuinely loving (1<sup>st</sup> John 3:18),  
"fishin' mission."*

With that foundational truth established and embraced, prayerfully consider the following. By coming to God's Word with a humble disposition and a holy desire to be holistically disciplined, the Christian could and should acknowledge and accept the Almighty's mixing of metaphors...

***God's faithful family is a fishing flock.  
God's sheep fish for goats...  
who will soon BE sheep-fish!***

BIG IDEA: **FISHING FOR MEN is one active & ongoing priority of The Gospel's soul-saving purpose, as well as a confirming fruit and missional passion of the "sheep-fish" who are faithfully following Christ.**

PREVIEW:

1. FISHING
2. FOR
3. MEN

TEXT:

**Matthew 4:19**

*"Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.'"*

## 1. FISHING

Illustration:

*Is the goal of Christian living to be Christlike? If so, we will reach that goal only to the degree that we possess the mind of Christ. If, as the Bible declares, **as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he**, then to the degree that we think like Christ, we will be like Christ.*

*– R.C. Sproul*

**John 3:16**

*For **God so loved the world that He gave His only Son**, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but will have eternal life.*

**Matthew 20:28**

*...the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to **give his life as a ransom for many.**"*

**Luke 14:23**

*"...the master said to the slave, **'Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled.***

Explanation:

*This lesson's simplicity & strategy make it both powerful & profound!*

To prove the point, let us begin by defining, describing, and defending what this particular biblical FISHING is, per Jesus, and what it is not. Keep in mind, context is always critical. With that said, let the reader consider, as Christ is engaging the men who would become His earliest Apostles...

**FISHING is:**

- **A metaphor**: a word picture that helped to illustrate to the local fishermen how following Christ would parallel, in an eternal context, where fish represented souls, their current work of finding and catching that which was swimming in the darkness below.
- **The Word of God**: According to 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:16-17, the fact that this "FISHING" is recorded and repeated in The Holy Bible, we know that the word and its metaphor carry divine authority when applied appropriately, in full and proper context.
- **A quote now attributed to Jesus The Christ**: Herein, we have both the Lord's intention and His power foretold. It is Jesus Himself who purposes and produces His FISHERS OF MEN. To dismiss or diminish FISHING or FISHERMEN is to disregard and disrespect Christ.
- **A God-honoring exercise**: FISHING, as called for, commissioned, and commanded by Christ is not merely a good deed. No. FISHING biblically, in its fullest application, seeks to honor the Lord by serving Him and His kingdom.
- **An effort with eternal implications**: Few things in this life have a direct and irrefutable connection to a soul's eternal destination. FISHING, by contrast, as portrayed by Christ, has eternity in its invitation, explanation, and application.
- **A personally contextualized, metaphoric, & missional bridge**: When Jesus used His famous FISHING analogy and metaphor, He was not talking to farmers or soldiers or religious leaders (to each of them He used different, custom-fitted metaphors). Here, our Lord was speaking to fishermen, so He tailored His message to their fishing lifestyle and language. Why? Answer: because He loved them, He understood them, and He wanted them to love and understand Him.
- **A supernaturally empowered act**: As is the case with all that Christ purposes, promises, and empowers (Acts 1:8), authentic, biblical, FISHING FOR MEN is a miraculous endeavor. To be sure, it is the Lord's supernatural work that brings to fruition BOTH, the catching of fish AND the caught fish's ability to go FISHING for new fish.

- **A Christ-centered act:** God-honoring FISHING is focused on the proclamation, demonstration, and celebration of Christ. It is Christ in focus prior to FISHING, during the FISHING, and after the FISHING. Christ, Christ, Christ... no more, no less, no matter what!
- **A verb - an action with a purpose:** The word “fish” can be both a noun and a verb. Moreover, as Christians, we are to embrace both the noun and the verb because we are to BE both the noun and the verb. By definition, ***we are the fish who fish.*** Think about how important it is that Christians hear & heed this simple & strategic purpose, plan, & priority. Nothing less than the contrast between “faithful obedience” & “active disobedience” rest in the balance (*NOTE: this is the proper place & application of the word “balance”*) between FISHING and wishing, between walking and talking, between BE-ing and fleeing God’s Gospel-spreading instructions.
- **An act of intentionality:** Biblical FISHING does not happen by accident. While there need not be a special event or designation for “FISHING today” marked on one’s calendar; nevertheless, God honoring FISHING is intentional at its core. This is why, in part, Christians are to BE and live READY... all day, EVERY-day... to go FISHING FOR MEN. God knew His fish would have opportunities to fish when they were not planning to fish (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:15).
- **An act of perseverance:** Few things in life test one’s patience and perseverance more than FISHING. It is true when it comes to recreational fishing, and even more so with “soul-FISHING.” Biblical FISHING requires the patience that comes with the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) & the sweet grace of God, as seen in the perseverance of Job, Paul, and ultimately, Jesus The Christ (Hebrews 10:36).
- **An act of obedience:** FISHING is another way of describing the living out of the Great Commandments (Matthew 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Luke 24:44-49). Consequently, to live and love FISHING is to live and love Christ (John 14:15 & John 20:21).
- **An act of love:** When a person truly loves God, per His Word, they will develop a love for His people (1<sup>st</sup> John 4:20). And, since we do not know who will ultimately enter eternity as His people, we are to have a love for humanity that mirrors the love of our Messiah – even when it comes to our enemies (Matthew 5:44). With that said, there is no greater love to be shared than the love that awaits every soul-fish that gets caught in Christ’s gospel-net. Therefore, FISHING FOR MEN... all men, locally, regionally, and globally (Acts 1:8, Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:18-19) is an act of loving, faithful, obedience.
- **An act of empathy:** All FISHING fish should remember what life was like when they were the swimming-dead. One of the greatest attributes a Christian can bring on their “*fishin’-mission*” is an honest, humble, holy recollection of their old dead days (Ephesians 2:1-10)... Often times, it is the fish that used to be the most stinky of rotting fish that makes the best FISHER of today’s dying fish.

- **An act of mercy:** *There has NEVER been a fish worth catching.* When Christians combine their love for God, their newfound love of people, their humbling and deep sense of empathy, it will lead them to become merciful, Christ-like FISHERMEN (Luke 6:36). One's heart posture is ALWAYS key when it comes to Christian living, perhaps never more so than when we come to Christ... AND when we bring Him to lost souls.
- **An act of hope:** FISHING is an ultimate expression of hope. Every time the Gospel net is cast there is justifiable hope that an eternal salvation will be a part of the catch. Like a lightning strike in a thunderstorm, it only takes one to change everything. FISHING declares hope, distributes hope, & destroys false hope that is delivered by worldly lies and liars.
- **An act urgency:** FISHING recognizes that every fish has a lifespan that is, by definition, getting shorter and shorter with each passing second... Consequently, knowing that hell awaits every soul-fish that dies without being caught by Christ, the healthy Christian lives and loves with a heartfelt sense of urgency for fishing.
- **An act of insight:** Those who embrace and engage their call to GO FISHING FOR MEN, do so, in part, because they see what others do not see... they know what the lost do not know... they care about what the goats & wolves dismiss. In many cases, their greatest insights do not involve the tragedies that await the lost, but rather, the tragedies that await the professing FISHERMEN who defy their self-designation with their lukewarm rationalizations and compromises. Further, they are moved by their accurate insights of God's glory being minimized by the side-liners who leave FISHING for the professionals, the spiritually gifted, & the zealots. In reality, *biblical insight will lead to missional FISHING!*
- **An act of faith:** If one were to make a list of all the reasons why they dare not, will not, or cannot devote themselves to Christ and Christian FISHING, the list would amount to nothing more than a sinful pile of rebellious disbelief (2 Peter 1:3 & Philippians 4:13) and inexcusable excuses. Remember, there is no "can't" on this side of the cross! A simple reminder of God's Word, will, and ways reveals that *FISHING is walking by faith (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:7)* with a worshipful witness (Acts 1:8), and a commitment that will fight to the finish (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:7)!
- **An act of war:** FISHING FOR MEN is a strategic weapon of war! Make no mistake, *FISHING is fighting!* FISHING is the active, intentional, penetration of enemy lines, the uncompromising work of liberating P.O.W.'s (prisoners of war) from the bondage of sin, self, and Satan. When Christians actively engage in missional FISHING, they are seeking to break down the door of the devil's house and free the hostages that are being held in his basement.
- **An act of worship:** The ultimate aim of every Christian life ought to be, above all else, to bring God glory (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:31). With that said, one of the greatest conduits of glory to the Lord is the biblical worship of His family of fish. One of the best ways we can worship & glorify the Lord is to GO FISHING... to find and grow more worshippers and glorifiers.

- **An act of gratitude:** There is no greater gratitude to be offered by a caught fish than their passionate, heartfelt commitment, (no matter what), to fishing for more family fish. In the Christian life, love & belief are defined by faithful obedience (John 3:36 & 14:15). Similarly, *living a 'Yes, Lord,' FISHING life, says 'thank You Lord.'*
- **An act of compassion:** Try to imagine the magnitude of joy that you would have if your lost and soon to be damned child were to be found and rescued... rescued from the clutches of an enemy who was determined to not only destroy your loved one, but to torture him/her endlessly. Biblical FISHING seeks to execute just such a rescue, all by God's grace and all for His family. Our Lord loves His children-fish and wants us to fish with the kind of gratitude & compassion that reflects our salvation.
- **An act of witnessing:** FISHING FOR MEN is one of the best ways we can witness to the glory of our God and the power of Christ's overwhelming, overcoming (Romans 8:37) Gospel. When both the lost world and loving Church encounter fish FISHING, a bold and beautiful witness is shared. So much is being said and shown through the witness of biblical, missional, eternal FISHING. The glory of God, the grace of God, the Gospel of God, the need for Christ, the power of Christ, the passion of His soul-fish & His saved family are all on display, all being validated, all being championed... *Our FISHING FOR MEN is God's plan "A" and there is no plan "B."*
- **An act of attraction:** Few things speak louder when it comes to impacting and influencing people (for better or for worse) than one's passions and commitments. A half-hearted or lukewarm endorsement, a lack of inspiring devotion, like an open-mouthed yawn, speaks volumes through their disconnected silence. On the other hand, praise God, when God's fish are joyously FISHING and fully embracing all the messiness that comes with it, again, it speaks volumes. FISHING, true biblical FISHING, combined with the missional koinonia (supernatural, Christ-centered unity) of God's fish-family serve as the primary means by which the Lord intends to attract souls and build His Church (Matthew 16:18).
- **An act of dedication:** *FISHING is not for the faint at heart.* Like most of the Christian life, the reality of God's Word, will, and ways require a deeper devotion and missional dedication than many are willing to give. FISHING FOR MEN fits this category for most church-goers. Keep in mind, *FISHING is not an option.* Yet, for the majority who call and consider themselves Christ's fish, research shows that they do little to no fishing. Herein, we find a widespread epidemic of dangerous symptoms, ranging from biblical ignorance, spiritual delusion, missional indifference, and cultural acceptance of poisonous lies. FISHING in this climate and these chopping water conditions will take a dedication that few, according to Jesus (Matthew 7:13-14), will endure. Tragically, far too many religionists have determined that FISHING FOR MEN requires them to carry a cross that they deem to be too heavy, too messy, too time consuming, too fearful, too involved, or too idol replacing.



- **An act of discipleship:** Christian mission, as noted above, is multi-faceted. While we seek to glorify God in all things. We worship Him, in part, by finding and growing more worshippers and glorifiers. As fish... as disciples... we make disciples who make disciples who make disciples (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2). Simply and strategically put, that prayerful process begins tactically with FISHING for more fish. By actively FISHING FOR MEN, the Christian disciple, the faithful fish, is actively worshipping, faithfully obeying, powerfully witnessing, intentionally equipping (Ephesians 4:10-15), and offensively fighting for the glory of God! *FISHING is discipling from start to finish!*
- **An act of glorification:** With all that has been noted above (and countless more examples to be found in God's Word), it is clear. It is simple & strategic. *Biblical FISHING brings God glory through the loving act of biblical fish bringing the glory of God to biblical goats.*

### ***God's sheep fish for goats!***

#### **FISHING is NOT:**

- **An option:** As outlined above, FISHING FOR MEN is at the heart of Christ's Great Commandments and Great Commission. Thus, this particular metaphor & expression, as with any & all other inspired instructions (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:16-17), is to be adhered to as the Christian abides in Christ. *Faithful obedience is never an option.*
- **Always the same:** While the mission, message, and foundational methods (proclaiming The Gospel and "truth in love" – Mark 16:15 & Ephesians 4:15) are biblical constants when it comes to FISHING FOR MEN, the context, culture, and challenges of any given "*fishin' mission*" may call for faithful fluidity and a customized approach. For example, while The Gospel never changes, when FISHING amongst Hindus, Muslims, Mormon, Atheists, Agnostics, Pharisees, Laodiceans, and/or Libertines, the way we cast the Gospel net should be strategically adjusted to the swimming patterns of each respected school of dying fish.
- **A pass-time:** FISHING is not something that is done inadvertently as a religious hobby or in hopes of filling the calendar with "good things to do." No. *FISHING FOR MEN should always BE a passion-time* and never merely a pass-time.
- **A ritual:** While Christendom houses many God-honoring activities, unfortunately, more than a few of those things that began with righteous intentions, in the Church at large & in the church-goer's individual heart, have become marginalized and reduced to mere rituals. Sadly, in these days, it needs to be noted that while the naked eye may not be able to see the difference between a ritualistic "going through the motions" & an authentic attempt to passionately fish for souls, be warned & warn others... God knows.

- **A dry event:** *To be clear, you cannot go FISHING & stay dry.* At the very least, one's hands are going to get wet when drawing in the wet net... Even more, if and when the fish are handled, they come out of the water wet. Anyone who hopes to stay dry when FISHING does not really want to go fish or actually catch fish. (See the ritualistic warning above).
- **About you:** All FISHERS of MEN need to know early and up front that the "fishin' missions" are NEVER going to be about them. As noted above, when the FISHING is truly biblical & missional, it will ALWAYS be Christ-centered. The place & posture of the fish who is/are fishing is to be the thankful servant(s) whose focus remains on Christ and His catch.
- **About the fish:** In the same way that the fish who are FISHING need to realize that the "fishin' missions" are not about them, the same is true for the fish being fished for... Note here, there is a dual warning needed. The fish in the water need to know that God's glory and Christ's Gospel are the focal point of the "fishin' mission," lest they get a prideful misinterpretation of The Gospel's invitation (*"When Christ calls a man He bids him come and die."* – Dietrich Bonhoeffer). At the same time; however, the fish who is FISHING must also remember to keep Christ at the center & core of the "fishin' mission." This exhortation stems from those who put so much emphasis & energy into the quantity of fish vs. the quality of fish, that they compromise (or poison) the "fishin' mission" by watering down (or totally perverting) the FISHING message and its biblical methods. Beware! Showmen and charlatans make their sinful living by building Christ-less crowds and calling them church, all by marketing to the consumers who end up getting what their itching ears want to hear (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:3).
- **Done with bait:** *Jesus never fished with bait! We won't either!* To be clear, any attempt to fish with bait in the name of adding to the catch is missing the mark on a number of important levels. Take note:
  - Bait replaces obedience.
  - Jesus said:
    - *Follow Me & I will make you fishers of men.*
    - *Go proclaim The Gospel to all the world.*
    - *Be My witnesses locally, regionally, & globally.*
    - *Go make disciples of ALL nations.*
    - *Teach them to obey ALL of My commands.*
    - *I will be with you ALWAYS...*
    - *Attract others with your love for one another.*
  - Bait has NEVER been a part of God's Word, will, or ways.
  - Bait says Christ & His Gospel are not enough...
  - Bait is like lipstick & a low cut blouse on The Gospel.
  - Bait is a mechanical effort in a miraculous equation.
  - Bait is a man-made recipe that alters God's remedy.
  - Bait is trickery, when what is called for is truth in love.
  - Bait believes & says that the ends justify the means.

- Bait seldom ever leads to The Gospel's true "ends."
  - Bait champions "balance" going out & coming in.
  - Bait is Satan's sweet tasting poison, the devil's drug.
  - Bait will eventually expose its user's lack of integrity.
  - Bait leads to bellyaches & later heart transplants.
  - Bait denies & defies the Holy Spirit's role in FISHING.
- **Hopeless:** Some think that the world is too far gone to be helped. Others see what appears to be a shrinking church and have given up hope for the upside of FISHING. Let us never join the ranks of the hopeless, for our Hope is alive (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:3) – His name is Jesus. Remember, it is Christ who promised to make us fish who would fish. It is Creator Christ who graced His Gospel captured fish with the privilege to cast His Gospel net and catch His growing family. He says fish so we fish. He says there are fish still to be caught... so we know it is so (2 Peter 3:9).
- **Fancy:** Just in case there are any potential FISHERMEN who think there will be glamour and fanciful entanglements to be discovered in our "fishin' mission," hear this truth in advertising... Biblically speaking, if you are FISHING properly, you will find that fancy is replaced with messy. Stated another way, if what you are doing is glamorous and fancy, it's not biblical, missional, God-honoring FISHING. To be absolutely clear, do not ever forget, *fancy FISHING is an oxymoron.*
- **A trip to the shore or boat ride:** Too many people confuse a lakeside picnic or a casual boat ride with actual FISHING. May it not be so. Picnics and boat rides are exactly that... picnics and boat rides. FISHING is FISHING! If there is no casting of The Gospel net, if there are no wet hands drawing wet nets out of the water, if there are not repeated endeavors, we are talking about something other than biblical FISHING.
- **A conversation about FISHING:** In the same principled context as above, talking about FISHING is NOT FISHING. Impassioned discourse, teaching others how to fish, discussing the highs and lows of past "fishin' missions," even praying for future FISHING... is NOT FISHING. Sadly, the church culture of our day has been overrun with books, seminars, binders from seminars, & internal church programs that all claim to champion FISHING FOR MEN, yet the fields remain ripe and ready for harvest... According to Jesus, there is a high quality & high quantity of harvest waiting in the field for FISHERS of MEN, while far too many discussions and conversations continue amongst a low quality & low quantity of indifferent, lukewarm, uninspired fish-harvesters (Matthew 9:38).
- **The acquisition of FISHING equipment:** Here again, having all the right equipment, perhaps the finest that money can buy, at one's disposal will never take the place of using the most basic tools and actually getting the job done. All tools lie idle and ineffective until they are engaged and put into application. For the Christian, we have received everything we need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). Thus, no more equipment is needed for any Christian to GO FISHING & to share the Gospel's truth in love.

- **Without biblical standards and methods:** Regardless of what some say, think, or do, biblical FISHING FOR MEN is not a freestyle sport. God's Word is the authoritative source (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:16) on both His will AND His ways. To say it in another context, when it comes to FISHING, the Bible has given specific instructions, established guiding principles, and has revealed through inference and its holistic teaching, various lines that should not be crossed. For example, considering and calling fish "caught" and "saved" when and because they say the sinner's prayer is NOT acceptable. It ought to trouble those who fish this way when they realize that no such method or standard of declaring fish "caught" can be found in Scripture. Similarly, the modern "attraction models" of marketing-based churches that are filled with more consumers than Christians utterly distorts and defies biblical FISHING. Be warned and advised, any FISHING that goes against God's ways is going against God's will, as defined in and by God's Word. The Bible has a word for that kind of FISHING... SIN!
- **Man measured or "outcome" based:** It has long been said, "Be careful what you wish for." That message and its application are simultaneously broad in scope and sobering to consider. Even so, both the warning and the wisdom apply to FISHING FOR MEN. The direct application is found in the FISHERMEN's goals and objectives. How so? Simple. What you want is what you work toward. Case in point, those who want to make disciples warriors for Christ will both fish and disciple with the cleansing, convicting, constructing Word, will, and ways of God. Standards will be high and confusion will be low. Quality will be high, while quantities will likely be low. Only a biblical blueprint will be deemed acceptable, with God-honoring bullseyes established in the pursuit of Christ-like disciple-making. ...If and when the world, the flesh, &/or the devil is running the quality control department, trophies are sought, customers & consumers will be catered to, and ultimately, crowds will be built in Christ-less church buildings... buildings filled with goats, wolves, and on occasion, some starving sheep.

*Christians are commanded to fish... not catch!.*

**Matthew 13:47-50**

*"Once again, the [kingdom of heaven](#) is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth"*

Application:

*The Christian who seeks a deeper experience of God by ignoring the hard sayings of Scripture gets nowhere. The full nourishment of the soul requires feeding on the whole counsel of God... To seek God is the business of the Christian. The quest begins at conversion; it doesn't end there. Once we have "found" him, the real search begins. We say "I found it" because he found us and now invites us to seek him until we pass through the veil into heaven.*  
– R.C. Sproul

## 2. FOR

Illustration:

***"Let's plunder hell and populate heaven!"***  
– Rodney Howard-Brown.

Explanation:

"FOR" is a definitive word. It brings explanation, purpose, and clarity to its surroundings. In the context of Christ's FISHING FOR MEN promise, purpose, and priority, FOR links the "what" of FISHING with the "why" of MEN. At the same time, it helps to filter out superfluous and misguided interpretations. For example, because of the FOR, we know that biblical FISHING is not for creating a food alternative, any more than the collection of MEN is to see how large a crowd we can build. Of course not... instead, here FOR defines the purpose for both, the FISHING and the MEN.

With the help of the missional "FOR" we are able to better understand the best biblical "how" of FISHING. God's intentionality, specificity, and strategy, coupled with the Christian's acceptable motives, methods, and mechanics have all been refined by the simple word: "FOR."

*Think lightly of hell, and you will think lightly of the cross. Think little of the sufferings of lost souls, and you will soon think little of the Savior who delivers them... God has not made this world to be a nest for us, and if we try to make it such for ourselves, He plants thorns in it, so that we may be compelled to mount and find our soul's true home somewhere else, in a higher and nobler sphere than this poor world can give.*  
– Charles Spurgeon

Application:

*Sharing the gospel is about more than just learning and reciting a generic gospel presentation. It's about knowing people and loving people... about loving them enough to get to know them. The better we know people, the better we can show them how the gospel addresses their deepest needs. We can listen to them carefully, then address their particular questions, concerns, griefs, & misconceptions.*  
– Tim Challis

### 3. MEN

Illustration:

***Souls are very dear.*** He that paid for them found them so; yet how cheaply do sinners sell their souls, as if they were but low-priced commodities. But you that sell your souls cheap... you will buy repentance at a very dear/high price.  
– **John Flavel** (1627-1691)

Explanation:

MAN was created in God's image as the crown jewel and pinnacle of The Almighty's divine creation (Genesis 1 & 2). Moreover, Creator God so loved His world filled with humanity that He gave His only Son, so that, whosoever believes in Him will not perish, but will have eternal life with Him (John 3:16). As Christians, we need to see and value the souls of fallen men and women in the same way that our crucified King did and does. In other words, we need to treasure what Christ treasures, regardless of what the world thinks (Matthew 13:44-46). We need to love as Christ loves and sacrifice the way Christ sacrificed for us (Romans 5:8)... No matter what!

*The soul of man bears the image of God; so, nothing can satisfy it but He whose image it bears. Our soul, **says Augustine**, was created as by God and for God, and is therefore never quiet till it rest in God.*  
– **Thomas Gataker**

*You don't have a soul. You are a Soul. You have a body.*  
- C. S. Lewis

In the end, one could argue forcibly that we are never more like Christ, emulating His incarnation, demonstrations, crucifixion, and commission then when we are prayerfully, sacrificially, wholeheartedly, and consistently leaving our comfort zones to GO out FISHING FOR MEN.

Application:

Jesus has created, called, commanded, and commissioned His Church to follow Him and FISH FOR MEN. Our Lord has said it, that should settle it! If more than this is needed here, the reader ought not be preparing to fish. No. Instead, at this point in the curriculum's lesson, any and all who remain resistant to biblical & missional FISHING need more to be caught than taught.

In the words of the trusted Puritan *Thomas Brooks* (1605-1680):

*A humble soul cannot, a humble soul dares not, call anything little that has Christ in it; neither can a humble soul call or count anything great wherein he sees not Christ, wherein he enjoys not Christ.*

CLOSE:

**C.S. Lewis** says: *"There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.' All that are in hell choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. To those who knock, the door will be opened."*

With an affirming similarity that carries the same "aroma of Christ" (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 2:15-17), **Charles Spurgeon** put it this way: *"The fact is, brethren, we must have conversion work here. We cannot go on as some churches do without converts. We cannot, we will not, we must not, we dare not. Souls must be converted here, and if there be not many born to Christ, may the Lord grant to me that I may sleep in the tomb and be heard no more. Better indeed for us to die than to live, if souls be not saved... ..If we had to preach to thousands year after year, and never rescued but one soul, that one soul would be a full reward for all our labor, for a single soul is of countless price."*

## **For What?**

*The pursuit of the knowledge of God is insufficient. It must not serve as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. The goal is to inflame the heart.*

***The mind is to serve as a feeding trough for the soul.***

***– R.C. Sproul***

## **So What?**

*God forms man, sin deforms him, the school informs him but only Christ transforms him, therefore preach Christ to ALL Men.*

***– C. H. Spurgeon***

*The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christ. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons... are simply a waste of time. God became Man for no other purpose.*

***– C. S. Lewis***

*You may not be allowed to stand on the pulpit in your church to preach, but every junction in your area is a pulpit, stand there and preach.*

***– Reinhard Bonnke***

*It is the duty of every Christian to be Christ to his neighbor.*

***– Martin Luther***

*The first work of the whole church is to give the gospel to the whole world.*

***– Oswald J. Smith***

*Two-thirds of God's name is GO!*

***– Rodney Howard-Brown***

*We do not stand in the world bearing witness to Christ, but we stand in Christ bearing witness to the world.*

***– A. J. Gordon***



*Make it an object of constant study, and of daily reflection and prayer, to learn how to deal with sinners so as to promote their conversion.*

*- Charles G. Finney*

## **Now What?**

*We've created this picture, almost, in the church today where so many followers of Christ rarely, if ever, share the gospel of Christ with other people. And this should not be. Fishing for men is a basic part of following Christ. Making disciples is a basic essential of what it means to be a disciple... And so, let's pray for one another that God would help us to fish for men. That God would help us not to neglect this glorious opportunity that God has called us to, to lead other people to Christ. What an amazing privilege we get to be a part of. Just as we are so thankful for the people who brought us to Christ, that we get to be that person in others' lives.*

*- David Platt*

## **PRAYER**

Dear heavenly Father, thank You so much for the Truth and Love of Your Word, will, and ways. Please help us to absorb and apply ALL that You have shared and commanded in the Bible. May our heads be infilled with Your defining Scriptures, for the express purpose of informing, inspecting, and inspiring our sanctified hearts and serving hands.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen and Amen

Support Sermon: *"God's PEACE Plan" & "The EVOLUTION of PEACE"*

*(part one & part two)*

Luke 9:57 - 10:12

June 29, 2014

Sermon Series: Special Messages