

Are we going to fish or just cut bait?

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Jesus said, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." Followers of Christ have been fishing for people ever since. Or have we?

Anybody can fish, but it takes time and preparation and participation to become an expert fisherman. We could talk about fishing all we want to, but the truth of the matter is, we will never be a fisherman until we start fishing.

This fact is highlighted in "A Plea for Fishing" by John Drescher. Following is my adaptation of this story.

Once there was a group of people who called themselves fishermen. And there were many fish in the waters all around them. In fact, the whole area was surrounded by streams and lakes and rivers just filled with fish. And the fish were hungry.

Year after year, those who called themselves fishermen met in meetings and talked about their call to fish, the abundance of fish, and how they might go about fishing. They continually searched for new and better methods of fishing, and for new and better definitions of fishing. They sponsored nationwide and world-wide gatherings to discuss fishing and to promote fishing, and to hear about all the new ways of fishing and new fishing equipment and new bait that was discovered.

Training centers were built whose original and primary purpose was to teach fishermen how to fish. The plea was that everyone should be a fisherman and every fisherman should fish. Many who felt the call to be fishermen responded. One thing they didn't do, however, was fish.

They engaged in all kinds of other occupations. Some said that they wanted to be part of the fishing party, but they felt called to furnish fishing equipment. Others felt their job was to relate to the fish in a good way so the fish would know the difference between good and bad fishermen. Others felt that simply letting the fish know they were nice land-loving neighbors and how loving and kind they were was enough.

One day, after one stirring meeting on "The Necessity for Fishing," one young fellow left the meeting and went fishing. The next day he reported he had caught two outstanding fish. He was honored for his excellent catch and scheduled to visit all the big meetings possible to tell how he did it. So he quit his fishing in order to have time to tell about the experience to the other fishermen.

Now it's true that many of the fishermen sacrificed and put up with all kinds of difficulties. Some lived near the water and bore the smell of dead fish every day. They received the ridicule of some who made fun of their fishermen's clubs and the fact that they claimed to be fishermen yet never fished. They wondered about those who felt it was of little use to attend the weekly meetings to talk about fishing. After all, were they not following the master who said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men?"

Imagine how hurt some were when one day a person suggested that those who don't catch fish were really not fishermen no matter how much they claimed to be. Yet it did sound correct. Is a person a fisherman if year after year he or she never catches a fish? Is one following if he or she isn't fishing?

Cutting bait is important, but fishing is the purpose. How can fish bite the bait unless they see it? How will they see it unless it is placed in the water? How will the bait get into the water unless the fisherman goes to the lake?

(Reference Romans 10:13-15)

We've become good at cutting bait, now let's go fishing!