

ten years from now there will be 1024 saved souls! That's what just one Christian with limited ability can help do.

Another reason to be a fisher of men is the value of one human soul. If you had two job offers, equal in all respects except that one paid twice as much as the other, which would you accept? If you help win a lost sinner you have gained something more valuable than the entire material world, a soul (Matthew 16:26-27). And what will happen to that lost sinner if no one takes the gospel to him? He will spend eternity in hell (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). The photographers who were chasing the car in which Princess Diana died were accused, among other things, of failing to render assistance to an injured person. Do you, as most, feel such men are contemptible? How contemptible are we if we will not try to save our lost friends, neighbors and loved ones? What is worse, dying in a car wreck or going to hell? Will we just let them die, or will we have compassion on them? (Matthew 9:36-38)

We should be soul winners in order to be like Jesus. Our highest aim in life must be to become like Jesus (Luke 6:40). And what was He like while on this earth? He declared, "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

We should seek to save the lost in order to meet our responsibility under the Great Commission. Jesus directed His apostles to make disciples of all nations by baptizing them and then to teach those disciples "to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18-20). Thus, we must teach people, baptize them, and then teach them to teach. In this way the kingdom of Christ is perpetuated on earth and spread throughout the earth from generation to generation.

Each of us should be fishers of men in order to experience the great joy of leading a soul to Christ. One of the great joys I experienced on my first trip to Nigeria was baptizing a young man in a filthy drainage ditch next to a railroad track in the pitch blackness of a moonless night. He was in his third year of seminary training to be a Catholic priest and gave up his hope of an education and a comfortable living in an impoverished society in order to become a Christian. The apostle Paul called the Philippians, many of whom he had led to Christ, "my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown" (Philippians 4:1). The apostle John observed, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 4). You've never known real joy until you've seen someone you helped lead to Christ become a Christian.

"Yes," you might say, "I know I should help win lost souls, but I just don't think I can." That leads to the last reason to be a fisher of men - it is possible. You see, God is working through us, by His word and providence (Philippians 2:13). And with God on our side, we can do more than we can imagine (Ephesians 3:20-21).

Conclusion

How was my friend such a great soul winner, if he couldn't teach? He asked everyone he met if they would have a Bible study. When someone agreed he called me and informed me he had a Bible study for me to teach. Several lost souls were saved as the result.

The Lord impressed upon his apostles the urgency of the task. He observed:

'Do you not say, "There are still four months and then comes the harvest"? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together' (John 4:35-36)

Brothers and sisters, look all around at your friends, loved ones, coworkers and neighbors who are lost and dying in sin. Indeed, the fields are white for harvest. Let's go fishing for men!

Fishers of Men

Self Preservation

Accomplish God's Will

Value of the Soul

Emulate Christ

Meet Responsibility

Enjoyment

Not Impossible

Questions for Review

I. Matching: What does each represent?

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. _____ the vine | A. God |
| 2. _____ the branches | B. Christ |
| 3. _____ the vinedresser | C. disciples of Christ |

II. True/False

1. _____ Mark 1:16-18 records Jesus' call of Simon Peter and Andrew to be apostles.
2. _____ Branches that fail to bear fruit are pruned.
3. _____ Leading the lost to Christ is the only way we bear fruit.
4. _____ We are not accountable for the number of people we help save but for the effort we put forth to reach the lost.
5. _____ God wills all people to be saved.
6. _____ God only holds us responsible for what we are able to do.
7. _____ If we have small ability we may do nothing.
8. _____ The soul of one person is worth more than the world.
9. _____ People who never hear the gospel are not held accountable.
10. _____ We should not show mercy toward those who are dying spiritually.
11. _____ We must be like Jesus.
12. _____ Jesus sought to lead the lost to salvation.
13. _____ It does not bring joy to help lead a lost soul to Christ.
14. _____ It is not possible for you to help win lost sinners to the Lord.

II. Application: List the names of three people you know who are lost whom you will try to lead to Christ.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Bible Correspondence Course Lesson Twenty-six Christians Must Be Fishers of Men

Introduction

One of the most effective soul winners I have ever worked with was a widower in his seventies who had very little formal education, was quite poor, and never taught a class that I knew about. But he knew how to reach the lost.

Mark 1:16-18 records Jesus' call of Simon Peter and Andrew to be His disciples. This was not the call to apostleship but to discipleship. Thus, the call of this passage applies in principle to all who would follow the Master. "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." **Why should we be fishers of men, soul winners for Jesus?**

Reasons to Be Fishers of Men

In John 15:1-8 Jesus compared His relationship to His disciples to that of a vine to branches. The Master warned, "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away" (verse 2). What happens to the branch that is taken away? They "gather them and throw [them] into the fire, and they are burned" (verse 6). Fruit bearing is certainly not limited to leading the lost to Christ (e.g., Galatians 5:22-24), but winning the lost to Christ is one way we bear fruit (Romans 1:13). Thus, we need to be fishers of men for self-preservation - to save our own souls.

Don't misunderstand. We are not responsible for the numbers we help save. The increase is in the hands of God (1 Corinthians 3:6-7). We will be held accountable for the effort we put forth.

A second reason to be a soul winner is to accomplish God's will. He desires everyone in the world be saved (1 Timothy 2:3-4).

God only holds you and me responsible for what we each can do (Matthew 25:14-30). But what can you do? Do you think in one year you could ask at least ten people for a home Bible study? Do you think one of those ten might become a Christian? If so, next year there will be two Christians, whereas now there is one. Can the two of you do the same thing a second year? Can you keep this up for ten years, one decade - each Christian, including each new convert, helping lead one lost soul to Christ each year? If so, whereas now there is just you,