

If You're Too Busy to Go Fishing, You're Too Busy!

We understand the feeling of being "too busy." Schedules are full, calendars are packed, and life seems to move at an exhausting pace. Yet there is an old saying that carries a deeper lesson: *"If you're too busy to go fishing, you're just too busy."* While often applied to rest and balance, it also carries an important spiritual reminder.

Jesus called fishermen, and told them, *"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men"* (Matthew 4:19). From the very beginning, being a disciple of Jesus included the work of reaching others. If our lives become so crowded that there is no time to influence souls, share the gospel, or encourage the lost, then something is out of order.

Being busy in and of itself is not sinful. The problem arises when good things crowd out the best things. Martha was *"distracted with much serving,"* while Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet. Jesus said Mary had *"chosen that good part"* (Luke 10:38–42). Fishing for souls does not always require formal teaching or organized events, but it does require time and intentionality. It may be a conversation, an invitation, a kind word, or a godly example. We must be committed to the cause of Christ to be fishers of men.

If we find ourselves too busy to show concern about souls, too rushed to speak a few words about Jesus, or too distracted to notice opportunities, then we are indeed, too busy. We might need to re-examine our schedules, re-order our priorities, and make room for the work that matters most, fishing for men.

- by Josh McCord

God's Name -- Handle With Care

How often do you use terms like "My God," "O God," "Dear Lord," or "Lordy" as mere slang expressions? Do you have no reverence for God and His name? Do you not fear Him? Can you trample God's name under foot and still go guiltless before Him?

Whose name are you taking in vain? It is the Creator of the universe; it is the giver of all good things; it is the One who "gave His only begotten Son;" it is the One to whom you want to turn when accident or serious illness or grief strikes within your family; it is the One before whom you must stand in judgment when all earthly life is ended. Can you stand guiltless before Him in judgment when all of your life you have profaned His name? Can you show contempt for His name throughout life and still expect Him to hear in your moments of crisis?

Even if you do not reverence God, do you not respect the feelings of those who do? There are people in your community who have a strong faith in God; who praise Him for His mercy and kindness; who even see His hand working through their sorrows and tragedies to bring them closer to Him; who truly love God. We are not speaking of hypocrites whose religion is only an outward show. We are speaking of genuine people who truly reverence God. These people do business with you; they shop where you shop; they attend community meetings which you attend. No, they don't correct you every time you use God's name irreverently, for they are concerned for your feelings; but they are deeply hurt every time they hear the name of their God used so carelessly. Do you not care? Should you not be equally concerned for their feelings?

Now, the fact that you are still reading this article indicates that you do care; otherwise, you would have already thrown this paper away. Your actions are due to thoughtlessness, not maliciousness. Or perhaps no-one has ever pointed out to you the seriousness of taking God's name in vain. It might not be easy to change. Habit can maintain a terrible grip on our lives. But with effort you can succeed. Of course, I would encourage you to go beyond this. I would encourage you to develop love, reverence, and respect for God that would not only regard His name as sacred, but would bring you humbly to His word and will, and to salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. If you do thus submit yourself to God, you will find joy in using His name in prayer and in praise. You will sing of His name and bring honor to His name through your godly life. Isn't this far better than blaspheming His name?

What does the Bible say of God's name? "Holy and reverend is His name" (Psalm 111:9). "O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth" (Psalm 8:1)! It's God's name. Handle it with care.

- by Bill Hall

Hyper-Critical Listeners

I can still remember the first time I was asked to make a short talk before the church. I was young, totally inexperienced, and more than a little scared. An older brother saw the panic on my face, pulled me aside, and said quietly, "Everyone here is on your side. They want you to do well. No one is hoping you fail." That helped more than he probably ever knew.

Through the years I've found that what he said is usually true. Most brethren genuinely love the Word of God. They are like the Bereans who "received the word with all readiness of mind" (Acts 17:11). They appreciate the effort it takes to stand before others. They want to learn. They want to grow. They are thankful for those willing to study and teach.

But, if we're honest, not everyone listens that way. A few listen with a different spirit. Instead of asking, "What can I learn?" they seem to be asking, "What can I question?" They are alert for a misstatement - eager to catch a flaw.

Now, let's be clear. The truth must be handled accurately (2 Timothy 2:15). If error is taught, it needs to be corrected (Titus 1:9). Faithful preaching welcomes honest examination. But there's a big difference between careful discernment and a fault-finding attitude. One is driven by love for truth; the other by a critical spirit.

So here's something worth thinking about: When you listen, what are you listening for? Are you seeking to be edified, as Paul urged in 1 Corinthians 14:26? Or are you hoping to spot a mistake? One approach builds up the body. The other quietly tears it down. Which describes you? Think!

- by Greg Gwin