

## Characteristics of Real Fishers of Men

Luke 5:1-12

Illustration: The Times-Reporter of New Philadelphia, Ohio, reported in September, 1985 a celebration of a New Orleans municipal pool. The party around the pool was held to celebrate the first summer in memory without a drowning at the New Orleans city pool. In honor of the occasion, 200 people gathered, including 100 certified lifeguards. As the party was breaking up and the four lifeguards on duty began to clear the pool, they found a fully dressed body in the deep end. They tried to revive Jerome Moody, 31, but it was too late. He had drowned surrounded by lifeguards celebrating their successful season.

*Times-Reporter, September 1985.*

### 1. **They catch fish.**

They do more than talk about fishing in meetings. Neither do they allow themselves to be caught up in such maintenance activities as repairing their nets, buying the latest lures, or giving seminars to others about how to fish. They are productive people who have something to show for their efforts. You know them by the fruit of their labors.

### 2. **Fishermen are passionate about fishing.**

In many cases they would rather fish than do anything. They do not mind all of the hassles of long hours because they are satisfied with the processes, purposes, and identities that come with their lifestyle. Fishing is more than just a job to them, it is a way of life.

### 3. **Fishermen are unique.**

They do not mind being misunderstood. They do not mind when people laugh at them about their seemingly lower class standing in the community. They believe that they are on a holy mission from God that transcends social-economic class. They are not afraid of being disliked for what they do, even by their relatives who would prefer that they take a more profitable job somewhere closer to people of power.

### 4. **Fishermen do not get side tracked by disappointments.**

When someone does not catch a great quantity of fish he does not get discouraged. They are equally concerned about the quantity and quality of their catch. Fishermen are dependent on the Lord for their success just as much as the farmer is dependent on the Creator for his harvests.

### 5. **Fishermen are enterprising without being self-serving.**

Wise fishermen know that they cannot over harvest their fishing fields or a breeding stock will be killed off. They are able to plan the best times to go fishing. They utilize the best seasonal factors to enhance their experiences. They are patient, waiting on the Almighty God to give them favorable seas where they can bring in the maximum harvest.

### 6. **Fishermen are equipped with tools for all kinds of jobs.**

In order to accomplish their jobs, fishermen have the latest equipment, knowledge, and machinery to make the most of every opportunity. They constantly read the latest journals, articles, and news bulletins to find the best places, methods, and tools to catch the kind of fish that will be most profitable.

### 7. **Fishermen learn a great deal through on the job training.**

By never ceasing in their learning about the art and science of fishing they are able to acquire new ideas from just about anyone. They are never too proud to learn from even the youngest or the oldest advisor. They recognize the diversity of gifts, abilities and callings in their profession so as to utilize a wide diversity of people in accomplishing their mission.

**8. Fishermen do not sit around and philosophize about fishing.**

These are men who are busy with the task of bringing fish into their boats to spend time talking about it. They sometimes grow discontent with others who are just spectators or armchair critics. Realizing that they will always have scoffers they have developed a thick skin to handle accusations, misunderstanding, or abuse.

**9. Fishermen are contextually wise about how the environment effects the kind of fish they want to catch.**

They are students of the situational factors that will help them determine the right kinds of bait to suit the fish they want to attract. They realize that one kind of bait will not appeal to every kind of fish. They study the habits of fish through practical experience as well as educative literature that gives them a leg up on their competition.

**10. Fishermen realize that by following Jesus,**

He makes them into fishers of men through a long process. They are humble enough to know that they are always in the process of becoming more like the Master. Never do real fishermen rest on their laurels and insist that they have arrived. They do not demand respect for their accomplishments. These are men who recognize that it is the Spirit's transformation that changes people into His image and gives lasting blessings without sorrow.

11. Fishermen do not do more or less than God wants them to do. They stay away from those who would make their profession into a glamorous Hollywood enterprise. Similarly, they resist the temptations to just be weekend fishermen who only give God their two hours on Sunday mornings.

12. Fishermen are equally adept at the art as well as the science of fishing. They have a good balance between using their finely tuned intuitive senses and applying the latest scientific know-how of the elements to maximize their catch.

Conclusion: It is easy to determine when something is aflame. It ignites other material. Any fire that does not spread will eventually go out. A church without evangelism is a contradiction in terms, just as a fire that does not burn is a contradiction.