

## Fishing For Men (1)

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by Tommy Rainwater

This time I'd like to share with you what actions are required of Christians who want to do some serious fishing:

### **1. Go where the people are**

Stephen's work was one of the reasons for the early church's success in spreading the word in Jerusalem. He "did great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 4:12). Though we don't have the miraculous ability today that they did, we do have the completed word of God confirmed by those early miracles. We need to imitate Stephen and the apostles and go among the people. We won't influence anyone new if we refuse to talk to people outside our comfortable circle of friends. It's easy to be with brethren all the time, but we have to go where other folks are and give the gospel some exposure beyond the walls of the church building. The apostle Paul went to the marketplace, to Mars' Hill, to the synagogues, and to a school -- places people typically gathered to talk. Jesus went to a well where people drew water. Ask yourself: "How and where can I meet my neighbor and my townspeople?" Then go, and have the courage to begin talking about the Bible. Go beyond talking about the weather, family, and politics. Prod the discussion with small questions like: "Do you go to church anywhere?" or "Have you done any reading lately?" You can get many a conversation onto a spiritual level. Sometimes they might even beat you to it! You will see very quickly if a person is interested or not. At least, if they don't seem interested at first, they will know you are a spiritual person and a source for encouragement. Having trouble starting the conversation? Pray for boldness (Acts 4:29). My wife Sonia looks for opportunities to gently prod her co-workers into a spiritual discussion. Over time, some of these people have opened up more to her to talk about their problems, etc. People need Christ. And Christ needs you to go "among the people."

### **2. As an individual, always be the proper example**

This world is full of religious hypocrites. As soon as you become one of them, you lose any ability to influence anyone to come to Christ. After all, you yourself are not walking with the Lord. Hypocrisy turns people's stomachs quicker than anything. On the other hand, people are won to the Lord through the power of a righteous life. The simple fact of Saul's conversion caused many in Judea to glorify God (Gal. 1:21-24). People need to see genuine change in us. They cannot see Christ in us if He is not really there. The joy and singleness of heart of the early Christians and their honorable conduct "among all the people" directly led to successful evangelism: "...they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor among all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:46b-47). God quickly let it be known what He thought of hypocrisy among Christians in the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). He didn't tolerate it because He's in the business of winning souls, as we should be.

*Points 3 & 4 in next week's article*

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