

Fishing For Men (2)

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:

3. AS A CONGREGATION, BE OF ONE HEART & SOUL

Each local church has its own "personality." Whenever I think of any local congregation I've visited or been a part of, I have an impression in my mind what that group is like. You can relate to this. Sometimes the impression is very good -- sometimes, not so good. The impression is never based on physical things, such as the state of the building or the skin color of the brethren, etc. But it is based on spiritual things like friendliness, hospitality, faithfulness to God and His Word, hunger for truth, diligence, zeal, love for song and worship, etc. The Lord certainly had a clear impression of the seven churches of Asia (Rev. 2-3). As we read about the early church in Jerusalem, we have a very favorable impression of it. Considering that it grew from 3,000 people (Acts 2:41) to 5,000+ people (Acts 4:4) in a very short time, we should want to imitate these brethren in every possible way. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42) and were "of one heart and one soul" (Acts 4:32). Their unity (in doctrine and attitude) was shown in their generosity toward one another. They valued each other over their own possessions (Acts 4:32-35). Who wouldn't want to be a part of a group like that? On the other hand, when brethren argue and mistreat one another, they become unattractive to anyone of a spiritual mind. Such a group will never grow. Remember: How the members of a congregation conduct themselves together is directly proportional to their ability to evangelize the lost.

4. KNOW THE WORD, & PRESENT IT AS COMING FROM GOD

How can we teach what we don't know? Diligence of study is required of those workers who "***rightly divide the word of truth***" (2 Tim. 2:15). That doesn't mean you must first learn *everything* before you can teach. But it does mean that you're always trying to learn more and working on honing your teaching skills. Many times you'll be asked a Bible question to which you don't immediately know the answer. When that happens, humbly say, "I don't know, but I'll find out and get back to you." The important thing is knowing that spiritual answers are found only in the Bible. The more you talk to people, the more you'll anticipate common questions and, by experience, know where in the Bible to turn. Also, make sure you answer their questions by showing them in their own Bible and having them read the verses out loud. That way, they'll see that the answer is from God and not from you. If they reject it, they are rejecting what is in their own Bible.

1 Peter 3:15-16a sums up everything well: "***But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience . . .***" As Christians, we are expected to answer people's inquiries into our faith. Are we ready?

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