



Fish Closer In

“The man answered, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind.’

And, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"Right!" Jesus told him. "Do this and you will live!"

The man wanted to justify his actions, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus Christ | Luke 10:27-29 (NLT)

The Lord was testing me, an extended wilderness time for sure. Despite my daily devotional, I felt adrift spiritually; my thoughts consumed by complaining, resentment, and offense. I've learned that in times like these I must disrupt my spiritual life to move closer to him... Surrender was inevitable; growth would follow.

"For the Lord corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights." King Solomon (Proverbs 3:12)

It'd been gnawing on me to spend dedicated time with the Lord, but I'd been putting it off, "Too busy... and where?" ... excuses. I knew I needed to make a commitment and had no choice after two men, members of my advisory Team, forced it. "We want to hear about it when we talk next week!" No turning back... I had to move closer to the source of life.

"The river of God has plenty of water; it provides a bountiful harvest of

grain, for you have ordered it so... even the hard pathways overflow with abundance. The grasslands of the wilderness become a lush pasture, and the hillsides blossom with joy.” King David (Psalm 65:9-12)

Dedicated time with the Lord refreshes and always delivers, often in surprising ways... why do I put it off?

I kayaked across a lake to a quiet beach. Prayed, had lunch, prayed more, journaled, admired the lake’s stunning beauty, its peacefulness... then confessed as the Lord highlighted what had come between us. I surrendered, what else could I do?

Just after, a curious thing happened...

Reflect: What keeps me from spending dedicated time with the Lord?

I’d envisioned myself alone on this beach, just me and the Lord, and I was for several hours, until I spotted a fly fisherman working his way up the shore. I watched as he elegantly whipped his line back and forth, the fly landing about 30 yds out. He knew what he was doing.

After a friendly greeting, I said, “I just saw a big one jump out there, but well beyond where you’ve been reaching.” Without hesitation he retorted, “I’m trying to catch the ones closer in.” Puzzled, I thought... doesn’t everyone want to catch the big ones, the ones out there?

Then it hit me... (This wasn’t the first time the Lord had brought

someone to me for a reason.)

Consider: **Seeking the “big ones out there” blinds me.**

Charged to advance my Mission, I’ve spent countless hours trying to figure out how to reach and serve people “out there”; people beyond my reach! During our time together, the Lord led me to ask myself, “Who am I really trying to serve?” ... Me! Funny that I’d just finished surrendering my pridefulness. To think that all this time I could’ve been “fishing closer in.” Isn’t it just like the Lord to use a fly fisherman to bring home his message?

Jesus was asked, “And who is my neighbor?” He proceeded to use the story of the Good Samaritan to answer... The people closer in, those you encounter along your daily path, are your neighbors. Do you see them?

Imagine: **Great Mission opportunities are right in front of me.**

Could it be that, like me, much of your struggle comes from a desire for meaning run amuck? Have you bought into the belief that to advance your Mission you must do something big? Perhaps saying, “Once I do this or get this training or degree or... then I will really be able to serve the Lord in a great way.” Engrossed in this, have you missed opportunities to serve those the Lord has placed right in front of you?

“Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening.” (Acts 16:25)

Paul and Silas show us how... they were in prison! As you go through life's varied circumstances, whether you realize it or not, you're surrounded by people in need of your service, your Mission. They're listening, watching, searching, hungering...

Fish Closer In

Go off the grid and ask these questions:

Coach's Questions

- Have I drifted into a spiritual wilderness? What step will I take to move closer to the Lord?
- Who is on my advisory Team? Who will hold me accountable?
- Who are my neighbors? Make a list. How can I can serve them with my Mission?

Spirit Talk

Post this where you will see it regularly.

Serve those I encounter along my path.

“Jesus replied with a story: “A Jewish man was traveling from Jerusalem down to

Jericho, and he was attacked by bandits. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him up, and left him half dead beside the road.

“By chance a priest came along. But when he saw the man lying there, he crossed to the other side of the road and passed him by. A Temple assistant walked over and looked at him lying there, but he also passed by on the other side.

“Then a despised Samaritan came along, and when he saw the man, he felt compassion for him. Going over to him, the Samaritan soothed his wounds with olive oil and wine and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him.

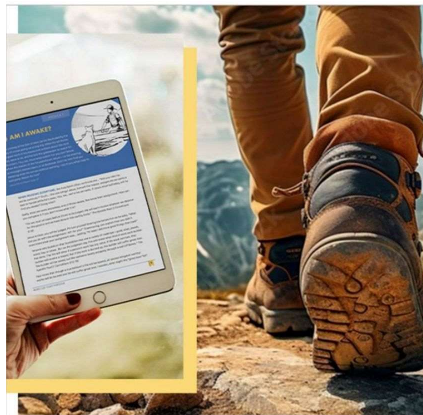
Jesus Christ | Luke 10:30-34 (NLT)



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