

Fishing With Artificial Bait

INTRODUCTION:

1. I like to fish. And, I fish mainly for Crappie. And, I fish almost exclusively using artificial bait—a bait called a jig.
 - A. I like to fish with artificial bait because...
 - i. It provides me with many colors, shapes, and sizes to match to the color of the water and the type of fish I am hoping to catch.
 - ii. Most of the time it is as successful in enticing fish to bite as is live bait, sometime more so, and much cheaper to use.
 - iii. It allows me to have more control of the fishing, allowing me to cast the jig into specific places, keep it at a certain depth, and reel it in at different speeds and angles. With live bait you just throw the line out there and sit back and wait for a fish to bite.
 - iv. Interestingly enough is the fact that you do not have to hide the hook. It is there for the fish to see because fish do not know what a hook is—they just see the color/shape of the bait and react to those things.
 - B. Despite the control I may have over the bait, there are still many things that can derail my hopes of catching a fish.
 - i. I can throw that jig with accuracy and retrieve it with precision, but if there happens to get the smallest piece of trash on that bait (grass, bark, leaf, bloom, etc.), a fish will not touch it.
 - ii. Bait must look a certain way or fish are not fooled—their instinct to strike is not triggered.
 - iii. It is up to the fish to bite—and sometimes they are not going to bite because of the direction of the wind, the temperature of the air or water or both, the barometric pressure, time of day, etc., are not right (ex. – movement of fish in a aquarium).
2. Despite these various factors, many people, and sometimes even I, catch a lot of fish using artificial bait.
 - A. So, what is the point?
 - B. There are some applications of these ideas to our life and the struggle we face with Satan and temptation, seeing **Satan is fishing for you!**

BODY:

I. Satan fishes with artificial bait to allure us to sin.

- A. Just like fishing, Satan’s temptation and the sin it brings are all about *deception*, about *covering up* the fact that what he offers is not real and cannot give what he promises.
 1. Artificial bait can look wonderful to a fish, just like what they need, but it isn’t. It provides no nourishment, no pleasing taste, just something that looks like what they need.
 2. Satan and sin promise fulfillment, happiness, meaning in life, etc., yet provide heartache, emptiness, self-loathing, and death! It is all deception (Heb. 3:12-13 – “**Beware**, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; ¹³ but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the **deceitfulness of sin.**”).
- B. Satan is a liar *always* and all he truly wants is to destroy you, as Jesus pointed out to certain Satan deceived Jews (Jn. 8:44 – “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”).
 1. So, as is true with artificial bait, there is *always* a barbed hook with a line attached by which Satan means to reels you in.

2. Whatever good, whatever value temptation might promise is a lie. Sin will NOT produce good in your life, only bad!

II. Satan controls the “lure” of temptations for maximum effect.

- A. Like a good fisherman, Satan analyzes you and seeks to choose the right color, shape, and size of temptation to cause you to be like a fish and strike without thought!
 1. Fish do not have a book of instructions and warnings to help them determine which bait to take.
 2. But you do. So you have to be wise and listen to God’s word when it tells you that Satan’s intentions are evil, that he wants to destroy you (1 Pet. 5:8 – “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”)
- B. But here is the thing. All temptation has some kind of *trash* connected to it, something that is not quite right. And we should know this and generally feel it in our conscience.
 1. When we sin, we ignore the warnings of conscience and of God’s word, ignore that something isn’t right.
 2. Ignoring such warnings is **dangerous**.
 - a. Ignoring your conscience can sear it so that it no longer warns you (1 Tim. 4:2)
 - b. Ignoring God’s word means you are ignoring the one message of truth on this earth that can help you know and resist Satan’s sin that destroys!
 - c. There must be effort on our part to train our mind and conscience to react properly.
 - i. Psa. 119:11 – “Your word I have **hidden in my heart**, that I might not sin against You.”
 - ii. In Hebrews 5:14 the writer spoke of those who can discern good and evil saying, “But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by **reason of use** have their **senses exercised to discern both good and evil**.”).
 3. If you feel something is wrong about what is before you, there is. Do not ignore your conscience, even in matters that may not be sin! (Rom. 14:23 – “But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.”).
 4. So, when the Devil sets that next temptation in front of you, remember that even a *fish* will let a trashy bait pass on by! And you are way smarter than a fish!

III. Despite all that Satan does, YOU determine whether you take the bait!

- A. Fish are guided by instinct, not reason.
 1. They do not decide to be active or passive based on the weather, whether they want to eat based on their weight, etc.
 2. They act without thought—they *react* to stimuli in the way God has designed them to.
 - a. You don’t even have to hide the hook.
 - b. The glitz—the color, shape, size, and motion of the bait—is what matters to a fish.
- B. But you are *not* a fish. You decide how you will live, what you will do.
 1. And, you should know that the glitz does not make the hook go away. God has shown us that the hook is there. And, that hook means death!
 2. If *you decide* to follow the ways of the flesh and take Satan’s bait, like a fish you will be caught and you will die an eternal, spiritual death (Rom. 8:5-8 – “For those who live according to the **flesh** set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.”⁶ For **to be carnally minded is death**, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.⁷ Because the carnal mind is **enmity against God**; for it

is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, **those who are in the flesh cannot please God.**”).

3. On the other hand, **you can choose to resist** Satan’s temptation and follow the ways of the Spirit and live as a child of God, you will live with the hope of eternal life in heaven with God (Rom. 8:12-14 – “Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, **you will live.** ¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are **sons of God.**”).

CONCLUSION:

1. You have a choice concerning sin and what your life will bring you eternally. The power in Christ to resist sin is yours “because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world” (1 Jn. 4:4).
2. Never forget that God has made it possible, even probable, for you to resist temptation. And if you will do so, you will shine as a light in this world for God’s glory and can live with confident hope in your eternal salvation.