

## Of Fish... and People (or vice versa)

### Part 2

(In the previous article on this topic, we observed that: Some fish will bite and swallow anything that even vaguely resembles something they would normally consume; Fish sometimes just want something “different;” and, Some fish, even after biting a fake bait, are not smart enough to just spit it out. The conclusions were that 1) Spiritually speaking, some people are no smarter than a fish; and, 2) We all need to be smarter than fish in these regards!)

Some fish are pretty smart. It’s usually the ones who have learned enough along the way to have lived a while, at least in fish years (whatever those equate to in human years).

- They’ve learned not to “bite” everything that swims by or looks good- especially when it doesn’t smell or taste right. There’s a whole line of sprays and dips in the fishing stores to help “artificial” baits *smell* and *taste* like the “real” thing in efforts to overcome this condition.
- They’re also the ones that realize they’ve made a mistake in “biting” something with a hook in it, and then do everything within their power to spit or sling it out, or break it off, to regain their freedom.
- Even when they’re up on the bank or in the boat, they still flounce and fight to get back into the water. Perhaps they realize that dry land (or the frying pan) is not the place for fish that wants to live.

But some of us “people” could learn a lot from a cagey old fish:

- Don’t *bite* and *swallow* practically anything that remotely looks or sounds like “the real thing” if it doesn’t also *smell* or *taste* right. Just because it’s in the water, doesn’t mean it’s good fish food. And likewise, just because it comes from a pulpit, or from someone with a Bible in their hand, doesn’t mean it’s good food for the soul. Note 1Timothy 1:5, “*the goal of our* (“inspired” and therefore “true”) *instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.*” Good spiritual “food” doesn’t just *look* and *sound* right; it *smells* and *tastes* right too! That is, because it is “real” food, it has nutritional value that produces the right spiritual outcomes. Conversely, the “fake bait” of *false teaching* produces only “*strange doctrines... speculation rather than the furthering God’s provision which is by faith*” and “*fruitless discussion,*” 1Timothy 1:3,4,6. So, “smell” and “taste” even those things that “look and “sound” right before you swallow, cf. Ezekiel 3:1-3; Psalms 19:7-10! Be smart like a fish that has learned enough to get old and big!
- Despite these things, if you find you’ve “bitten” a “fake bait,” be smart enough to admit you’re wrong and just let go. Don’t let your pride prevent you from admitting that you’ve been fooled, and then “sink your teeth in” and “lock your jaws,” and refuse to just let go. The Sadducees serve as an example of people who were not as smart as some fish. They had “swallowed” the “fake bait” that “*there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor a spirit,*” Acts 23:8. Though I fail to comprehend the attraction of a doctrine that results only in doomed destruction (cf. 1Corinthians 15:16-19), rather than just admit that they were wrong and Jesus was right (cf. John 5:25-29), they sought to entrap and discredit Him with a question the premise of which they themselves rejected. They asked Him a hypothetical question regarding *the resurrection*, Matthew 22:23-28! Instead of just admitting that the doctrine was wrong, and that they had been “caught” by it, they refused to spit it out... and their foolishness was masterfully revealed, Matthew 22:29-34. A wise fish knows better

than that. If you get “lured” into a false doctrine, at least be shrewd enough to spit it out or break free once you see where it’s heading. Be smart like a fish that has learned enough to get old and big!

- Some fish, once “hooked,” just roll over and allow themselves to be “reeled in.” Others, even after every effort has been expended (and has failed) to sling or spit out the bait, or break off the line, aren’t finished even when dragged up on the shore or into the boat. They continue to fight, flounce, and flail around doing everything they possibly can to return to the safety of the water. Many a fish has regained freedom despite being hooked, reeled in, and even “in the grasp” because he never gave up! Which will you be: the “fish” that, once “hooked” by sin, or “lured” by false doctrine, just rolls over and gets reeled in because there is no “fight” in you, cf. Hebrews 3: 12 – 4:2; or the one that keeps fighting against Satan and sin, and for faith and salvation, to the bitter end, cf. Hebrews 6:9-12? The choice is yours. Be smart like a fish that has learned enough to get old and big, and keep on fighting for your spiritual life and freedom in Christ!

Otherwise, you’ll surely wind up on Satan’s “stringer”! (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at [southportcofc.org](http://southportcofc.org); email to [mrpcstrong@hotmail.com](mailto:mrpcstrong@hotmail.com))