

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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Fishing for Money

Fly-fishing has become a recent interest of mine. I have always loved fishing but never really had the opportunity to enjoy fly-fishing like you can in Northeast Pennsylvania. Small trout streams are common, and the scenery is spectacular. Few things are as peaceful as the sights and sounds of a mountain stream.

One of my favorite evenings was the night I caught two Brown and two Rainbow Trout on a small wet fly. The corner pool that I was fishing was left completely to me. The setting sun made the slight fog appear more like a dream than reality. As I landed the first of my fish, I carefully removed the delicate fly that I had hand tied and released the fish. I continued that practice several times that night and then sat on a rock and pondered the joy of fishing.

While thanking God for the opportunity He had given me to enjoy such a splendid night, I suddenly remembered the story in Matthew 17:24-27 where Jesus sends Peter on a fishing trip. The goal of his fishing trip was "... go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you." Jesus was going to pay the temple tax with money from the mouth of a fish! What a great story.

Have you ever pondered what must have gone through Peter's head that day? I can only imagine what he must have thought the moment he felt the tug on his line. The anticipation of seeing a fish being pulled to shore and then reaching in its mouth must have been exhilarating. When he saw the money, I am sure he could not wait to tell that fish story. All the way back from his fishing trip, he must have said, "Wow, this living with Jesus is amazing!"

As the fog continued to gather on the stream that night, I realized nothing had changed. While I have not experienced Peter's joy, I have acquired a list of similar events that continue to encourage my heart to have faith in God even during the most difficult times. Just as Peter was willing to obey, I must be willing to obey and trust God to provide for my financial needs. Peter was not living apart from the principles of God, and his needs were met.

Consider the issues he had to settle in his mind to follow Christ:

- My standard of living must change because instead of gaining wealth, I will give my wealth away to benefit the Lord's work.
- My business plans will have to align with the time demands needed to know Christ better.
- My recognition as a businessman will now change so I can follow Christ and make Him known.

These matters all have financial implications. Each of them must be thought through clearly in order to follow Christ. Are you willing to take that step of obedience? I urge you to walk with God, obey His Word, and enjoy the experience of living by faith. While the tug on the end of a fishing line is exciting, nothing compares to watching God provide through faith!

BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: bbcfoundation.org; e-mail: info@bbcfoundation.org