

## Ten Lessons I Learned from Brazilian River Fishermen

*Lessons from those who catch fish for those who catch people (Mark 1:17)*

The **Lesson of Two**: Most boats have two people fishing – one directs the boat and one catches the fish. One seems to know better where the fish are, the other seems to know better how to catch the fish.

*Evangelism is most effective when we partner those who know the fish with those who know how to catch them. This is often a partnership of new believers with mature believers.*

The **Lesson of the Season**: A fisherman has to fish all the time to survive, but there are two times of the year when they really catch fish. They maximize those times when the fish are most likely to be caught.

*Share the good news at all times but there are “seasons” when people are the most open to hearing and receiving the Gospel. Make the most of those times!*

The **Lesson of the Center**: Fishermen know that the center of the River is the safest. One side is usually very shallow and the other deep. One will see you run aground, while the other will see you wreck a motor.

*The Christian life is usually at its best when it is lived in balance and not to extremes.*

The **Lesson of the Empty Boat**: The fishing boats are not big. The more a fisherman puts in his boat, the less room he has for fish.

*If we fill our lives with so many other things, we won't have any room for sharing Jesus.*

The **Lesson of the Current**: Fishermen know that there are times to follow the current (when it is in the direction you need to go) and times to avoid the current (when it is against the direction you need to go).

*The current (our culture) may be helpful or harmful to sharing the Gospel. Take advantage when the current is helpful, but be willing to go against the current when it is harmful.*

The **Lesson of 5,000 Knots**: The average Brazilian fishing net has about 5,000 individual knots. If you are going to catch fish, you are going to have to do some work preparing to catch fish before you catch any.

*Results in evangelism are usually found on the other side of continual effort given to living authentic lives, sharing the authentic message of the Gospel, and showing authentic concern for the fish in our lives.*

The **Lesson of the Cooler**: Most Brazilian fishermen have a cooler in their boat or a partner whose boat may be filled with refrigerators. You have to have a plan for getting the fish back to your family or to the market.

*People accepting God's salvation isn't the end, seeing them become like Jesus is (making disciples).*

The **Lesson of Beaches**: Places on the River are not marked in time (that village is an hour away) or in distance (that village is 10 miles away) but in the number of beaches you pass (that village is six beaches away).

*Spiritual maturity and discipleship are not measured by time or distance but by actual growth.*

The **Lesson of the Right Tackle**: Fishermen know that the right bait matters but they also know that the right equipment matters. Little fish are caught with nets, big fish are caught with hooks.

*Catching any fish is good. Catching little fish is easier than catching big fish, but catching big fish makes the biggest difference – catching the head of a household often results in catching the whole house.*

The **Lesson of the License**: Fisherman fish. A license, a title, or even a passion doesn't make you a fisherman. Working to catch fish (and hopefully catching them) makes you a fisherman.

*A Christian is to be a disciple. A disciple isn't a disciple if they are not “catching fish” and making disciples.*

*Written by Timothy Kroll with inspiration and information from Daniel Simon*