



Basic Fishing Tips For Your Tackle Box

By Kurt von Schleicher

*Before I can preach love, mercy, and grace,
I must preach sin, law, and judgment. —John Wesley*

Here are some crucial factors with which you can be equipped and prepared for sharing your faith?

1. *To start off, you must be born again! Why?* Because Jesus said, “*Ye must be born again*” (John 3:7). Yes, the Fisher of all fishers, Jesus Christ who promised to make you a fisher of people, needs to be living big on the inside of you. He literally needs to be controlling you in every fishing effort you’re involved with, so that you will succeed ...and success in fishing isn’t always defined as hooking a person. You see, He defines “success” differently from how the world does, and from how religious people do. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will successfully lead you to kindly plant a few seeds (of evangelistic or biblical ideas) in the unbeliever’s mind for the day. That’s success! Remember, having Christ on the inside and living for Him 100% seven days a week, as you work together with Him to win people to righteousness—that’s the highest form of success! Obeying Him daily is huge success too. So start off in Christ, seeking Him for His will each day. He will meet your every need. Don’t worry or be distracted, He is all about fishing for souls and He will prepare the people’s hearts ...as He prepares you, as well. He will grant you diving encounters—fishing-setups if you will—with people who are ready to hear. But how can Christ control you as His witness if you are still in the darkness, as the enemy of God and of light? Religion won’t make you a fisher of men and this nation is already filled with seminary grads that unfortunately do not verbally witness or win people to Christ (and personally, I really like many Christ honoring seminaries in the USA). Be available. Make Jesus Lord of all. Let Christ fish through you as you reach out to those in need. You can learn more as you go.
2. *You can be filled with and empowered by the Holy Spirit.* Yes, in the book of Acts we see that the Holy Spirit is the One who gives people the power to be an effective witness for the Lord. Prayerfully read through the book of Acts over and over again. You’ll clearly see the

missionary heart of the Holy Spirit. He hasn't changed. He loves sinners and testifies of Jesus. He is the Spirit of truth, love and joy! Of a truth... love and joy are some things the Spirit can produce in and through you. And sinners are thirsty for God's selfless, agape love. They live in a joyless world today, but you can become a joy-filled, change-agent for spreading the glorious Good News! Most people you meet today are basically not interested in going to heaven or hell; they just want to know how to make it from Monday through to Friday, when they can get off work and go buy those six-packs. They need to see you living in victory above the circumstances of life, without needing the six-packs, as Elijah did. Your joy in the Spirit, that is exhibited daily even when you are in the midst of a struggle, will be a great entrée to sharing your faith. Preach the Word in the power of the Spirit! Point people to the ultimate Solution – Jesus and expect them to turn from their sins and from their own way of living!

3. *Have an absolute assurance of your own faith.* You can not be an effective soul-winner if you lack an assurance of your own salvation. The world is waiting to see exclamation-point-Christians rather than question-mark-Christians. God wants to give you boldness, confidence, courage, clarity and compassion in your presentation of His truth. Real Christians might not remember the exact date when they were born again, but they remember a specific point in time when they chose to believe and receive Christ. You can know you are saved and you can witness with His assurance. The Apostle John said, "*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God*" (1 John 5:13).
4. *Get an understanding of the basic Gospel Message.* The Good News isn't complicated at all – it is very simple. A Harvard grad and a small child could understand it. The Gospel is simply glorious and gloriously simple. Sinless Jesus, God the Son, came to this world to save sinners from their sins and from an eternity in a real place called hell. He died on a cruel cross to pay the full penalty for your sins – for my sins, and He rose from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures. God raised Him. He did this so that you could be born again and then establish a close, personal relationship with God where you make Jesus your Lord. He did this so you could have and enjoy a privileged-part in His world-wide fishing enterprise. Knowing Christ and making Him known – that's what it's all about. When presenting the Gospel, there are some tools which may help you further: (1.) the Bible. That's God's love letter to the believer. It is a great fishing tool as well, because God's Word does not return void. (2.) "*The Roman Road*" which includes passages such as Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:6-8; (3.) A decent Gospel tract. Campus Crusade for Christ publishes many good ones. The goal is to study the Bible so you can have many answers. You can also study good tracks and that will help you (beware: there are some lame tracts that never mention repentance, the free gift, sin, future judgment ahead, or eternal destruction for those who choose to remain outside Jesus). But don't wait until you know it all to start witnessing. You do not have to have all the answers of apologetics or about cults to start, but you do need to point them to the One who does have the answers. You can and should learn as you go and even take time for studying.

5. *Your testimony.* A Christian with a glowing testimony (that does not attempt to glorify their past life of sin with all the gory details) is worth a library full of arguments. The wonderful thing about sharing your own testimony is that you don't have to know all the proper theological responses! Remember the story of the man born blind to whom Jesus gave him his sight? He was asked many questions, to which he responded, "*I don't know.*" But there was one thing the scoffers couldn't deal with: "*One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!*" (John 9:1-34).
6. *A real concern for unbelievers.* We live in a world where people have become more and more isolated and lonely. We live in a world where people don't reach out and help their neighbors with anything, let alone even know their names. It's just not as safe as it was before so you do want to be wise and non-intrusive in your outreach. The psalmists described the feelings of so many unbelievers, even of our day when he said, "*I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul*" (Ps. 142:4 KJV). Loving concern comes from a loving God who feels concerned for people. Tap-in to the Power Source daily. *Soak or bathe your unsaved loved ones and friends in prayer.* God will hear your prayers. Pray believing before you go and talk with them. Honor their time and express your gratitude for them taking the time. Set an appointment with them if you must. Pray silently while you're with them ...expecting them to say yes to an opportunity to receive Christ! Ask them if there is anything they would like prayer for, and pray with them right there if they don't mind. Pray after you leave. Pray continually (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
7. *Have a desire to check back on them to follow-up and see how they are doing?* Whether you plant seeds, water seeds, get flat-out rejected by some, or even lead a friend to Jesus, you do want to re-contact with the ones who are open to truth, to see how they are doing. They might need a ride to a healthy church or Bible study. You don't want to wait until they call you for a ride or to ask you about churches to visit. Church and Bible study might be so radically new to them that they will need some help. Try to put yourself in their position and try to imagine how they might be feeling with this whole new Christian lifestyle. They might just need someone to listen – someone to be a real friend. The Bible says, "*A friend loves at all times*" (Proverbs 17:17). It says, "*A man who has friends must himself be friendly*" (Proverbs 18:24). They might have basic questions or just need prayer. They might be bored and just need a buddy to go play tennis with. They are your friend, so don't make them feel like you got your scalp and spilt and simply don't care about them any more.
8. *Be willing to suffer if necessary to bring them to Jesus* (read 1 Peter 2:21). Live consistently as a good example before them. Jesus did that. They might have some rough edges for a time and even take some things out on you if they go through a trial or hardship. It's not always easy for them to understand what's going on when life really hurts ...and remember, Christians can get hurt too while on this sin-cursed planet. If those in the world act hateful towards you don't take it personal, don't get in the flesh or act hateful back. Just remember it is not you they hate, it's Jesus Christ in you. Darkness hates the light and those in the darkness don't want their wicked deeds exposed. There is an offense in the Gospel to many. The world thinks your Gospel Message is just foolishness, but you never want to add to that offense by being offensive or rude to unbelievers. Too many Christians add to the offense of

the cross by returning evil for evil. Hang in there with Jesus as you allow God to love them through you. God will make it all work together for good as you continue to seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness (see Romans 8:28 in its context). You don't want to leave the newborn or the not-yet-reborn person to themselves when they are open to growth, but instead, you want to keep loving them to the Word of God (read 1 Peter 2:22-24). I don't particularly like relating witnessing to marketing, but listen ...sell them on Christ and his program ...so to speak ...and then resell them again and again and again. Because He is drastically more worthy than anything else they could buy into. Be honest about how you feel, but don't dwell on feelings or teach them to focus on their feelings. Encourage them to focus on Jesus as they lean on the promises of God's Word. Be gentle with them and be yourself. Some sinners are tough and need a bit of tough love sometimes, but don't over do it. God will show you how to minister to them if you just ask Him to. Remember, if you live right for Jesus in an ungodly world, you're going to suffer as a fisher of people – even when you are thoughtful and considerate of others. If they have been procrastinating and still haven't come to faith in Christ, refuse to nag them about Jesus or be pushy. Jesus was longsuffering with you. Have a sense of urgency about you and be discerning as to when then time is right. Give them all the time they need to count the cost of discipleship. There is nothing wrong with that. There are way too many fair-weather followers who have never counted the cost of complete commitment. Trust the Lord to do His work in their hearts as you continue to intercede for them. If you are having trouble leading them in a prayer to trust Christ, offer to bring them to a Christian crusade, to a Christian concert, or to a church event where you know they will have the opportunity to be saved (just do your homework in advance, because not all churches or ministers tactfully evangelize). A witness in court doesn't have to prove anything or make people believe him when he testifies; they just need to tell the truth about what happened to them. That's what we are called to do; tell unbelievers the truth and what we've experienced. The responsibility of saving people is ultimately the Lord's.

Have Kurt's fishing devos blessed you? Click on the "Contact" button and let him know!

© Copyright 2007 by Fish4Souls. All rights reserved.