

**THE FISH
HOOK AND THE
BAIT**
30 Questions, 30 Solutions

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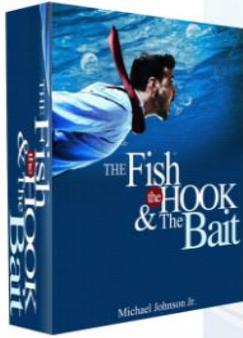
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Questions

1. How do you deal with the conflict of lining up your *daily actions* with your *verbal confessions*? (Pg. 5)
2. How do you break the *stronghold of lust*, when it has a hold of your heart? (Pg. 6)
3. How do you truly maximize and utilize the *way of escape* the Lord provides? (Pg. 7)
4. Why is it that scripture can seem *incapable* of breaking you from the stronghold of lust, flesh producing sin? Is it because I'm using the wrong scriptures? Or do the scriptures *lack the ability to free me*? (Pg. 8)
5. Why should I *continue to fight a war I know I will lose* because I really want to do even though I hate how I feel after doing it? (Pg. 9)
6. What should I do when I'm *bored* and I *feel the burn*? What do I do when I feel the *tug of war within my flesh*? (Pg. 10)
7. How do I "*Starve*" the monster within me? (Pg. 11)
8. Is being a Christian really *difficult* or is it an *excuse* because we *refuse to let go* of our carnality? (Pg. 12)
9. How do I win the battle over *self by myself*? (Pg. 13)
10. If the Lord allows *suffering*, what do I do to *prepare* for the *allowed suffering*? (Pg. 14)
11. How do I deal with the *negative seeds* planted by others *close to me*? What do you do when dealing with peer pressure from those who are *closest to you*? (Pg. 15)
12. How do I *submit* to the Holy Spirit to make me *strong* when I am *weak*? (Pg. 16)
13. How do I *walk in the Spirit*? (Pg. 17)
14. I've been guilty of living a *double life*. How do I stop it? (Pg. 18)

15. How do I keep the *guilt* and *shame* of my past from impacting *how I feel about myself*?
Even though Jesus forgave me, is He still mad at me? (Pg. 19)
16. I'm *losing hope*, how do I keep *hope alive*? (Pg. 20)
17. Are *faith* and *belief* the same thing? (Pg. 21)
18. How do I discern between the *tools* used to build my faith vs. the *weapons* used to bring me to my fate? (Pg. 22)
19. What do I do when I find myself at the *wrong place at the wrong time*? (Pg. 23)
20. What is the key to *resisting* the enemy? (Pg. 24)
21. How do I find *accountability*? (Pg. 25)
22. How do I *identify* my *re-run episodes*? (Pg. 26)
23. How do I *break* the *desire* to *re-live* past experiences? (Pg. 27)
24. I'm in church, but I still have *fleshful cravings*. What's wrong with me? (Pg. 28)
25. *Look, Linger, Lust, and Lose*. How do I apply this in my life? (Pg. 29)
26. Lean not to my *own understanding*, how do I do that? (Pg. 30)
27. How do I get my *authority* back? (Pg. 31)
28. How do I *discern* the difference between good things vs. God things? (Pg. 32)
29. How do I get *free* from the *hook* in my mouth? (Pg. 33)
30. How do I *keep from ending up* on someone else's hook? (Pg. 34)



1. How do you deal with the conflict of lining up your daily actions with your verbal confessions?

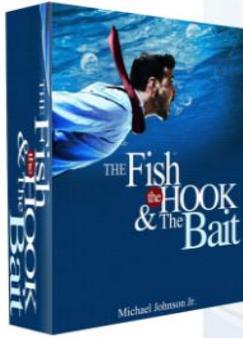
Proverbs 6:2 “You are trapped by the words of your mouth. You are ensnared with the words of your Mouth.”

You have to consider that the actions you take on a daily basis are the result of a pattern you set for yourself. This includes how you respond to the drive thru person at McDonalds, how you respond to the supervisor on Monday morning, how you respond to your teacher on Final Exam day, how you respond to your pastor on Sundays, how you respond to husbands or wives. All are a result of your daily patterns and habits. The challenge with daily patterns is that they are subject to how you feel at the moment. Often times those we come in contact with become victims due to a negative emotion caused by our interactions with other people. And these negative emotions are expressed by the words we speak.

The bible says we are ensnared or entrapped by the words we speak. Also you must understand that life and death lies in the Power of the tongue. The step you must take in lining up your daily actions with your verbal confessions is determined by you marrying the words you speak with the Word you commit to live and abide by. **You cannot allow your emotions to dictate what you say or how you act. You cannot allow how you feel to give a “pass card” allowing you free reign to react when you know you should respond in certain situations.**

So instead of reacting, commit to manage the life you live by monitoring the words you use. This may require you taking time to **think** before you **speak**. Before reacting to those you come in contact with, respond accurately. Otherwise your life will be a contradiction enslaved by the double mind that is unstable in all its ways.

Marry the words you use with the word of God you abide by, not the feelings you fight with.



2. How do you break the stronghold of lust, when it has a hold of your heart?

Psalms 51:10 “Create in Me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right Spirit in Me.”

You may need a **new heart**. It's that simple. I'm not talking about an actual heart transplant; I'm talking about a **heart replant**. Consider this that lust doesn't dirty your heart, it defiles it. It causes it to be conflicted with toxic stimulants that impact how you feel which in turn impacts how you think resulting in what you do.

Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

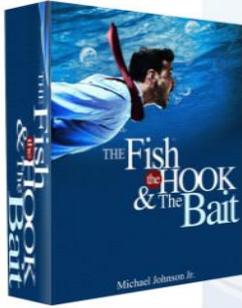
So when there is a stronghold on your life due to a vice latched on to your heart, you may need a new one. Ps. 51 David said Lord create in me a clean heart and renew in me a right spirit. David uses the word similar to how God created the heavens and the earth. He calls out to the Lord in his moment of desperation like we all have and He asks the Lord to make something out of nothing.

This is what God can do for you. He can create something pure out of something defiled. But it's your responsibility to acknowledge that you are in need of a new clean heart and believe the Lord can give you one.

With this new heart you also have to ensure that you do not follow the patterns of the old heart. With a new heart must come a new way of thinking. **Rom. 12:2** “*Be not conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind so you may prove what is the good, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God.*”

Eph. 4:22,23 “*that you put away, as concerning your former way of life, the old man, that grows corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.*”

Trust the Lord to create in you a clean heart, follow the word of God to renew your mind and put away the former way of life.



3. How do you truly maximize and utilize the way of escape the Lord provides?

1 Cor. 10:13 “No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”

The way of escape is exactly that, a way of escape. You cannot allow the **memories** of your **past** to lock you to a prison God freed you from through the sacrifice of His Son.

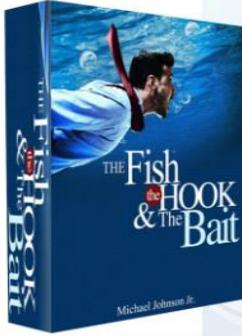
Consider **Genesis 19** Lot and his family was given a way of escape with the requirement of not looking back. Consider this that God not only provides a way of escape for you but you also need to consider your salvation from danger may depend on your obedience to Godly instruction.

While Lot and his daughters were steady on their way to freedom from danger, Lot’s wife found it difficult and unbearable to leave without letting her past go. This was an act of disobedience resulting in her death while Lot and his daughters lived on.

The way of escape the Lord provides is freely given to those who belong to God but it is your responsibility to follow the Lord’s instructions to ensure your overall salvation.

So now let’s make it even more practical. **What** is the **cause** for you looking back? **Why** are you checking on your ex? **Why** did you go back to the bar? **Why** are you thinking of calling them back? Probably like Lot’s wife you entertain the idea of reliving past memories. Well that has to stop if you don’t want to be guilty of abusing the way of escape provided for you. Stay away from the page, don’t go down that street anymore. There is an escape made for you. So use it!

Follow the way of escape and obey the plan of God for your salvation. Commit to a strategy to ensure you will not look back but stay focused on the way of escape provided for you.



4. Why is it that scripture can seem incapable of breaking you from the stronghold of lust, flesh producing sin?

Is it because I'm using the wrong scriptures? Or do the scriptures lack the ability to free me?

2 Timothy 3:16,17 *“Every scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”*

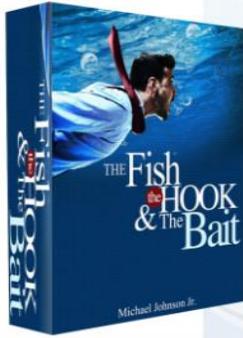
I challenge you to consider that the conflict is not with the scriptures you're using but **how do you see the scriptures in your life?** When you open up the bible what do you see? Do you see a bunch of ancient writings? Do you see a bunch of poems and songs? Do you see countless stories with different narratives? Or do you see the bible as instructions? Do you see the bible as a manual? Do you see the bible as the infallible Word of God?

The Word of God to the flesh has no true value. The flesh approaches the scripture as an adult listens to a nursery rhyme, it's cute. But when you are able to accept the scriptures to be the very breath and Word of God, it has a different kind of weight. You have to train your mind to approach the bible to be the mouth piece of God.

A child hears his dad he trembles with a fear of authority. A grown man hears his father, his fear turns into respect and reverence. Here we have the same father, the same child, different timeline. **God's word back then is the same word right now.** The bible isn't just a collaboration of ancient stories, they are testimonies to the now generations if He did it before, He can do it again, because the same God right now is the same God back then.

You have to learn to embrace the bible as God's word, God's instruction manual, and God's solution to any problem. Heed to His instructions, and then you will discover the power to break the strongholds. Yes, **Phil. 4:13** *“You can do all things through Christ who strengthens you.”* **1 John 4:4** *“Greater is He that is within you, then he that is in the world.”*

**God's Word gives you the ability to do what you cannot do for yourself.
Follow His Word.**



5. Why should I continue to fight a war I know I will lose because I really want to do even though I hate how I feel after doing it?

2Co 4:7-9 “*But we have this treasure in clay vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves. We are pressed on every side, yet not crushed; perplexed, yet not to despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; struck down, yet not destroyed;*”

Who said you were destined to lose? Last I checked, you were destined to win.

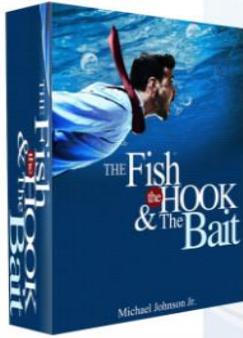
First step is to crucify all death language in your life. How weird is it for someone to speak as if they were dead while they're standing in front of you in complete health. The same applies to you in the fight for your spirit man. No matter how many times you've lost the fight, you're still in the war. Stop the premeditation of defeat before giving yourself a fighting chance.

Rom. 8:18 “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed toward us.”

God wants to reveal His manifested goodness in your life, there is a purpose to your suffering. If you choose not to fight, you will never reach the place God has for you. Paul says, **1 Tim. 6:12** “fight the good fight faith. Lay hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you confessed the good confession in the sight of many witnesses.” Don't allow your confession of Christ to be made null and void because of a reoccurring struggle over your thoughts and emotions. Fight back!

Phil. 3:13 “Brothers, I do not regard myself as yet having taken hold, but one thing I do. Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forward to the things which are ahead, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. “

There are rewards to those who endure to the end. Hang on in there; you shall reap, if you feint not. Fight the Good Fight!



6. What should I do when I'm bored and I feel the burn. What do I do when I feel the tug of war within my flesh?

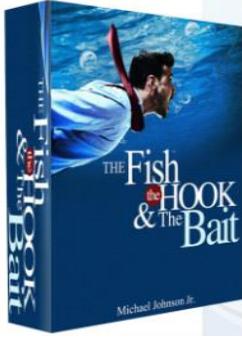
Rom. 13:13-14 “ Let us walk properly, as in the day; not in reveling and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and lustful acts, and not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, for its lusts.”

Being bored is an emotion. Feeling the burn is an emotion. All emotions are influential but all can be managed and controlled. All emotions impact how you feel and how you think, but if you learn to be led by the spirit of God you will be able to manage what is produced as a result of the feelings you have. The above scripture suggests you put on the Lord Jesus Christ, meaning if you are in Christ there should never be a time you are not influenced by the Lord Jesus. The issue isn't being bored; the issue is what patterns do you submit to **when** you are bored.

If you know you have the Lord in your life then the fellowship you have with him produces fruits in your spirit man that will help you with the fight. Self-Control is a fruit of the spirit that isn't given to you, it is produced from you. So it is your responsibility to work out your soul salvation utilizing what God is producing from you to help you focus on what matters the most, your salvation.

The tug of war in your flesh all boils down to who is in control of what is being produced out of your life. **Rom. 8:5** “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.” Setting your mind on the spirit may require using alternatives to help you in your boredom. When **bored change your location**, find better alternatives be more **productive**. Don't commit to just being busy, commit to being more productive. **It is in your pursuit to be more productive you'll discover the key to not just getting free, but being liberated.**

When bored change your location, find better alternatives be more productive. Don't commit to just being busy, commit to being more productive.



7. How do I “Starve” the monster within me?

1Co 9:25-27 *“Every man who strives in the games exercises self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore run like that, as not uncertainly. I fight like that, as not beating the air, but I beat my body and bring it into submission, lest by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected.”*

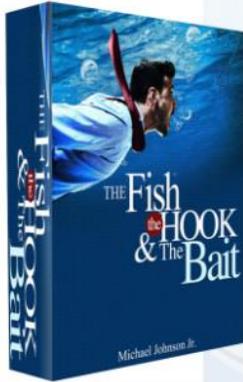
Starve: To die or perish from lack of food or nourishment. To suffer from extreme poverty and need. To cause to kill, weaken, or reduce as a result for the lack of.

Starving the flesh in its most practical form means to cause the flesh to perish due to a lack of nourishment. **Stop feeding the flesh.**

The flesh has an appetite, and as long as you feed the appetite with carnality, it will always remain hungry coming back for more. So in your commitment to starve the flesh, when it rises to oppose you, you have to bring your body under subjection. Remind your flesh who is in charge, take authority back over your mind and body, then you will exercise the self-control you need for a healthy spirit led life.

Did you know you have the authority to control the monster inside you? Yes you do. While the flesh makes its demands to feed the flesh, by the power of the spirit of God that dwells on the inside of you, you can bring your body under subjection and drive your spirit man to serve the Lord in your everyday actions. But you have to use your authority through the word of God. So when there is a flesh craving and your carnal mind makes its demands; shut him up, remind him who’s in charge and dictate to your body how you plan to serve the Lord.

Take your authority back. Remind your flesh who is in charge. Bring It under subjection and let it starve to death. Stop feeding it.



8. Is being a christian really difficult or is it an excuse because we refuse to let go of our carnality?

Rom 8:5 “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.”

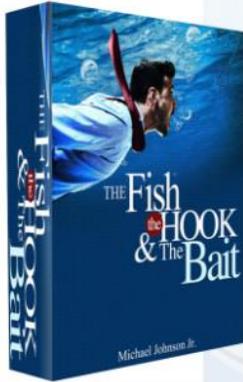
The true difficulty is not in a lack of ability, but in the lack of submission. Walking this Christian walk is difficult because all we know to do is walk in the flesh. But those who walk in the flesh set their mind on the things of the flesh, but those who can commit to set their minds on the spirit will be able to resist the enemy and walk in accordance to the spirit.

The challenge is creating an intentional mindset that desires to set your affections on the Lord and your spiritual maturity. Rom. 8:5 to set your mind on things of the spirit means to direct one's mind to a thing, to seek, to strive for to seek one's interest.

Are you directing your mind to follow the Lord? Are seeking after the God who sought after you? This has to be apparent in everyday of your life until it not only becomes routine but it becomes apart of the fiber of your very being.

As you commit to set your mind on the spirit you'll notice you'll think more and more like Christ and less and less on the flesh. Commit to follow this perspective and you'll be well on your way to being conformed to the image of His Son.

Break the pattern of predetermined failure and commit to set your mind on the Lord. Acknowledge Him in your choices and decisions, then what seems difficult to you will be doable because of Him.



9. How do I win the battle over self by myself?

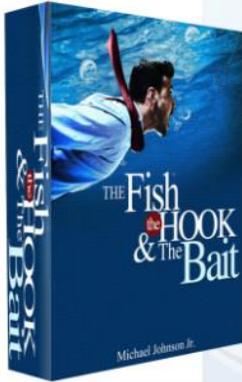
Romans 7: 15,18,19 *“For I do not know what I am doing. For I do not practice what I desire to do; but what I hate, that I do.... For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing. For desire is present with me, but to do that which is good is not. For the good which I desire, I do not do; but the evil which I do not desire, that I practice.”*

You can't! You cannot win this battle over self by yourself. You are your worst enemy; which means you need intervention. Some outside force needs to intervene between you and the self-imprisonment. This why the Lord sent His Holy Spirit to be a helper to intervene between you and the conflict within you.

Let's make this more tangible. After the Lord ascended he sent the Holy Spirit to be your advocate, your guide and your helper. But what helps you to keep your mind on God's ability in your life is the accountability you submit to. Matt. 18:20 *“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.”* There is power in numbers. Whether the issue is with your brother or yourself, anything is possible when believers come together on one accord.

When a room needs to be secured and protected you will often times notice a security guard or a security camera in place. There are some rooms that require more than one security camera to cover the entire room. The larger the room, the more angles are needed to securely cover the room. You can only see your life from one angle, so you need other people in your life to help you see your life from multiple angles. So find healthy partners you can be willing to confess your faults to, and have them help you secure your flesh man as you strive to please God in all you do.

Stop fighting the war by yourself. You need the accountability of both the Holy Spirit and someone you trust in order to win the battle over self.



10. If the Lord allows suffering, what do I do to prepare for the allowed suffering?

Rom 8:18 *“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which will be revealed toward us.”*

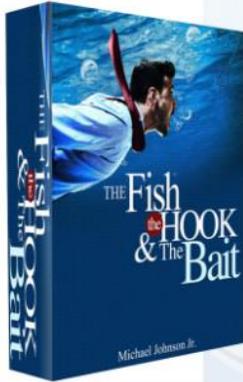
What do you do when you know it's going to rain? You get prepared for it right? You wear a jacket and bring an umbrella. When you know something is coming, you have to get prepared for it.

When on a plane and the pilot warns the passengers we're running into turbulent skies each seat is designed to hold the passenger in place. While you are at that altitude you cannot run from the turbulence, you just have to buckle in and endure the turbulence. How do you prepare for allowed suffering (Turbulence)? 1. Open your ears. 2. Follow Instructions. 3. Buckle up. 4. Brace for Impact.

The encouragement God's word brings is that the sufferings of the temporary present time aren't even worthy enough to compare to the Glory which will be revealed in you. Troubles won't last always. Yes weeping may endure for a night but joy is coming in the morning.

I wish I can say that all suffering is avoidable, but some suffering is necessary for lessons to be learned. But God will you to be tempted, tested or tried beyond what you can bear. So be encouraged, endure the ride and you'll come out stronger than the way you came in.

- 1. Open your ears to listen for instructions.**
- 2. Commit to obey and follow instructions.**
- 3. Buckle up and ensure yourself for survival of what is to come.**
- 4. Brace for impact. This won't kill you, it will soon pass.**



11. How do I deal with the negative seeds planted by others close to me? What do you do when dealing with peer pressure from those who are closest to you?

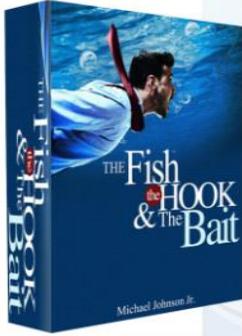
Matt. 16:23 “But Jesus turned, and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of men.””

It's painful to have to deal with those close to you as your greatest opposition. What happens when friend becomes a title for a wolf in sheep's clothing? It hurts, but everyone in your life God allowed them that access. **There are some relationships and friendships God allows for life lessons to be taught, other toxic connections God creates separations. But every connection good are bad is still working for your good.**

Jesus' close friend Simon Peter found himself as the adversary used by Satan to try to deter Jesus from His overall mission. But Jesus didn't sway, instead for this brief moment He severed ties from Peter identifying that anyone who tries to pull you away from your destiny is a direct enemy of God. Uproot those seeds as quickly as possible.

Don't let them fester. Time is against you when dealing with poisonous seeds in your garden. They work quick, which means you have to be quicker. If your connections are more of a distraction than those who draw you to stay focus, you may need to consider readjusting their level of influence in your life.

Identify every connection you make has a purpose, but be wise as a serpent yet innocent as a dove. Never allow your back to be your Achilles heel. Be prepared for both those qualified to restore you to health and those who only inflict and afflict your health.



12. How do I submit to the Holy Spirit to make me strong when I am weak?

Luke 9:2 *“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.”*

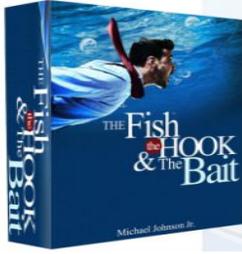
Submission requires letting go of self. This includes being vulnerable, transparent, being penetrable. Submitting to the Holy Spirit is more than just listening to the Holy Spirit but yielding to the direction of the Holy Spirit. Wherever He tells you to go, go. Where ever he tells you to move, move. Whatever he tells you say, say. **Submission requires letting go.**

When a parent says to their child to wash the dishes, obedience is not when they say, “yes sir.” “Yes ma’am”. **Accurate obedience requires corresponding action.** Obedience requires you playing out your confession. This is where submission comes in, where you actions are in line with the orders given to you even when you don’t want to do it. Have you been found guilty of saying, “Yes Sir” to God but you’re guilty of doing the opposite of what you just said you would do? I’m guilty too. This is one of the challenges with submission.

Consider the above script. Out of the mouth of Jesus He says if anyone wants me, he has to first deny himself. Subject one self, to forget one self, lose sight of one self and your own interests.

To submit to the Holy Spirit requires you putting God s will before your own. Keep him in your front mirror and rear view mirror and deny the distractions created in your gleeful desires.

Deny the demands of self and make the Lord the priority.



13. How do I walk in the Spirit?

Gal 5:16 *“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”*

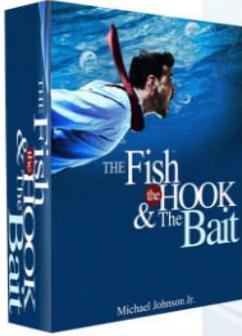
When I’m going for a walk with someone, you know we are walking together by a few responses. The company I’m with you’ll know by the pace we walk. You’ll also know by the interaction between us. During our walk we’re talking with one another or motivating one another to keep moving. You’ll also know by the stretching. When it’s time to take a break and stretch, we do it together. When you are walking with someone you are synchronized to match one another to the degree you begin to resemble each other.

Do the people in your life know you are grouped together with the Lord? Are you walking the same pace with the Lord? Do you interact with Him during your walk? Are you stretching together? Is there a harmonious connection with you and the Holy Spirit?

In order to walk in the Spirit, not only do you need to be in the spirit, but you have to be aware of the pace you agree on. Before walking with someone we agree on a strategy. Maybe we’ll start with a brisk walk and then pick up along the way. Whatever strategy we adopt, we have to agree on. The challenge with walking in the spirit, the Lord knows what pace He is walking, but you have to commit to follow His pattern if you want to walk in the spirit. The challenge is submitting to His system in the pace of the walk.

This has been the greatest conflict, where we are unhappy what pace the Lord is walking and so we end up doing our own thing and neglect who we’re supposed to be walking with. But the amazing thing about the Lord is that even when we’re not on the same page with The Spirit of God He always appeals to the desire to reconnect with Him.

There is never a time God doesn't want to walk with you, but do you really want to walk with him? Follow the walking pattern of God. Stay on the same pace. Walk in the same direction. Increase unity and harmony with conversation. Synchronize with the Spirit by communing with him. This is walking in the Spirit.



14. I've been guilty of living a double life. How do I stop it?

Jas 1:8 *“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”*

A Double minded man is unstable in all his ways. No doubt you embrace the instability living a double life produces. But consider the factors why it's difficult to change? Normally because there is an anchor dropped in one life that impacts your ability to leave the other life.

For some leaving a job is hard because of the anchor of money. For some leaving an unhealthy relationship is anchored by the memories or responsibilities they share. **What anchor has been dropped where you feel like you can't leave your other life?**

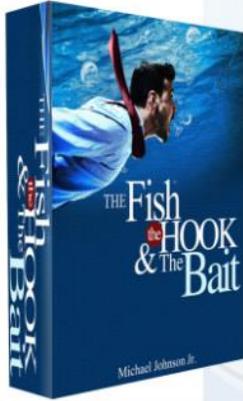
1 Corinthians 5:17 Paul says for anyone in Christ He is a new creation. Which means you have to understand your other life doesn't have to pick up the anchor, you may just have to learn to leave your old one behind. If you're in Christ the way you used to talk changes, the way you used to live changes. **Leave the other anchor behind, that's not you anyways.**

Easier said than done? I know, especially when you have patterned your life in accordance to your old way of living.

Carrie Underwood once wrote a song called, “Jesus take the wheel”. The chorus says, “Jesus take the wheel, take it from my hands, cause I can't do this on my own, I'm letting go. So give me one more chance, save me from this road I'm on, Oh, Jesus take the wheel.”

I bet that's where you need to be when challenged with a double mind. You need Jesus to take the wheel. The Lord can help you change your ways, but you have to be willing to let go of the old and consider living the new life in Christ.

Jesus take the Wheel.



15. How do I keep the guilt and shame of my past from impacting how I feel about myself? Even though Jesus forgave me, is He still mad at me?

Romans 8:1 *“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in union with Christ Jesus.”*

Here is where the anchor plays in your favor. You must learn to drop your anchor in the hope of His calling in your life.

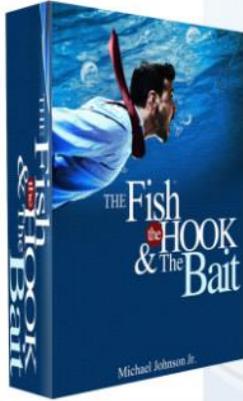
Countless people in the bible were called even when they felt like they were disqualified. But God doesn't call the qualified He qualifies the called. His callings are without repentance because He knows what you're meant to be, not what you look like right now.

The above scripture makes a reference that the gospel of Jesus Christ does not condemn you to who you were but instead grants a pardon because of who you are in Christ. The shame and guilt you feel after salvation is a lie created by the enemy to draw you to your old ways as if you are still a prisoner in bondage. But the truth of the matter is who the Son sets free, is Free Indeed!

So your motivation when faced with guilt and shame, is to remember who you were, that is not who you are any more. God designed you to be better than that.

So pick yourself up, dust yourself off and strive for the purpose God has for your life. Guilt and shame are like quick sand, don't stay there too long or you will drown. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus!

Drop your anchor in the hope of his calling not in the weight of sins already forgiven. You have been freed from your past declared innocent. So walk in your freedom and be Liberated.



16. I'm losing hope, how do I keep hope alive?

Romans 8:24-25 *“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, what does he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”*

It's understandable to go through and to seemingly lose hope. Sometimes life gets overwhelming and it's hard to stay strong. Have you been in the place where it seems like all hope is lost?

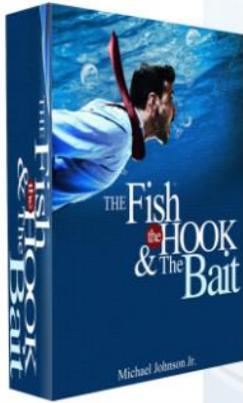
Hope thrives on what is unseen. When someone makes a promise to you, expectation is not that you have what they promised but instead their word is reliable enough for you to believe it's coming.

Is the word God promises to you reliable? If it is, you keep your hope alive in the fact that God comes through on His promises. So your expectation has to live not in how long it takes to see the promises of God but instead you know God's word is reliable.

Manage your anxiety, fear and doubt by trusting in the Lord, leaning not to your own understanding but learning to acknowledge God in everything believing He's got you on His mind.

Hope in His reliability, when you lose hope in His timing. Even when your hope wants breathe its last breath, resuscitate it by reminding your hope, God can do anything but fail. Keep hope alive.

It is better trust the Lord than to put confidence in man. It's best to never establish your hope in who and what you see. For the things seen are temporary but the things that are unseen are eternal. Anchor your hope on what is eternal, the unseen



17. Are faith and belief the same thing?

Hebrews 11:1 *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”*

Most believe it is. This is just my opinion but I believe they're related but separate.

The anatomy of faith is understood to be the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Pure belief is only the conviction of things hoped for.

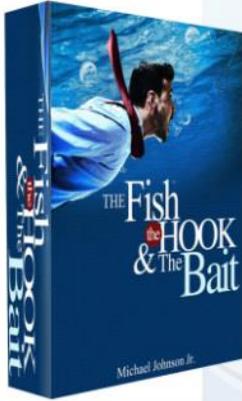
When you believe in something there is a stirring of truth and hope. To believe is to have conviction. Mark 9:24 The father who brought his son to Jesus was faced with a conflict in his faith. He confessed, “I believe but help my unbelief.” He was saying, I am convicted with the idea of truth, but persuade me with the truth you present.

When the bible says **2 Cor. 5:7** *“for we walk by faith not by sight”*, it's not saying walk by conviction or belief only. **No faith is corresponding your actions in line with God's ability.**

Your convictions of truth should drive you to align your daily actions with God's ability. **That's true faith, when your everyday actions are a result of an unseen conviction that the things that are impossible with men, are possible with the Lord.**

So you have to learn to convince yourself not to merely live with conviction, but walk in that conviction. That is walking by faith. **There will be times in your life as a believer where God tests your faith to check if you truly believe He can do what you confess He can do. This may require you walking blindly without the assurance of tomorrow relying on hope that the Lord can see you through anything.**

Do not merely believe, but walk by faith in Faith.



18. How do I discern between the tools used to build my faith vs. the weapons used to bring me to my fate?

2 Cor. 10:4 “for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but might through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ:”

Tools vs. Weapons. Tools are used for maintenance, to build, to fortify, to establish, to strengthen. Weapons are used for defense, for destruction. One set is used to build, fortify and establish while the other is used to destroy and tear down.

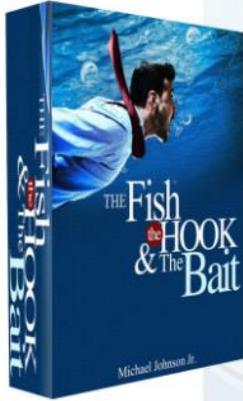
The Lord is not trying to kill you, He is trying to build you while the devil is not trying to strengthen you, he’s trying to weaken you to the point of death.

You will understand the difference between a tool and a weapon not by how it looks but by how it is used.

A hammer on a piece of wood is a tool; a hammer smashing in someone's skull is a weapon. Same object different uses, different identity. Everyone is given an arsenal of both weapons and tools. Your responsibility is to discern not what tools or weapons are being used but how the tools and weapons are being used.

In the above scripture spiritual weapons are meant to be used to pull down strongholds for the benefit of spiritual victory. Do you know anyone who has used a spiritual tool as a weapon against you? Some people misconstrue scripture to manipulate you to follow their agenda. Some people use the Lord’s name in vain for personal exaltation and you become the victim being drawn to your fate because a spiritual tool was used as a weapon against you.

Don’t worry about what tools are being used but how they are being used against you. Manage your response based on the use of the tools.



19. What do I do when I find myself at the wrong place at the wrong time?

Genesis 39:12 “She caught him by his garment saying, “Lie with me!” He left his garment in her hand, and ran outside.”

First off let me ask what has been your pattern when found in the wrong place at the wrong time? Have you been known to entertain the moment? Do you linger around when found in the wrong place?

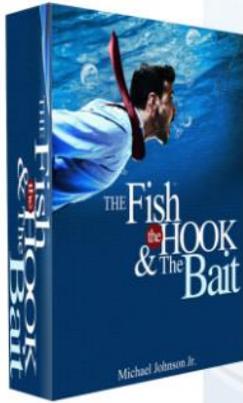
The major issue of being in the wrong place at the wrong time is that it produces the wrong state of mind. Consider the above scripture when Joseph was found in the wrong place at the wrong time he didn't entertain the moment, he fled.

But let say we go to 2 Samuel 11 King David during the time when kings were supposed to be at war, he was hanging around on top of his roof being a peeping tom lusting after a woman bathing herself.

One protected his integrity which led him to the Purpose of God, while the other received a harsh judgment following with consequences for being in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong state of mind.

In the heat of the moment you cannot and should not try to rationalize the situation. You're in a place you should not be. Find the next exit and make your escape. You being able to use your exit strategy may be the defining factor between life and death. Do not entertain being in the wrong place, use wisdom and get out of there.

Run!



20. What is the key to resisting the enemy?

James 4:7 *“Be subject therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”*

Resist: Counteract, recognize, defend, conquer.

Counteract: to act in opposition to; frustrate by contrary action.

Recognize: to identify as something or someone previously seen, known, etc

Defend: to ward off attack from; guard against assault or injury (usually followed by from or against).

Conquer: to acquire by force of arms; win in war. To overcome by force.

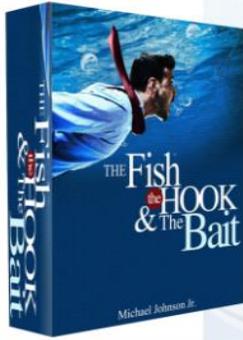
Am I suggesting that counteraction requires all these definitions in order to resist the enemy? No.

But I would urge you to consider knowing which form of counteraction your situation calls for. In some scenarios your responsibility is to recognize (identify) what form of opposition you're dealing with.

Some scenarios require you to defend yourself which may require bracing for impact or using the advice prior given, run away.

Some scenarios you may not be able to run from and they require you to show yourself to be stronger than the opposition. But be encouraged God has not given us the Spirit of fear, but of power love and a sound mind.

Counteract, Recognize, Defend, and Conquer. This should be your perspective. Use wisdom, sometimes you need to approach life with a hammer in one hand with your sword in the other.



21. How do I find accountability?

James 5:16 *"Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."*

Having an accountability partner can be the factor that determines your freedom from the bondage of self-inflicted sins. But who can you trust that won't be a stumbling block?

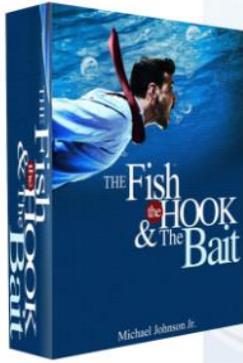
An accountability partner should be one who is trustworthy, honest, transparent, and committed to your freedom.

Unbiased when it comes to your struggle. Everyone in your life cannot take the roll of an accountability partner. Why would you entrust a drunk with your accountability for sobriety? Why entrust a drug addict with your accountability to stay clean. Your accountability may have their own struggles but make sure it's a different face. Can you confide in your accountability secrets they won't hold over your head? Are they available to you? Are they someone you can confide to?

Consider the above scripture. You should be accountable with someone you can confess who will pray for you that you may be healed. An accountability partner is not after you feeling better, an accountability partner is after you being better. One who can get a prayer through on your behalf. Someone who doesn't have all the answers but are willing to help you navigate to God's word or outside support for solutions.

Some accountability may just require a good listening ear. There are somethings God can free you from through your confession without the response of your partner. But are they passionate about you being made whole?

Accountability is necessary. Choose wisely, make no excuses why not to have one. Pray the Lord sends you the support you need to be made whole.



22. How do I identify my rerun episodes?

1 Corinthians 13:11 “*When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child. Now that I have become a man, I have put away childish things.*”

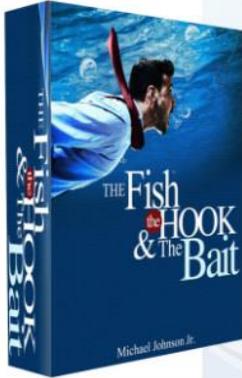
There plenty of differences we find between a child and an adult. But one major difference is found in how they respond to certain instances. Have you ever met someone who was mature in age, but not mature in responsibility? Age really is nothing but a number. Unfortunately age no longer is the defining factor of maturity.

Consider the above scripture. When I was child I responded as a child, but when I became a man, what I did I as a child I put away. Identifying your re run episodes is learning to document past experiences trying to replay in your life. In your maturity you need to consider have I been here before? What am I known to do in these situations?

When watching a TV show you first notice the characters, then the setting, then you attentively listen to the conversation. If all these factors strike a chord that you once heard before then it's probably a re-run episode. Now in your life some characters change; some settings change even the dialogue may be different, but if it strikes the same chord as before then this should be an indication to use wisdom.

Also you must consider that identifying re runs may require you relying and trusting people who will tell you the truth about you. I notice you often do this, Why are you going back there? Why are you still with them?

Document in your mind how you react and respond. Watch for re occurring characters, settings and dialogue. If you feel like you've been there before then respond differently, because most likely you know where this road leads.



23. How do I break the desire to relive past experiences?

Philippians 3:13 *“Brothers, I do not regard myself as yet having taken hold, but one thing I do Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forward to the things which are ahead.”*

Your desire for spiritual maturity must transcend beyond your desire for fleshful gratification. 5 minutes is not comparable to a life time of pain. Manage your desire, and manage your ability to resist submitting to the craving in your carnal man.

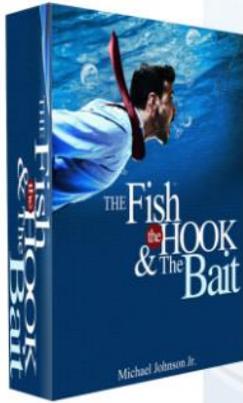
It's one thing to deal with breaking repetitive cycles it's another thing to break the desire tied to the cycle. There are some invisible attachments that you have to the past experience and these invisible attachments padlocks you to your past.

What are you still holding on to that connects you to the past? If you are planning on moving on from a bad break up from a relationship that lasted more than 5 years than most likely it is a requirement to get rid of everything that reminds you of them. Pictures, music, stuffed animals. As long as there is a marker with your past tattooed to it, you will have a near impossible time moving forward completely.

You have to learn to let go of what was, recognize what isn't anymore, consider what can be, should be, what will be and keep moving forward.

I understand letting go can be one of the hardest things to do but the desire to relive past experiences require you replacing the markers tied to your past experiences. It's time to replace the old markers in your life that give you a glimpse of different way you live your life.

Let go of the past markers.



24. I'm in church, but I still have fleshful cravings. What's wrong with me?

Rom. 12:2 *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what is the good, well pleasing, and perfect will of God.”*

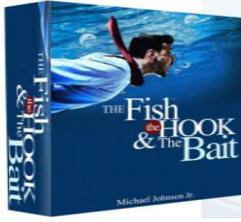
I often share the reality is even though we have been saved spiritually by putting our faith in Jesus Christ we do not go through any amnesia periods. Spiritually we are saved but the above scriptures let's us know we need to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. It is the by the ongoing washing with God's word we are transformed.

The cravings will continue because we are in the flesh. David said it like this **Psalms 51:5** *“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity. In sin my mother conceived me.”* This is the curse we are all plagued with due to the disobedience of Adam and Eve. So there requires a reformatting in the way we think in order to sever the tie to our fleshful man.

Nothing is wrong with you. There are tendencies in us to fulfill the gratifications of the flesh. This is why the Lord sent the Holy Spirit to help sever the ties between flesh and spirit.

Your responsibility is do the above scripture, be not conformed to this world. Do not fashion yourself in accordance to this world, to your negative surroundings. Do not outline your thoughts to resemble the destructive nature your exposed to. Be transformed by the reformatting of they way you think resulting in how you live.

Reformat the way you think by following the Word of God.



25. Look, Linger, Lust, Lose. How do I apply this in my life?

Matt. 5:27 *“You have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery; but I tell you that everyone who gazes at a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if your right eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away from you. For it is more profitable for you that one of your members should perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”*

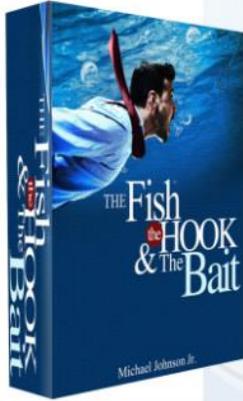
This is a real challenge for many of us. In a society where we are bombarded by sensual stimuli it can be very difficult to manage our lives accurately trying to keep from being caught in the web of lust. Whether it's money, ego or the popular sexual tendencies that lead to fornication and immorality; our society is consumed by it all.

But we are not of this world; also we serve a risen savior who overcame the world. The issue is not freedom but **LIBERATION**.

Is it wrong to look? Personally, I don't believe the problem is in the look. You have to look where you are going. You should give eye contact with those you have a conversation with. The challenge isn't in the look, the challenge is in the next stage, the linger. When your look moves to a linger, then we're on dangerous territory. Whether it's lingering on an actual person, a magazine spread or a computer screen, when you linger it always leads to dealing with the seeds of lust leading to the loss in control.

So what do we do? We have to implement strategy for your everyday life. I challenge you to Slow down your life and recognize the moment. **Look:** I see someone that looks attractive. **Linger:** Normally I take a second look. This look is a little bit longer then the last one. **Lust:** Something is being developed in me as I continue to linger. It's no longer just looking at them, but now there begins to develop a strong desire for them or for what they have. **Lose:** I manipulate my surroundings to get what I want. You follow them, you find out where they are going and you feed into the flesh craving.

Yours may not play out exactly like this but similar. You have to catch the linger before it leads to lust. Tell yourself, “Look, but don't linger”. Manage your eye gate. Then you'll get ahold of the challenge with lust taking hold of your heart.



26. Lean not to my own understanding, how do I do that?

Prov. 3:5-7 *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.”*

Let’s deal with the problem first. **Prov. 16:2** *“All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weighs the motives.”* **Prov. 21:2** *“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weighs the hearts.”* **Prov. 30:12** *“There is a generation that is pure in their own eyes, yet are not washed from their filthiness.”*

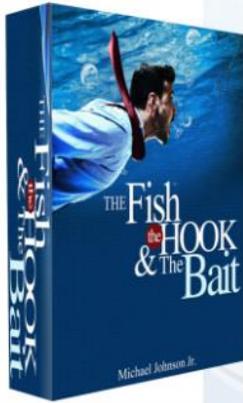
So here lies the problem, we always think that we know what is best for us. We consider our actions are without flaws and never take the time to consider that maybe we are blinded by our own ego we never acknowledge the need for help.

If you desire to trust in the Lord with all your heart not depending on what you think is right, then you cannot have the last say so. I challenge you to learn to depend on the word of God being the defining factor to what is right and wrong.

Ps. 119:105 says, *“Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path.”*

The psalmist confesses that The word of God is a light when your path way seems dark. While you often rely on memory on how the trail looks, and you rely on feeling your way around trying to use instincts that are blinded by conditions, the word of God shines bright the pathway you need to take in order to find your way in life.

Do not tolerate nor suppress what is wrong to make it look right, instead embrace the fear of the lord being the beginning of knowledge. Depend on his wisdom and His Word to bring understanding and clarity in times of confusion.



27. How do I get my authority back?

Romans 8:37 “No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus who loved us.”

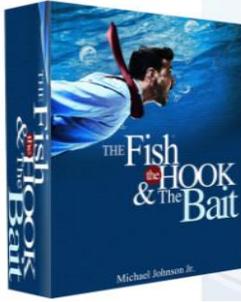
Do you know who you are when you are in Christ? You are more than a conqueror. First step to getting your authority back is to be found in Christ Jesus. That’s where your power comes from. **Salvation is not an option, it’s a necessity.** Making Jesus the Lord of your life takes you out of the place of being conquered to becoming more than a conqueror.

When you recognize the exchange of power when you are in Christ you now have to reformat the way you think about your opponent.

Luke 10:19 Jesus said, “Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

Whatever opposition is thrown at you is under your feet. And because in Christ Jesus you can tread on every destructive force and it will not harm you. Your opponent is a defeated foe; don’t allow him to manipulate you to think you are still under his control.

You have been declared a conqueror. Don’t allow the condemnation of yesterday to rule you today.



28. How do I discern the difference between good things vs. God things?

1 Cor. 6:12 “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”

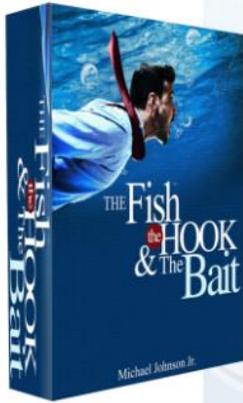
The Life Application Study bible commentary suggests regarding this scripture, “Some actions are not sinful in themselves, but they are not appropriate because they can control our lives and lead us away from God.”

How many times have you been distracted by a good thing that resulted in producing consequences later on down the line? We run into good things regarding relationships, job opportunities, car dealerships and even business opportunities. We are surrounded by a lot of good things. But you have to consider all good things do not lead you to the right places. Some good things are temporary distractions that can lead you to where you find yourself being compromised to a place of eventual destruction.

I am sure you are tired of being distracted by the good things and now you are looking for the God things in life. You see, recognizing the God things require you looking at life through a different set of lenses. There some people who suffer from Near Sightedness or Far sightedness. They have a conflict with making things out in close proximity or from a distance. But when they put on a pair of corrective lenses, they are able to see clearly what was already in front of them.

Prayer can cause the Lord to help correct your vision and get you see life the way He sees it. Before you decide to go left, put your spiritual glasses on and pray about it. Before engaging in a lasting relationship, put your spiritual glasses on and pray about it. Before accepting the job, before driving the car I would suggest in order to enhance your discernment you may need to exchange your vision for God’s vision. With His vision, He’ll be able to show you that some things are lawful to you but not all things are expedient.

Be anxious for nothing, pray about it. Let the Lord give you a pair of spiritual glasses to discern the difference between the distractions from the things God intends for you to have.



29. How do I get free from the hook in my mouth?

John 8:36 *“So if the son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”*

The reality of getting free from the hook in your mouth cannot be done by your own effort. You’re in need of another fisherman catching you with the intentions of freeing you then setting you back in the water. That’s exactly what the Lord does. He catches you only to free you from the hook and set you back in the water.

But how do we keep from ending up back on another hook?

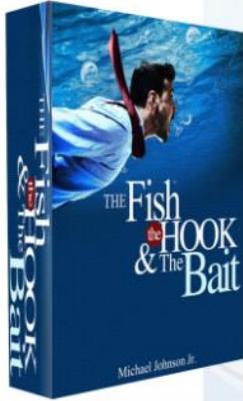
Well, how did you end up on the hook in the first place? Have you been caught by a hook or that before? If so then you need to identify what unhealthy patterns you play out. When you start seeing some common mistakes then you need to commit to change your circumstances and set up a strategy to stay away from those waters. Maybe you need to stop swimming in the shallow waters and go to where fishermen don’t normally fish.

Stay away from the popular hangout spots. Just because you see a school of fish swimming in the same area doesn’t mean that should be your reoccurring place to chill. How many fish do you know who swim around with hooks in their mouths? Learn from their mistakes.

Initially the challenge of freedom requires you be willing to get caught. Don’t treat the Lord like you would people. **Ps. 118:8** *“It is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man/put confidence in man.”*

People have the tendency to let you down, and are not authorized with ability to free you. But there is a savior who is called the fisher of men. Whose number one aim is to free the fish who have lived their lives on the end of someone’s hook

Submit and be willing to be caught by the Lord. Follow His instructions allow Him to pull the hook out of your mouth. Even though scars are left, we overcome by our testimony. The Lord can free anyone who is willing to get caught.



30. How do I keep from ending up on someone else's hook?

1 Timothy 6:20 “Timothy, guard that which is committed to you, turning away from the empty chatter and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called;”

2 Timothy 1:14 “That good thing which was committed to you, guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in you.”

The apostle Paul says to his son in ministry Timothy to guard what has been entrusted in his care. This word guard means to keep watch of, have an eye upon, remain safe from, to protect from a person or thing, to keep from being lost.

Freedom is a free gift given to those who belong to the Lord. But you must guard the free gift otherwise a slave master will take you right back to the prison you've been freed from.

You are a fish on the run and the enemy will stop at nothing to catch you again. Just like an actual fisherman who beats himself up for losing a fish that got away, the enemy feels the same way when he loses you through his fingers. So while you are free don't allow what God gave you to be snatched away because of a bad decision or poor choice.

Guard your freedom like your life depends on it. Guard your salvation like your life depends on it. Guard your heart from being defiled by the influences you flesh produces. Your testimony should be that you are a fish that was freed from the grips of death so you can be an advocate of life. A fish with a story to other fish that what God has done for you, he can do in others.

So from one fish to another, live to fight another day and stay away from the hook that the Lord freed you from. Guard the freedom and salvation God has given you and be free to live in victory!

The Fish The Hook & The Bait

About Michael Johnson Jr.

With over 15+ years' experience as a Youth & Young Adult Speaker, Michael has spoken to over 1000+ people, Mentors 50+ youth & young adults and is a reoccurring speaker for youth driven events in the cities of Los Angeles, Inglewood, Long Beach & Moreno Valley. He is driven to charge a Generation to be passionate in their Pursuit for Godly Perfection.

Michael has also successfully sponsored community unified youth events, leadership training seminars, a mentorship program through Long Beach Jordan high school, outreach partnerships, monthly evangelistic efforts, conference call prayer lines as well as a young men's social club purposed to restore character, class and respect to the young men of this generation. He has also authored countless Audio Devotionals.

Michael currently resides in Long Beach, CA and he serves as an associate Minister at THE ROCK CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP under Pastor Gregory Sanders. He is also Married to his lovely wife Jamaica Johnson.



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