

Understanding Father through Suffering and Conditions

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The river was brown. You could not see your bait, or the fish. Many hooks and sinkers were lost in snags. The line was cut by piranha time after time. Most of us had not had much experience fishing, but even among the more experienced there was lots of frustration. Very few of the right kind of fish had been caught in the first weeks. It was an event to have caught a "counter" and the testimony was shared with everybody. But with time and finding our way step by step, catching fish became more commonplace.

For the first two weeks I just threw out my line and waited for the fish to come. But through the "fish testimonies" I realized that this was not just a matter of hooks and bait and strength of line, but it was more internal. The most successful Korean national messiah told us

that we have to first decide which fish we wanted to catch.



My first reaction was incredulity: How could I know which fish was going to bite? I couldn't even see which type of fish was in the water. What did he mean? Later, and with more understanding of what bait the different fish like, which areas they live in and such, I realized he was right. Most especially, however, he stressed the importance of being very focused, that your mind had to be there—on the line, on the hook.

For me personally, the breakthrough came through conversations with Roddy Portelance (national

messiah to Grenada), the workshop leader. He drew many parallels between fundraising and fishing: "Mobilize the spirit world. Challenge them to help and support you to reach your goal." His most useful advice was "When you want to achieve anything you have to invest and lay conditions. If the result doesn't come, you have to set more conditions. Without conditions results will not follow."

This was something like a revelation to me and certainly was what influenced me most in the workshop. It is incredible that only after 27 years in the church did I understand the relationship between investment (indemnity conditions) and outcome. I had so often taught about responsibility, but my "heartistic" understanding and acceptance of this point had been blocked.

This was a breakthrough. I realized that up to then I had not really been serious about anything in my life or in the church. I had done what was expected from me, such as witnessing and fundraising, but not much more. For me it was already hard enough—indemnity enough—to go out fundraising, to go out witnessing. Why should I make additional indemnity conditions on top of that to reach a goal or achieve

certain results? All my life, even before the church, I had had this mental block, or was blocked in my heart. I had not been willing to invest beyond the basic requirements. But this advice inspired me; now I was serious, I wanted to establish indemnity conditions. I decided to skip breakfast and do a hundred and twenty full bows every day.



Only after having fished myself did I understand what level of concentration, seriousness and focus is necessary. I cannot maintain my focus for just twenty-one minutes on a fishing line. I do not know how Father focuses for the whole day and on twelve to eighteen rods simultaneously! For us, the goal was to catch a hundred and sixty fish in forty days. But for Father, each rod represents a nation, or a president. As he cannot reach them substantially, he establishes these indemnity conditions through fishing. He cannot allow himself to be bothered by thirst, by mosquitoes, by the sun.

Through these forty days, I received at least a faint idea of Father's focus and seriousness, which he has maintained not just for forty days but throughout his life.