

Staff Work

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Rhythm of Work and Fishing

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Rhythm of Work and Fishing

Abstract

"When we view pastimes, hobbies, and vacation as escape from work, we are missing the reality that work and play exist together and benefit each other."

Posting about a healthy work-life balance from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/the-rhythm-of-work-and-fishing/>

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Comments

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The Rhythm of Work and Fishing

 [all in allthings.org/the-rhythm-of-work-and-fishing/](http://allthings.org/the-rhythm-of-work-and-fishing/)

July 29,
2016

Adam Adams

One of my earliest memories is standing on the bank of a small pond in Illinois, with a cane pole and worms, catching Bluegill with my father. Stacks of pictures from my childhood show me proudly displaying stringers of bluegill, crappie, bass, and catfish that I caught with my father and grandfather. Riding in either one of their pickup trucks to a friend's pond was a childhood highlight. As I got older, my parents started allowing me to ride my bicycle four miles to a family friend's pond. In the summer, with a tackle box swinging from the handlebars, and fishing poles clasped between my hands, I'd brave the gravel on my BMX for the chance to catch a fish.

Moving into middle school and high school, I continued fishing with Dad. On humid summer nights in Missouri, Dad and I could be found standing chest deep in small ponds fishing for bass in the moonlight. Having a bass explode on a top water lure just feet from your face is a lifelong memory! Even if we didn't catch any fish, we still had a great time, and can share stories to this day of our adventures together.

The challenges of college, followed by a job overseas, kept me from fishing for a number of years. Fortunately, all of my equipment was neatly packed away in my parents' home. In the last few years, I have rediscovered the joy of fishing. As an adult, I have come to realize the following phrase is incorrect "A bad day fishing is better than a good day at work." God has created us for both work and play, and thinking that one is better than the other keeps us from seeing our need for both. Additionally, when we work hard, we are grateful for rest. When we have rested well, we are prepared for work.

I love my job, and can see each day how God has equipped me for my occupation. Putting time and energy into my job is both enjoyable and rewarding. My occupation is challenging, but it is worthwhile work, and I am part of something meaningful. Over weeks and months, the burden of work, even enjoyable work, can wear on a person. Fortunately, vacation time can allow us to refuel and prepare for our time back at work.

When we view pastimes, hobbies, and vacation as escape from work, we are missing the reality that work and play exist together and benefit each other. For me, fishing is not an escape from work, but a transition from one thing God has created me to do, to another thing God has created me to do. Each of these activities are necessary for me to lead a fulfilling life. A bad day fishing is better than a good day at work is simply not true.

When I go fishing, I'm able to focus on practicing very specific skills. This focus helps me to completely disengage from other thoughts in my mind, and truly allows my brain to rest. Tying a knot in fishing line is challenging. Casting is challenging. Properly setting a hook is challenging. Quickly catching and releasing a fish is challenging. From my childhood to today, I have learned how to tie progressively more difficult knots with specific purposes. I can effectively cast multiple kinds of fishing rods, and understand how to catch, handle, and release several species of fish. These skills have no place in a conference room, but they allow me to be more engaged the next time I'm in the conference room.

Fishing allows me to deeply experience creation. Understanding how wind, water temperature, and sunlight influence fish and the foods they eat not only help me to catch more fish, but helps me appreciate the intricate connections within nature. On my last fishing trip, I kayaked 15 miles of Ozark stream with a friend. I noticed I was catching fish in areas where herons were perched in the trees, watching baitfish. To our surprise, we even watched a Bald Eagle harass a heron from a prime observation point. This particular stretch of river was prime habitat.

Fishing with my dad in my childhood gave us a special bond, and allowed Dad to talk to me about all sorts of things. From the time we left the house, until we came home, he had my attention and he used it to prepare me for

adulthood. As an adult, fishing with friends has given me space to talk about my own challenges in life and connect with my own memories from a lifelong pastime. The conversations we have on the river don't fit in a conference room, but they allow us to be more engaged the next time we're in a conference room.

I'm more persistent, and effective at solving problems because of fishing. There are many pieces of fishing equipment that can fail, the weather can be bad, or my own inabilities can create problems to be solved in order to catch fish. It's necessary to focus, troubleshoot, and keep trying in order to catch a fish. Persistence and creative thinking are valuable for me to do my job well, too.

Perhaps the single biggest reason that I enjoy fishing is because of "the one that got away." Standing in the clear waters of the White River in Arkansas, I finally made the connection between the size of fishing line I use, and the quality of my fly casting. I was caught up in the joy of improving a new skill when, *Zzzzzzzzzzzzz!* The line sizzled off my reel as a large trout took my tiny midge! I set the hook, and felt the power of the fish pulling down and across the river. Heart pounding, I fought back and drew the fish closer to me, trying to use every one of my skills to land a large trout on a fly rod. For a moment, I was winning the battle, then the fish charged back down stream and took control again. We went back and forth 3 times...and then the fish was gone, leaving my fly stuck in submerged tree in the river. With my heart both pounding and broken, I knew I would be back to fight this battle again. The one that got away continues to draw me to the river, and provides a few moments of respite in my mind during a tough stretch at work. Whether I'm at work or play, I am grateful for the joy, fulfillment, and connection to God that each activity brings.