

## **Losing Your Favorite Fishing Lure**

(This is a follow-up article to last week's piece, "Just a Little Boy Mowing Yards," which can be read here: <http://www.southportcofc.org/resources/articles/2021/03/30/just-a-little-boy-mowing-yards.>)

After drawing some spiritual lessons gained from mowing yards as a youngster in last week's article, I hinted that this week's companion piece would answer the question as to what I did with the money I made through the effort. So, here goes...

It won't surprise anyone who knows me (even if only through social media!) that I like to fish. I have "fished for men" through preaching and teaching the Bible since I was about sixteen years old, and have done so as a vocation for a little over 35 years. But I've "fished for fish" for considerably longer- most all of my life. So it should come as no surprise that most of my hard-earned "spending money" (the part Mom and Dad didn't insist that I save) was spent on fishing tackle. The old Zebco 202 and beat up rod I drug out of the "service room" didn't suffice long, and several yards later, I bought my very own new and better rod and reel. Though I still used a few old inherited "plugs" (mostly top-water fishing lures, including a felt-covered artificial mouse that I never caught a thing on and seldom used), I begin to also build a collection of my own lures. My tackle box soon came to house a few crankbaits and a lot of blue and purple plastic worms.

A couple of buddies and I sniffed out all of the area farm ponds and gained permission to fish most of them. So, with held tackle box on one side of the handle bar and a fishing rod on the other, we spent practically all available time somewhere "casting a line" for our species of choice: Largemouth Bass. And we usually managed to catch a few as most of these ponds were rarely fished by anyone else.

But that's enough "background"- let's move on to the point. On one such excursion to "wet a line," I wasn't fishing with any of my usual partners (Eddie, Kirk, or Bill), but talked Dad into taking me with him while he did some work at one of the pieces of land owned by my uncle... which, of course, had a pond that I eagerly anticipated trying out. So while he worked, I slipped down through the woods to the water. Though I fished diligently, and probably tried ever lure and bait I had, by late evening when Dad came down to get me, I had caught absolutely nothing. Somewhat embarrassed that an "expert" angler such as myself had to report getting skunked, I quickly tied on my "favorite" lure for just a few more frantic casts in an effort to prove myself by catching one while Dad was watching. Sure enough, on the last cast (for which I had pleaded), it happened... the line sailed over a limb extending out from a dead tree and my "favorite" lure quickly wrapped itself several times before the treble hooks caught firmly. Hot and sweaty, and already deflated from having caught nothing, my efforts to retrieve this "special" lure that I had labored so vigorously to be able to purchase prove vain. I would say "lost," but it actually hung there hopelessly entangled but clearly visible.

As we made our way up the hill through the weeds and woods (Dad walked, I trudged dejectedly), I bemoaned the fact that last cast had caused me to lose my "favorite" lure. Then Dad said something that has stuck with me, obviously, till this day. "Son, you didn't lose the lure because it was your last cast, you lost it because it was your

“favorite.” Though it was of little consolation to me at the time, his point was immediately clear to me. You fish more with your “favorite” lure, so you’re much more likely to lose it than the rest of those that rarely leave the tackle box. Are there spiritual lessons to be learned from this simple truth? There were/are for me...

**Sometimes we lose our “favorite” people simply because we use them more than the rest.** All I mean by “use” in this instance is that we spend more time and interact more with them. Thus, there are more opportunities for misunderstandings, and therefore more opportunities for hurt feelings and dissolved friendships- and we “lose” them. It is true that those closest to us (*i.e.* our “favorites,” as per fishing lures) are typically more tolerant of our short-comings. But there is usually a limit even for them. After discussing the husband/wife relationship and its inherent obligations, 1Pet.3:8-9 concludes, *“To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, kind-hearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.”* Our “favorites” are so to *bless* us. Even though we necessarily have more interactions with them, don’t “bruise” these opportunities. Allow them to continue to *bless* you and remain your “favorite” by taking good, careful, and considerate care of them.

At other times **we lose our “favorite” people because we’re more likely to cast them into difficult spots, fraught with potential danger.** Simply put, we are unfortunately more likely to **abuse** our “favorite” people. Think for a moment: Are you more kind, considerate, and polite to strangers or your spouse? Are you more accommodating to some unknown elderly person, or you own parents or grandparents? Are you more gracious and understanding to someone else’s children than your own? Are you more tolerant and forgiving to people of the world than to your own brethren? Indeed, both the Old and New Testaments enjoin kindness and consideration to *strangers*, but such does not provide license to misuse and abuse those closest to us (either by blood, friendship, or His blood). If we are told to even *“love your enemies”* and *“pray for those who persecute”* us (cf. Matt.5:44), surely such would also be required regarding our “favorites.” There is *“a still more excellent way”* by being *patient, kind, not jealous, not bragging or arrogant, not unbecoming, not seeking your own* (but *their* interests and good), *not being easily provoked, not taking into account a wrong suffered, not rejoicing in unrighteousness but with the truth, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, and enduring all things*, cf. 1Cor.14:31b – 15:7. Such will not allow you to *abuse* your “favorites”!

It’s easy NOT to lose fishing lures you don’t like. Just keep them in the box and never use or abuse them. But it is significantly harder not to lose your “favorite” fishing lures... or people. You really have to be careful, vigilant, use them wisely, and never abuse them. We all have “favorites,” but if we fail to properly cherish and **abuse** them, they’ll probably cease to be in our box... or lives. (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at [southportcofc.org](http://southportcofc.org))