

TEACH A MAN TO

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Ezra stopped paddling his small outrigger canoe and watched the sun sinking toward the Pacific on the other side of the bay. For years he had fished these waters with his father, but today he had trouble seeing the familiar sight through his tears.

Today he was alone.

As the canoe rocked gently on the water, he could hear the words his father had often spoken: “Watch carefully, Ezra. Someday when I am gone you will need to know how to support the family.”

Today was the day his father had warned him about and tried to prepare him for. But it had come too soon. He was only 16. He wasn't ready.

The Responsibility

Ezra idolizes his father. He had waited impatiently for years until his father said that at age seven, Ezra was finally old enough to help him set and check the fishing nets.

Fishing didn't provide a lot of money, but it was enough to feed Ezra, his five sisters, and their mother; support Ezra's oldest sister on her mission in the United States; and help their neighbors. Ezra was even able to begin saving for his own mission.

But now his father was gone. His death was unexpected, and it broke Ezra's heart. Losing his father meant losing his hero, his bishop, his mentor.

But added to the heartache was a terrible realization: the responsibility his father had tried to prepare him for was suddenly his. Ezra would have to support the family now.

The Prayer

He couldn't even consider fishing that first week after his father's passing. His emotions were too raw. The thought of taking his father's canoe, using his father's nets, and doing his father's work without him was unbearable.

By the following week he knew his family needed him to go, but the burden was overwhelming. For as much as Ezra wanted to be like his father, he recognized more than ever just how far he was from achieving that goal.

“I felt like there was no hope,” he says. “I found it difficult the first time to walk in the steps of my father. As I took the canoe out into the sea, I felt his absence. Those words my father had spoken came back to me, and I felt the weight of responsibility for my family.”

Standing in the shallows of the Pacific, he turned to the only Person who could help him—the One his father had taught him to trust.

“Show me where my father stood,” Ezra prayed. “Help me fulfill my father's wish for me.”

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADAM C. OLSON, EXCEPT AS NOTED

FISH

When he needed help, Ezra, a 16-year-old in Samoa, turned where his father had taught him: to his Heavenly Father.

Ezra and his friend Fetu return in an outrigger canoe from pulling in their nets.

The Answer

In the early evening silence after that prayer, Ezra felt something change. He felt led to his father's fishing spot, and the things his father had taught him came to mind when needed.

"After that prayer, I felt extra strength," he says. "I knew Heavenly Father would help me."

Just as the Savior showed His ancient Apostles where to cast their nets, Ezra received help too. "I caught a lot of fish that day," he says.

Like Father, Like Son

Though he had doubted he could do what his father did, Ezra learned that he could do more than he thought.

"It's been a big change in my life—the way I think, see things, and do things," Ezra says. "I realized I can do what my father did."

Ezra has become more like his father than he believed he could. He has followed in his father's footsteps as a fisherman—and as a teacher.

The second week Ezra went fishing, his friend Fetu asked if he could come along and learn. Ezra has taught Fetu how to fish, and Fetu has helped Ezra with his work and kept him company.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to teach others as my father taught me," says Ezra. "It makes me happy to know I am not only a fisherman like my father but also a teacher."

Teach a Man to Fish

The saying goes that if you give a man a fish, you have fed him for a day, but if you teach him to fish, you have fed him for a



Ezra plans to serve a mission. He remembers that Heavenly Father answered him when he called. "I want to be able to answer Him when He calls me," Ezra says.



Having to take over his father's role as provider, Ezra says, "I found it difficult the first time to walk in the steps of my father."

lifetime. Ezra's father certainly did the second.

However, Ezra learned much more from his father than how to fish. He learned that he could rely on his Heavenly Father. This knowledge will serve him throughout his life even better than his ability to fish.

Knowing how much he needs his Heavenly Father's help, Ezra is careful to worthily fulfill his responsibilities as a priest, the office to which his father ordained him the week before he died. He also schedules his fishing so that it doesn't conflict with school and seminary.

What's more, he is saving what money he can from fishing so that one day he can be a fisher of men (see Matthew 4:19).

"During one family home evening, my father expressed his desire that we all serve missions," Ezra says. "That is my utmost goal."

Ezra remembers that the Lord answered him when he called. "I want to be able to answer *Him* when He calls *me*." **NE**