

# Reflections on the River

## Week 28 - Before the First Cast

### Scripture - Psalm 46:10

*“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”*

*“The wisest anglers often make their first observation long before their first cast.”*

Arriving at a favorite trout stream stirs a familiar excitement. The sound of moving water, the cool morning air, and the hope of rising fish tempt us to string the rod, tie on a fly, and begin casting immediately. Yet seasoned anglers often do something surprising—they wait.

They stand quietly along the bank and simply watch. They notice how the current bends around a boulder, where foam lines drift, and whether mayflies or caddis are on the water. A trout rises beneath an overhanging willow. Another subtle swirl appears along the far seam. Without making a single cast, the river begins revealing its story.

Those few minutes of observation often determine the entire day. A hurried angler sees only water. A patient angler begins to understand the river.

God frequently invites us into that same posture. Through the psalmist He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God.' Stillness is not inactivity or wasted time. It is an act of trust. It is choosing to quiet our own plans long enough to recognize that God is already at work.

Our lives are often lived at a frantic pace. We rush into conversations, decisions, and responsibilities with little pause for prayer. Then we wonder why we struggle to discern God's direction. Like the angler who casts before reading the water, we sometimes create unnecessary frustration simply because we failed to observe before acting.

Jesus Himself regularly withdrew to quiet places to pray. Before choosing the twelve disciples, before facing the cross, and throughout His ministry, He sought His Father's presence. If the Son of God valued stillness, how much more should we?

Some of the sweetest moments beside a river have nothing to do with catching trout. A kingfisher darts downstream. An osprey circles overhead. Morning mist slowly lifts from the water. A spider's web glistens with dew between two willows. These gifts are often noticed only by those willing to linger.

Perhaps that is one reason God calls us to be still. In quietness we begin to recognize His fingerprints everywhere—in Scripture, in creation, and in the ordinary moments we usually rush past.

The next time you step into a river, resist the urge to make the first cast immediately. Spend a few minutes listening instead. You may discover that before God teaches you where to cast your fly, He first wants to teach you where to rest your heart.

### **Reflection**

- Where has busyness made it difficult for you to hear God's voice?
- What would it look like to practice stillness before making an important decision?
- What has God been trying to show you that you may have been moving too quickly to notice?

### **Naturalist's Note**

Experienced fly anglers often spend several minutes observing a stream before fishing. Watching insect activity, current seams, light conditions, and trout behavior usually leads to better fly selection and presentation—and often a far more enjoyable day on the water.

### **Prayer**

Heavenly Father, quiet my hurried heart. Teach me to listen before I speak, to observe before I act, and to seek Your presence before I pursue my own plans. Help me recognize Your voice in Your Word and Your handiwork in creation. Amen.

### **On the Water This Week**

Before your first cast, spend five uninterrupted minutes simply watching the river. Offer no requests—only thanks. Ask God to help you notice one truth about His character that you might otherwise have overlooked.