

## Qualities God looks for in people He uses: Part 1

Adapted from QUALITIES GOD LOOKS FOR IN PEOPLE HE CAN USE by Pastor Rick Warren

### Introduction

Over the next 3 weeks, we will be studying the qualities God looks for in people He can use. It might seem so difficult but in fact, it begins with our desire to be used for His glory. Today we will look at 2 of those qualities namely: Holiness and Surrender.

### Discussion

#### 1. HOLINESS : GOD IS LOOKING FOR HOLY PEOPLE.

*Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy (Lev19:2, 1 Thess 4: 7. 1 Pet. 1:16 KJV)*

As Christians we are called to be set apart. Jesus says that even while we are to be in this world, we are not of this world. How does this statement apply to your own life? We can still live in the world and yet set ourselves apart from the worldly values! Joseph, Daniel and Jesus showed us how we could lead a holy life despite the worldliness around them. They did not fall into the temptations or threats leveled at them.

It is a challenge to live a holy live before God but as we depend upon Him, His grace is sufficient for us. With God nothing is impossible. It is a struggle with our fleshly desires but as we tune our hearts and mind to God, He will guide us through. God cannot work within us if we don't yield to Him. That is why we are called to love our God with all our hearts, all of our soul and all of our minds (Matt 22:37).

When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you want to be holy. That's the major difference. You desire to be holy. You want to be like Christ. What does it mean to be holy? Psalm 24:3-4 *"Who may ascend to the hill of the Lord and who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart who does not lift up his soul unto an idol nor swear by what is false. He will receive the blessing from the Lord and vindication from God his savior."* To be holy there are four things we need to take note of:

- a. **You've got to have clean hands.** Clean hands simply mean a clear conscious. The starting point to living a holy life is we must live a cleansed life. Does that mean perfect? No, because none of us are perfect. What it means is to keep short accounts with God. *"If we confess our sins He's faithful and just to forgive us and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* So when I sin, I just say, "God, I was wrong. I confess it." I keep short accounts with God, clean hands, a clear conscious. There is no power without a clear conscious. I saw a sign at a gas station that said, "A clean engine produces more power." That's true in your life too. So we must have clean hands.
- b. **The second thing we need is a pure heart.** This is talking about motives, integrity. Clean hands mean a clear conscious. Pure heart means integrity. Pure motives. God can do tremendous things through the person who doesn't care who gets the credit. So we keep our motives pure before the Lord. We talk to Him in the private moments, not in front of other people, but in the private moments we say, "God, examine my heart and clear out the dross and make my motives pure before You." There's a verse in the King James, Jeremiah 48:10, *"Cursed be he who does the work of the Lord deceitfully."* That means with mixed motives.
- c. **The third thing it says regarding holiness:** *"Does not life up his soul to an idol."* He's talking about humility. Humility is the third characteristic of holiness. Pride goes before destruction. There is no sin God judges faster than the sin of pride. Pride was the sin that kicked Satan out of heaven. Pride was the sin that caused Pharaoh to lose his nation. Pride was the sin that Herod was stricken and died on the spot. So we have to be aware of the power of pride in our lives. The Bible says, *"Before honor is humility."*
- d. **The fourth thing:** *"Nor swear by what is false."* Honesty. Even greater than that he's talking about having right words, having holy language. We watch what we say. Psalm 39:1 *"I said, I will watch my ways and keep my tongue from sin. I will put a muzzle on my mouth."* One of the greatest areas where we sin is in talking too much. We need to have greater control on our tongue.

## 2. SURRENDER : GOD IS LOOKING FOR SURRENDERED PEOPLE

*Be it unto me according to your word (Luke 1:38).*

*For me to live is Christ, to die is gain (Philippians 1:21).*

Surrender is basically yielding to another power or authority. When we surrender our lives to God, God will be in control of our lives. Jesus surrendered His life to the Father. In the garden of Gethsemane, He committed in prayer that although as a man He desired to have the cup of suffering to be taken away but He yielded to Father's will. Because of His obedience, man can be reconciled with God. That action is greatest surrender in the bible! The Apostle Paul, who through numerous beatings, scourging, shipwrecks, imprisonments and more, could still state that for him to live is be for Christ, and to die is gain.

Richard Baxter said "A surrendered life in the hands of a holy God is a fearful thing." God is looking for surrendered or submissive people. The Bible word for "surrender" when we surrender our total selves to God is the word "broken" or "brokenness". God uses broken things, broken vessels because that represents something totally surrendered to God. It was a divine principle. When Jesus fed the 5000 it says He took the bread, He broke it, He blessed it and then He used it. That is a divine principle that we see all through scripture. God takes us, He breaks us, He blesses us and then He uses us. So the principle of brokenness is the principle of total surrender to God. Psalm 51:17 David says, "*It is a broken spirit You want, remorse and repentance. A broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not ignore.*" Jeremiah 4:3 "*Plow up the hardness of your heart otherwise the good seed will be wasted among the thorns.*" God uses broken things.

The story of Gideon in the Old Testament, God said, "I want 300 of you to go out against 450,000 enemies," – not very good odds. He said, "Surround the camp and take three items for warfare – a trumpet, a lit torch, and a clay pot to go over the torch to hide the fire." They went out and surrounded the camp at night. When God said Go! They blew the trumpets, they broke the pots, the light shown out and caused mass confusion among the enemy. They began killing off themselves and God gave a tremendous victory to Gideon and his band of 300. What would have happened if the pots had not been broken? There would have been no victory. But when the pots were broken the light shown out. Then they got victory.

This point of total surrender, this Gethsemane that I'm saying you need to come to, usually requires a crisis. You find Peter after his denial "Lord, I'll never deny You!" and goes out and denies Christ three times before the rooster crows that morning. You see Samson after he'd finally given into the temptation, his hair is cut off, he's a broken man strung between two pillars. Yet Samson's greatest victory came after his brokenness. You wrestle with God the way Jacob did. The Bible says that Jacob wrestled with an angel all night and the Lord touched his hip, his thigh, and weakened it. And it says that for the rest of his life, Jacob walked with a limp after that. God touched Jacob at his point of strength and made him weak there, so that the rest of his life he would walk with a limp. When you've gone through Gethsemane you'll never walk the same again after that. You just aren't the same.

### **Discussion**

1. Take a few minutes to discuss how each of you can apply God's requirements of us to be both holy and surrendered in our individual lives.
2. Pray as a group for each other according to the needs and desires expressed in the discussion above.

### **Conclusion**

As we walk in holiness and total surrender to God, we are allowing God to use us a vessel of His glory. May God be glorified as we pursue holiness and total surrender to God! Hallelujah!