

QUALITIES GOD LOOKS FOR IN PEOPLE HE CAN USE – Part 3

Adapted from Qualities God looks for in People He Can Use by Rick Warren

Introduction

In the last two weeks we look at 4 qualities God looks for in people He can use which are people who are holy, people who surrender, people who believe, and people with foresight. This week we will look at the final two qualities: persistent people and loving people.

Sharing

1. GOD IS LOOKING FOR PERSISTENT PEOPLE

People that God can use in a tremendous way never give up. They don't get discouraged. They're diligent, persistent, determined. They hang on. Paul says, I press on. I don't give up. Galatians 6:9 says *"And let us not get tired of doing what is right for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't get discouraged and give up."*

The Bible's got a lot of examples of guys who had tremendous promise but copped out. Paul talks about Demas in 2 Timothy 4. He said *"He has forsaken me having loved the world."* He started off right but he flamed out. John Mark started out right. He was going with Paul and Barnabas but he copped out. Later he got back on the right road. God uses people who don't give up and who are persistent. D. L. Moody said, *"I've never known God to use a discouraged person."* When you're being discouraged it's because you're choosing to be discouraged. You're looking at the problem, rather than looking at the Lord. God will never put more on you than He puts in you to bear it up. So you trust Him. Sometimes you can put more on yourself.

Paul's secret of usefulness was that nothing could discourage him. God uses people who are persistent. *"We are pressed on every side by troubles but are not crushed or broken. We're perplexed because we don't know why things happen as they do, but we don't give up and quit. We are hunted down but God never abandons us. We are knocked down but we get up again and keep going."* That's why Paul was a great person. He just kept on keeping on.

What does it take to discourage us? One little word of criticism and we're ready to give up? If we're going to be a leader, if we're going to be a minister, if we're going to serve Jesus Christ, we need a tough skin and a tender heart. It's hard to keep that balance, but we need them both. We cannot live our life for the approval of other people. What is important is that we should seek God's approval as whatever God says, it matters most as He is our Heavenly King. Christians should never let troubles get them down except down on their knees. A great person is just an ordinary person who has an extraordinary amount of determination. Thomas Edison once said, *"Genius is ten percent inspiration and ninety percent perspiration."*

2. GOD IS LOOKING FOR LOVING PEOPLE

This is the number one trait of the New Testament Christians. *"See how they love one another."* 1 John 4:7-8 (Living Bible) *"Let us practice loving each other. For love comes from God and those who are loving and kind show that they are the children of God and that they are getting to know Him better. But if a person isn't loving and kind, it shows He doesn't know God. For God is love."*

People today are looking for love. When we stand out to shake hands of the congregation to greet them with a joyful smile and cheerful "Shalom", you might not know that you may have just brought peace into the person's life or turned someone's day brighter. Just even friendly hallo after the service might also be an encouragement and we might be the only person that they had a friendly chat

during the weekend! We tend to lose the element of love when we get too busy. Even though we may know all kinds of great theological truths but if we have not love we are merely a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal.

Do we love people the way that Jesus loves people? That is the basis for ministry. Somebody has said, "Sympathy is when you say, 'I'm sorry you hurt.' Empathy is when you say, 'I hurt with you.' But compassion is 'I'll do anything I can to stop your hurt.'" If we study the life of Christ it says "*He was filled with compassion.*" He said, "I'll do anything I can to stop your hurt even if it means going to the cross. Jesus was moved with compassion.

It's interesting to note that in Matthew 25 the one thing that we're going to be judged for at that judgment is how we treated other people. "*I was sick and in prison and you visited Me. I was naked and you clothed Me. I was hungry and you fed Me. I was thirsty and you gave Me drink.*" How we treated other people. That's one of those eternal values. It's so much easier to tell a person what to do than to stand with them in their pain and love them. Love them into the family of God. The language of love always works.

Many years ago, Fulton Sheen, the Catholic bishop, visited a leprosy colony in Africa. As he was walking around there was this leper lying on the ground that not only had leprosy but also a number of other skin diseases. His body was open sores all over. Fulton Sheen leaned over to talk to the man. He was wearing a crucifix and, as he did, the chain came unlatched and his cross fell into one of the open sores. Fulton Sheen said, "I was revolted and stepped back in horror." Then he said, "Then all of a sudden I was just filled with compassion for this man. I reached into the sore and took up the cross."

What God needs us to do is go out into the sores of life, out into the marketplace and take up the cross and we do that by love. God uses people who love.

Discussion

1. Discuss how we could encourage each other to be persistent in doing God's will despite the difficulty or challenges that we face (it could be a criticism or strong objection).
2. Discuss how we can show compassion to those around us. Even gets even more difficult if we have to show compassion for people we have difficulties dealing with.

Conclusion

God desires people who are persistent in doing His will as only such people are able to withstand the heat in the ministry. When the going gets tough, the tough gets going. God also desires that we are filled with love. Without love, our ministry will remain just an ordinary work but with love, we can be a ministry that can be extension of God's kingdom. The love of God changed the world. Praise the Lord!