

Luke 16 (10-13) – The Qualities of a Quality Man

Intro: the one most important thing to learn, teach, and look for. This text speaks primarily in terms of money but it applies to all the areas of your life. It teaches you the traits of trustworthiness, and how to build the personal qualities of quality persons.

You can be qualified and yet not be quality. You can have the right education and experience, and yet still not be a quality individual who will be a valuable asset. Whatever field or endeavor we are talking about, I'd rather have someone that doesn't know the game but who will play by the rules than someone who knows the game but tries to game the system. You can be a qualified person but not be a person of quality. And eventually the truth about your quality or lack of quality will reveal itself. It may take a while, but it will happen (cf. 1 Timothy 5:24-25).

The truth is that we are all broken people. However, people can know that they need help, and know that they are broken, but they still think that they can control the process of being made whole by God. And sometimes broken people can seem like they have gotten it all together when they haven't, they are just pulling a sham off on themselves and everyone else. But the truth will win out, and let me tell you something, broken people leak when they get full of themselves.

People find out who is a quality person and who is not. The person who is known as a person of quality is the one that others are looking for. People want to hire them, to work for them, to be around them, because they will do their best to handle whatever situation comes their way. They won't just try and find "shortcuts", or throw curveballs, or blame others for circumstances. If they do something wrong, they will own it, and not make excuses, deny, or lie. If confronted they confess. And the person of quality is given the benefit of the doubt because of who they've proven themselves to be. But someone who has proven themselves not to be a person of quality or who isn't building quality into their lives is looked at with suspicion, and rightly so.

People who are looking for a free ride, looking for the easy way out, trying to take a shortcut, these people are miserable to be around. They don't really care about getting the work done the right way. You can't rely on them at all. There is always some kind of issue. They won't go the extra mile, and no matter how detailed you are in your instructions, you can still expect some kind of problem from them. They are the last to get there, first to leave, always demanding their rights, claiming things aren't fair, making excuses, never taking the blame, always doing less than their best. That's the opposite of a person of quality.

Luke 16:10-13 gives us four areas where we can see, measure, and grow in quality. It is about making the transition from feeling you deserve more to being given more. It is basically a matter of trustworthy stewardship. For people of quality, their values make them valuable, and they are given more respect, more responsibility, and more rewards. They earn people's trust.

Vs.10 – they have integrity – Here we see dishonesty contrasted with faithfulness, and the very little compared to the much more. Jesus says that little things matter, and that they reveal who you are. If we avoid, dismiss, or neglect the small things, we will do the same with big things. Conversely, if you see someone taking care of even a seemingly small matter, it is a good sign that they will give that same diligence to larger matters. You see, it's not about the amount entrusted to you, it's about your sense of responsibility.

Dishonest means unjust, and this would include lying, but also the shading of truth, exaggeration, pretense, and false impressions, stealing, cheating, failure to keep your promises and doing less than your best. It's all a lying lifestyle. And little lies are evidence of a lying heart which is not a little thing it's a big thing, and it's a bad witness. Proverbs 19:5 – *A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who breathes out lies will not escape.* People can't trust you if your being dishonest by doing less than your best, and you are not building quality in your life.

A quality person is honest even with small things. They are reliable to the same degree in all areas, all the way through. They don't do just enough to get by. They are faithful, and they put quality effort in no matter the size of the project or task, even when no one is watching. If you show that the details matter to you, that even small assignments and small contributions make a difference to you, then it shows that you can handle more things, and bigger things, because you have integrity. You are solid. Your responsibility matters to you, and you own it. Colossians 3:23-24 – *Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.* Hudson Taylor – A little thing is a little thing, but faithfulness to a little thing is a big thing.

Vs.11 – they are not irresponsible – Here we see lesser things compared with greater things, and material things with spiritual things. Jesus is talking about being indulgent, instead of industrious. When people abuse, misuse, and waste what they have, and what they are given, it has an effect on how they are perceived, and it prohibits their promotion and their prosperity. The “true riches” is referring to future service for God. In the spiritual sense, how can God bless your endeavors and give you greater spiritual things when you don't put what you already have to good use? In the earthly sense, if you abuse, misuse, and waste lesser things, how can you be trusted with things that are more important?

Sometimes people are tested by the things they don't have, and sometimes people are tested by the things they do have. What would you do if you had more money? It's the same as you do now, just a different proportion. Money doesn't change you, money reveals you. And more money would only magnify that. Give someone a little money, authority, or responsibility, and you will see who they really are. If you abuse, misuse, and waste the possessions, position, power, and property you are given, how can you expect to really prosper?

What do you do with what you have, and what you are given? When you aren't building quality in your life, when you aren't doing what's right with what you have or with the chances you are given, then people stop giving you a chance. When people don't see any change in the lesser things why should they trust you with greater things? And how can you expect to grow in your spiritual life if you don't obey God with the rest of your life? 1 Peter 4:2 tells Christians how we should spend our time, *no longer for human passions but for the will of God.*

Vs.12 – they are investors – Here we see the connection between stewardship and ownership. A person of quality knows and lives like their time, talent, and treasure are on loan. They know that they have been invested by God and they are to invest in others.

A person of quality sincerely wants to do right by those they work with or work for. They are the kind of person who will be faithful in another ministry before starting their own ministry. God proves His quality servants through submissive service, sometimes for those who are lesser

people than themselves. Someone who knows how to submit knows how to lead. If you can't be a good subordinate, you won't be a good supervisor.

Someone who isn't a quality person is jealous and envious of what others have, and if they could they would take it for themselves. Their sense of gratitude has been replaced with a sense of entitlement. They aren't investors, they are imposters. They won't work hard for others to get ahead. They don't rejoice in others' blessings, they resent them. And they want to rise above the crowd so that they don't have to listen to or deal with other people.

But a person of quality doesn't think they are "above" or "beyond" other people. They are respectful of others. They do right by others, even if that other person can't pay them back. They will sacrifice their own self-interest in the interest of others. That's what Jesus has done for you. That is the way you build quality into your life, and it is a mark of a quality person.

Vs.13 – they are not idolaters – Here we see God contrasted with money, and it's talking about who has the mastery over your heart. The person of quality is not double minded. They consciously serve the Lord, and people know their words are true because they have these other 3 qualities active in their lives. They are honest, responsible, and respectful.

This verse isn't saying that money is inherently evil, but that it is often misused and a means of evil (cf. 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19). God must be the center of your life, not money or possessions. Christians can enjoy the blessings that God has given them, but the tests will come, and all too often it is not the ways of God but the ways of the world which rule our decisions. You will compromise if you are double minded.

Are you building up the things that make you trustworthy? Can people trust you all the way through? Can you be trusted with more things, with better things, with control of things? What are you most influenced by? Are you consumed with having more stuff, better stuff, and your own stuff, are you consumed with yourself? Can you count on your own character? Can God trust you? Are you reliable? Are you ready for more? The most important ability is dependability. You can cultivate that, but are you serving yourself or your Savior? We imagine that we will serve God with our lives once we have gotten what or where we think we need. But that isn't true, and this passage proves it.

A person who isn't a Christian may be a person of quality in many ways, but the believer has the only true foundation on which to build a truly quality life. The only true way to become a person of quality is to follow Jesus, to love, serve, and worship Him. He is worthy. Jesus is the man of quality, the only one who was faithful in all things, in all ways, at all times. He had perfect integrity, He was perfectly responsible, and He invested eternity in you. If you surrender to Him, trust Him, and follow Him, you will become a person of quality as you find your satisfaction, significance, and stability in Him. If you find it anywhere else, you are an idolater.

You may not be a person of quality, or you may have lost some of your quality, but God's grace is here for you. The first step in getting clean is coming clean (1 John 1:9). The promise of grace is what gives us the courage to repent, and the power to change. Whether you need to be saved, or you're saved but you need to grow, it's time to surrender to the man of quality, Jesus Christ. Repent, and place your faith in Him, and God's grace will build quality in your life.