

THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

Jeremiah 18:1-6

God planned our entire being and life before we were born, He continues to mould us throughout our lives, He enables our faith to develop in times of waiting, and he allows us to experience trials and tribulations in order to strengthen us and prepare us for His unique calling.

We must put ourselves in the hands of God, our Master Potter, and allow Him to mould us into the beautiful vessels that He intended for us to become in order for us to be fit for His service.

1. God knew us before we were born

Psalm 139:13-14, 16 – ‘For it was you who created my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. ¹⁴ I will praise you because I have been remarkably and wondrously made. Your works are wondrous, and I know this very well...¹⁶ Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in your book and planned before a single one of them began.’

Just as the potter moulds his clay into the desired shape for a specific use, God has uniquely created each and every one of us according to His purposes.

You are unique; there is no one in this world that is the exact same as you, and there never will be. You truly are God's masterpiece.

All of the special characteristics, talents and desires that make us unique were specifically planned out and placed into us by God. We need to embrace all of the amazing aspects that He has so carefully thought of and moulded into us and use them for His glory.

2. God continuously shapes us throughout our lives

Some of the most useful vessels aren't always the most attractive on the outside, but they still get their jobs done.

Matthew 23:7 – “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which appear beautiful on the outside, but inside are full of the bones of the dead and every kind of impurity.

Outward beauty and image mean nothing if the inside is full of impurity, lies and hypocrisy. God's main concern is the condition of our heart.

God works through the cracks and the kinks to shape us into vessels capable of fulfilling the unique design He has for us.

***Ephesians 2:10** – For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.*

Just as clay is flexible in the hands of the potter, we need to remain vulnerable and willing to be continually shaped by God.

***1 Timothy 2:12** – So if anyone purifies himself from anything dishonourable, he will be a special instrument, set apart, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.*

Although God has given us free will, we must not use this as an excuse to resist His working in our lives, nor use our own selfish desires as an excuse not to follow or trust His purposes.

a. God allows for periods of waiting to build our faith

Isaiah 40:31 – But those who trust in the Lord will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not become weary, they will walk and not faint.

Lamentations 3:25 – The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him.

Psalms 27:14 – "Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord."

Psalms 130:5 – "I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope."

When our only option is to look to God and rely on His perfect timing, our trust and belief in Him increases.

The waiting period becomes impossible when we choose to rely on our own strength and move forward ahead of God.

b. God uses trials and tribulations to strengthen us

God often leads us the hard way instead of the easy way because He wants to do a work in us.

***James 1:12** – Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.*

***1 Peter 5:10** – And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.*

***John 16:33** – I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”*

***Proverbs 3:5-6** – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

3. God remains sovereign through it all

Jeremiah 18:6 – “House of Israel, can I not treat you as this potter treats his clay?” – this is the Lord’s declaration. “Just like clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, house of Israel.”

Isaiah 29:16 – You have turned things around, as if the potter were the same as the clay. How can what is made say about its maker, “He didn’t make me”? How can what is formed say about the one who formed it, “He doesn’t understand what he’s doing”?

Isaiah 45:9 – “Woe to the one who argues with his Maker – one clay pot among many. Does clay say to the one forming it, ‘What are you making?’ Or does your work say, ‘He has no hands’?”

Isaiah 64:8 – Yet Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we all are the work of your hands.

Romans 9:19-21 – You will say to me, therefore, “Why then does he still find fault? For who resists his will?” ²⁰ On the contrary, who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? Will what is formed say to the one who formed it, “Why did you make me like

this? ” ²¹ Or has the potter no right over the clay, to make from the same lump one piece of pottery for honour and another for dishonour?

God doesn't owe us a single thing, yet He chooses to extend His unwavering patience, kindness, compassion and love towards us every day. He continues to work in us and through us for His glory.

God has created each of us a certain way with specific attributes. It is our responsibility to use what He has given us to fulfil His will in our lives.

Just as the clay finds its highest purpose when it remains flexible and vulnerable in the hands of the potter, so our lives fulfil their highest purpose when we let God have His way in us.

Hebrews 11:1 – *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*