



The Potter's Plan Home Church 2018/2019 Discussion & Study Guide

NOTE: This guide is designed to help you think through this analogy. If used for a group discussion, it may be too much material for one setting depending on the size and makeup of your group; that is ok. The goal is not to complete this guide, but rather to let God use this analogy to speak to you personally as you approach 2019.

Let's Get Started:

After watching the home church video, let's begin the discussion with these warm-up questions:

- What stood out to you about the pottery process?
- What do you think would be the best part about making pottery?
- What do you think would be the hardest or most frustrating part?

Let's Dig In:

Read Jeremiah 18:1-4. Talk through some of these questions to get you thinking allegorically:

- Why do you think the Lord chose to speak to Jeremiah at the potter's shop?
- What's so special about this parable or analogy to you? Why do you think this imagery is used several times throughout the Bible?
- Do you have positive or negative emotions when you think of God being the "potter" of your life?

Pastor Dale mentioned 5 analogies from this pottery illustration. Take time to think about these and discuss them as we roll into 2019. Before you begin, take a moment to pray that God will use this little illustration to speak to you.

Five Analogies:

1. God is the Potter:

**This first analogy is foundational to understanding the others. So, let's take a little extra time with this first one.*

- What does it mean that God is our potter? How much concern does a potter have for the clay? The Bible often refers to God as our Father, Shepherd, and here in this passage, a Potter. How do these parallel? Describe the emotion that it gives you to know your life is not left up to blind fate.
- Since clay cannot mold itself, in what ways does it need a potter? In what ways do we need an external power source in our lives?

- Read *Jeremiah 18:6-10*, *Isaiah 45:9*, and *Romans 9:20-21*. It seems arguing with God, trying to tell Him what to do, is a pattern for humans, the clay. How have you seen this dynamic play out in people's lives, or maybe even your own? Why is this a waste of time? Why is it dangerous? How could this argumentative perspective cause a person to waste their lives?
- A good potter has a vision for what He wants the clay to become. Read *Jeremiah 29:11*, *Romans 12:1-2*, *1 Corinthians 2:9*, *Ephesians 2:10*, and *Philippians 1:6*. Do you believe those verses; that God has a perfect plan for your life? What are some of your biggest hangups in trusting Him with your life?
- Sometimes the potter molds the clay with force, other times with finesse. Both are needed. How have you experienced God in both of these extremes? Give some specific examples.
- The potter works patiently with the clay. How have you experienced God's patience with you? Give some specific examples.
- The potter uses tools to shape the clay. What are some of the "tools" God has used in your life? Give some specific examples. (Hint: some common tools He uses are people, circumstances, blessings, pain, etc.)

2. We are the Clay:

- Read *Isaiah 64:8*. Clay is dust mixed with water. Read *Psalms 103:14*. See even more clearly the similarities.
- Clay cannot mold itself. By itself, how valuable is clay? So, if pottery has value, what makes it valuable; what makes it great? How does this truth apply to our lives?
- Read *Isaiah 29:16*. What happens if the clay does not yield to the potter's hands? How important is it that we yield to our Potter's hands? What does yielding look like in our lives? Why is it so hard at times to yield even when we know how much we need the Potter?
- If clay is unyielding and hard, the potter has to soften it. What are some ways God softens us? How does it cause us to become more yielding to His touch?

3. Life is the Wheel

- Read *Romans 8:28*. The events of our lives seem random at times, but what is the promise of *Romans 8:28*? Does that passage say everything that happens to us is good at the time? How does this verse give you hope?

- Think of some Biblical examples of people who experienced bad things but it turned out good. Discuss those examples. To get you started, how was this illustrated in the lives of Mary and Joseph?
- The most important thing about the wheel (life) is not the size or how long it turns. The most important thing is that it is centered. How does this apply to your life? Read *Matthew 6:33*. How is Jesus the “anchor” for your soul as we live in this spinning world? Make this as practical and less abstract as you possible can.

4. Disobedience is the Marring

- Re-read *Jeremiah 18:1-4*. Sometimes the clay gets marred, meaning it does not turn out as expected. What mars the clay? Give some examples of how this may happen in a person’s life.
- When marring happens, what does the potter in *Jeremiah 18:4* do? What emotion does it create in you to know that our Potter does not throw marred vessels away? Describe a time you felt like He started over making you again? Or, describe a time you experienced God’s grace and a second chance.

5. Trials are the Furnaces

- Why is heat important to making pottery? How useful and valuable is pottery that has not experienced the fire? How does this apply to our lives in the pottery analogy?
- Read *1 Peter 4:12-13*. Peter talks about the furnace of persecution. Make this practical. What are some “furnaces” in life? How have you personally experienced the heat? How have those “furnaces” made you better?
- Read *1 Corinthians 10:13*. Potters know how much heat the clay can take. How does this comfort you? How can you use this truth to encourage you as you face 2019?

Let’s Wrap It Up:

- Now, after dwelling more on this analogy, what encourages you the most? What is the most challenging?
- What truth from this analogy do you want to “hold onto” in 2019? What seems very important for you in particular to remember? Do you feel God is saying anything to you through this parable?

Let’s wrap this up by praying. Talk to God as if He is the Potter and You are the clay. Pray through these five analogies and pray as God’s Spirit leads you to pray.