



ACCORDING TO HIS PLAN

LESSON 43 → John 3:3,16; 17:15-17; Acts 1:5-8

Just as the potter shapes the clay into a usable vessel, God wants to mold our lives.

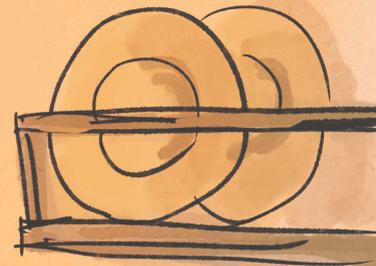
Walking slowly along the river bank, the potter scrutinizes the ground beneath his feet. His attention is caught by a smooth, reddish streak in the mud just to his left. Could this be the type of clay he is looking for?

Bending over, he thrusts his shovel deep into the rust-colored earth. After removing a shovelful he rubs some of the clay between his fingers. Years of experience help him recognize that this smooth, shiny clay is, indeed, the right quality. It will hold together. It can be



I WANT EVERYTHING GOD HAS FOR ME.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. — Ephesians 6:11



worked. Carefully he separates a sizable chunk of clay from the muddy ground and puts it into the gunny sack over his shoulder and returns to his workshop.

God is like the potter in this story. He wants to make a vessel He can use. His vessel will be a human life dedicated to Him. Like the potter, He must first find His material. The potter searched for usable clay and found it surrounded by the mud of the riverbank. God looks for people who are willing to submit their lives to Him. When He takes them out of the “mud”—the troubles, guilt, and sin in their lives—we call this “salvation.” It brings about a complete change. The Bible tells us, “Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

The potter spreads the clay out in the sun to dry. When it has hardened, he gathers the lumps together and pulverizes them. Next comes the vital cleaning process. Sifting the clay through screens of various sizes, the potter painstakingly removes the dirt, twigs, and other foreign particles until the powdered clay is perfectly clean.

After we have received salvation, there comes a second step. We call this “sanctification,” or cleansing. It is an entirely different experience from salvation. Just as the potter cleaned the clay, taking away the impurities, God cleanses our hearts when we experience sanctification. At salvation we are forgiven for all the wrong things we have done, but when we are sanctified God cleans out all the feelings that ever made us want to do wrong.

When the cleansing process is complete, moisture is added to the clay, making it workable. The potter kneads the mass, removing all pockets of air. Then the time has come to shape the lump of clay into a usable vessel. The potter knows exactly what he wants to create. Placing the clay on the wheel, he pushes it to the center, for only when it is positioned exactly can he begin to work.

The wheel starts to revolve, and the potter’s skilled hands begin molding and shaping. A little pressure here, a gentle lifting there, and the clay is fully pliable and nonresistant, accepting the guidance of the potter. At last the vessel is complete.

After we have been sanctified, we want more than ever to be something for God. We want God, like the potter, to “shape” us into something He can use. For this, we need the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Sometimes we call this experience, “power for service.”

The first step in receiving the baptism is to make sure we are “centered.” Just as the clay had to be positioned exactly in the middle of the potter’s wheel, so we must be right in the center of God’s will, eager and ready to do whatever He says. We must be as the clay, pliable and willing to accept His direction. Then, when we pray with all our hearts, God will send His power into our lives, making us able to work effectively for Him.

After a period of drying, glaze is applied and the kiln, or oven, is heated. In this heat, the clay vessel hardens and becomes able to withstand rough handling. The process is complete! The vessel can be used.

Even though we have received salvation, sanctification, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost, trials will still come into our lives. We might compare this to the “heat” in our story of the potter. And when we come out of the test or trial, we will find we have been strengthened by it, just as the vessel of clay was.

God wants to use you. He has a plan for you. Have you let Him become the “potter” in your life? If not, do so today!

Lesson 43 Activity

GROW GOD'S WAY



Each experience we have from God is important. His Word helps us to understand them. Read each verse given, starting with "The Way," and write your answers on the lines provided.



Who is
"The Way"?
JOHN 14:6

What is another way to
Heaven besides Jesus?
ACTS 4:12

What happens to
our sins?
1 PETER 2:24

Who sanctifies
a Christian?
1 THESSALONIANS 5:23



What things should be
acceptable to God?
PSALM 19:14

Who is the baptism of the
Holy Ghost for?
ACTS 2:38, 29



Does sorrow
last forever?
PSALM 30:5

If Christians are like clay,
who is their potter?
ISAIAH 64:8

In what areas should a
Christian grow?
2 PETER 3:18

THIS IS NOT THE
END — IT'S ONLY
THE BEGINNING!

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