



Life

is priceless

Lessons from the Potter

*"...we are the clay
and You are the potter..."*

Isaiah 64:8b

Colossians 3:16 Moments for Pastors

"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom, teaching, and admonishing one another..."

Pause before teaching and admonishing others.

Reflect on you and the Potter; personalize the verse.

"Now, O Lord, You are my Father, I am the clay and You my potter; I am the work of Your hand."

Consider quietly the Potter's intimate attention toward you, His caring concern of your worth and value to Him; you are priceless. Now, allow your heart to respond to Him; tell Him of your gratitude, your thanks, your love.

Responding to the Lord this way will help prepare you to lead your people into similar loving response.

The Potter's Masterpiece art prints are available through :
New Hope Pregnancy Care Center 423.479.6683 or
www.newhopepcc.org

I. A Journey to the Potter's House

Throughout scripture God is portrayed as the potter—and you and I as the clay. Many lessons are derived from this analogy .

- Claiming the potter and clay are equals is arrogant. —*"Shall the potter be considered equal with the clay...?"* Is. 29:16a
- Denying I am His creation lacks wisdom—*"Shall...that what is made... say to His maker, 'He didn't make me'?"* Is. 29:16b
- Doubting that the Potter truly knows me is senseless! *"Shall...what is formed say to Him who formed it, 'He has no understanding'?"* Is. 29:16c
- Questioning the Potter's work in my life is pointless. *"Will the clay say to the Potter, 'What are you doing?'"* Is. 45:9

Click here for overview of Jeremiah 18 from Mike Ferris
www.ajourneytothepottershouse.com

II. Created in the Potter's Image—*"But now, O Lord, Thou art our Father..."* Is. 64:8a

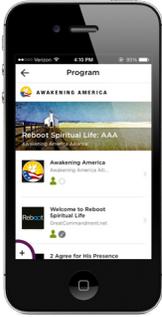
- You may be clay—but you bear the Father's image.

In Genesis 1:26, God said, *"Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule..."*. To grasp our value to the "potter", we must begin here—not in the garden "fall", or in reference to the serpent—but here where God purposefully pauses to counsel with Himself.

Also significant is this first biblical reference to *us* and *our* as the Trinity is in view. Only here in the creation story do we find God's full disclosure of His relational oneness. For years scholars have debated the full meaning of the "image of God" (Imago Dei). Some have suggested that Adam and Eve were like God in their personhood, ability to reason, creativity and spiritual nature. Others have concentrated on the "let them rule" phrase, stating that we are most like God when we rule. Because the Trinity collaborated over the creation of man (let us make man in our image), we can also discern that to be created in the image of God includes the fact that man was created to be a relational, interdependent, social being—created to relate to God and others.

- Cherishing life is a priceless priority. *"Behold children are gifts from the Lord."* Ps. 127:3

His gifts are to be cherished and protected, nurtured and loved. It seems



Click here for a powerpoint of Reboot Spiritual Life download instructions.

we should embrace the virtue and imperative that **“Life is priceless—Handle with care”**.

Many of you have seen the acclaimed movie *October Baby* as it portrays the story of Hannah—adopted after a failed abortion—embarks on a journey to discover her hidden past and find hope for her future.

On this day, we’re reminded that EVERY life is priceless and that we’re called to pray for a renewal of God’s hope and provision for *“children as gifts from the Lord.”* (Ps, 127:3) Be sure to download your Spiritual Reboot Resource and join countless numbers of Jesus followers on a one year journey of spiritual renewal, believing God for a Christ Awakening in our land.

III. Marred by sin—but retaining the Potter’s image

“We are clay and Thou our Potter and ALL of us are the work of Thy hand.” Is. 64:8b,c (emphasis added).

The uniqueness of a coin is forever determined by the image stamped upon it at the mint. Even when it is lost, misplaced, or damaged it still retains its original image and its significance to the master (Luke 15:8). The uniqueness of man was determined in the creation process—we were created in the “image of God” and His likeness was stamped upon us.

- But can the phrase “image of God” still be applied to man after the fall? Apparently so, for God reiterated this truth to Noah in Genesis 9:6: “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man.” Similarly, James seems to include all of humanity, fallen and redeemed, when he wrote: “With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men who have been made in God’s likeness.”

The testimony of scripture seems to indicate that while some aspects of the “image of God” were lost at the fall, other aspects remained intact. This would indicate that there are two distinct aspects of the “image of God.” One aspect—man’s essence—remained the same despite his fall into sin and corruption. The other aspect—man’s nature—changed completely because of his lost communion with God. It is this fall into sin that brings the heritage of a sinful nature to all descendants of Adam (Genesis 5:3). Secondly, just as Adam chose, all men choose sin: “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12).

Man’s “essence” includes the capacity for redemption and gives value even to the life of those outside Christ. Man cannot lose this element of the divine image and still be human, thus every human is priceless—meriting respect and value, worth and dignity.

- Even when we have NOT valued life as priceless—His forgiveness is extended! *“You saw me before I was born.”* (Ps. 139:16)

Of special significance is that the “marring of sin” has been provided for in Christ. *“For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”* (Romans 5:17)

Shari Rigby stars in the movie *October Baby* as Hannah’s mother and her story of God’s freedom and forgiveness is both inspiring and hope-filled.



Click here to view Shari’s story of freedom and forgiveness.

IV. Responding to the Potter's Touch

"Woe to the one who quarrels with his maker." Isaiah 45:9

- If "quarreling" with the Potter brings "woe", how should we respond?

Insights from how Jesus responded to the Father point to one critical factor—YIELD! We don't quarrel, we yield. Nowhere in Scripture do we see the Father yielding to the Son. Indeed, the Father is always the one who commands, sends, and commissions the Son. And the Son, as a demonstration of His love, always yields to the Father. Jesus' commitment to yield was so strong that He described it as His very nourishment: "My food... is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work" (John 4:34).

Consider the following additional statements of Jesus from the Gospel of John:

- "I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me" (John 5:30 NASB).
- "...I love the Father and... I do exactly what my Father has commanded me" (John 14:31).
- "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love" (John 15:10).

One of the ways we as "clay" express love to the Father is to yield to His will and to His ways for our life. Great love is expressed when we yield to the "Potter"—even before we know His exact plans for us. Our fulfillment of what Jesus called the Greatest Commandment—to love God—(Matt. 22:37-40) includes the discipline of yielding! One of the simplest of ways to "love God" is to say, "Yes Lord—now what would You have me do?"

Consider pausing in a prayer of yielding: "Lord, I acknowledge Your work in my life and yield to it. Continue Your Spirit's work in me that I might better express the life and love of Jesus."

- In closing, our response to the potter can be grateful and thankful love as we reflect on the wonder of His unending grace; Pause to reflect on you and the Potter.

On the reverse side of your bulletin insert you are asked to make two lists—on the left is a list of "what have you done this week to prompt God to love you MORE?", and on the right "what have you done this week to prompt God to love you LESS?" The Potter's unending grace says "Stop writing!" Your lists are to be blank:

"For I am convinced that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:39)

Let's pause to respond in love to such grace from the Potter.

Reflect on you and the Potter; personalize the verse.

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