THE POTTER AND THE CLAY

Ten Steps · King James Version

THE POTTER

Isaiah 64:8 But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

Jeremiah 18:6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter’s hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.

Isaiah 45:9 Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?

Romans 9:20–21 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

1. Dug out of the pit



SHOP

The potter goes to the clay bed by the wadi and cuts living earth from the bank. It is not a pot. It is mud with stones in it, still belonging to the dark ground. Until he takes it, it stays in the pit.

WALK

New birth. Dug out of the kingdom of darkness and translated. You did not climb out.

SCRIPTURE

Colossians 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.

John 3:3, 5–6 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

1 Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

John 15:19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

2. Washed



SHOP

The lump goes into water and is stirred to a thin mud (levigation). Heavy grit sinks. Stones and sand are lifted out. What remains is plastic clay. Without this, the wheel will tear it and the fire will blow it.

WALK

Water baptism, and the washing of water by the Word. Both. One puts you in the water; the other keeps putting the Word through you.

SCRIPTURE

Titus 3:5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Ephesians 5:26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.

Acts 22:16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

John 15:3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

Hebrews 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

3. Weathered



SHOP

Clean clay is spread on the hillside or the yard. Sun and wind pull the surplus water. Days, sometimes weeks. Too wet, it slumps on the wheel. This is not yet kneading. It is waiting in the open.

WALK

In the world, not of it. Exposure. The weather of life on a man who no longer belongs to the pit.

SCRIPTURE

John 17:15–18 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

Romans 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

1 John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

4. Tempered



SHOP

After the wash the clay is often too “fat.” The potter works in temper — sand, crushed pot (grog), grit — by hand until the body will take heat without splitting. Too little temper, the fire cracks it. Too much, it has no strength.

WALK

Truth, brethren, and trial mixed into you so the later fire does not split you.

SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 2:5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:16 From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Colossians 2:6–7 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

James 1:2–4 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

5. Trodden



SHOP

He treads the lump with his feet on stone, or kneads it with the heels of his hands, until there is one even body — no hard spots, no pockets of water. Isaiah names this: the potter treads clay. This is how air is driven out in that yard. Not a wire-slice inspection. Feet and weight.

WALK

The neck under the hand. Authority. You stop arguing with the pressure.

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 41:25 I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come: from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name: and he shall come upon princes as upon morter, and as the potter treadeth clay.

James 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1 Peter 5:5–6 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

Hebrews 12:9–11 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Philippians 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

6. Thrown — and if it fails, remade



SHOP

The lump goes on the wheel-head. The potter’s foot turns the lower stone; his hands centre the clay, open it, draw the wall. If the vessel is marred in his hand — off-centre, collapsed, a hidden fault — he does not fire a ruined pot. He crushes it back to a ball and throws it again. That is Jeremiah 18:3–4.

WALK

The first sending. Luke 9 — thrown into the Father’s will with almost nothing, to see if they will hold. They held. He did not smash that work and start the Twelve over. Later He sends them as apostles with a different charge. If a man will not hold, the Potter is still free to remake.

SCRIPTURE

Luke 9:1–6 Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where.

John 20:21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

Acts 1:8 But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Romans 9:21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Jeremiah 18:3–4 Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

7. Leather-hard — handles, rest, sealed



SHOP

The thrown form sits in the shade until leather-hard: firm enough to handle, not dry enough to crack. Now he adds rim, base, handles — scored and joined with slip. Then it rests again. Rush this and the handle peels or the wall warps. Some shops press a mark in the base. Most household pots went unmarked.

WALK

Members set in the body. Sealed. Rest, or the form warps.

SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

Ephesians 1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.

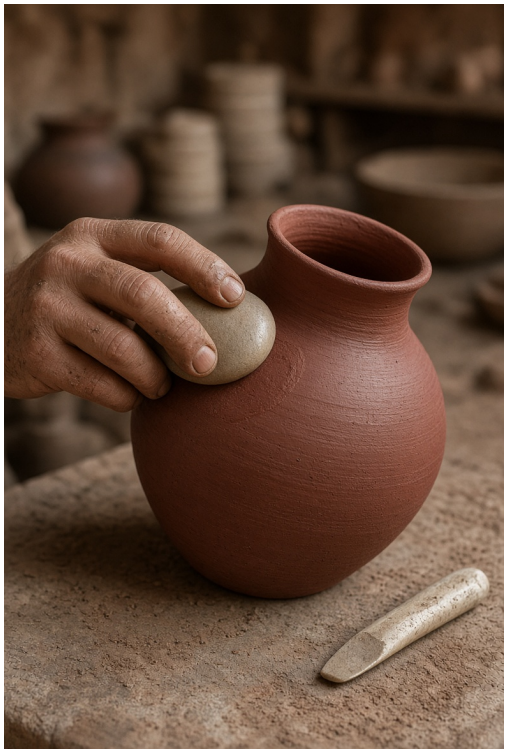
Ephesians 4:30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

2 Timothy 2:19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

Matthew 11:28–29 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Ephesians 2:21–22 In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

8. Slip, then burnished



SHOP

A cream of fine coloured clay (often red haematite) is wiped on the leather-hard wall. It soaks in. It is not paint and it is not glaze. Then a pebble, a bone, or a smooth sherd is rubbed hard over the slip until the colour is compressed into the skin of the pot and the surface closes. One treatment. Before the kiln.

WALK

The Spirit put in you, not painted on you. Burnishing is the broken pieces — broken people around you — rubbing until what He put in is brought out. Uncomfortable. Necessary.

SCRIPTURE

Romans 5:5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.

2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Ephesians 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.

1 Peter 4:14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

Hebrews 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.

Colossians 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

9. Dried again. One fire.



SHOP

After slip and burnish the pot dries again, down to a few percent water. Then one load in a two-chamber updraft kiln — fire below, pots above. A good Judean firing sits near 800–900 °C. Watch the fire. A bad climb ruins the whole load. After this, water cannot make it clay again. Jeremiah 18 is the wet wheel. Jeremiah 19 is a fired flask.

WALK

Trial that locks the work. Faith tried. You do not go back to mud.

SCRIPTURE

1 Peter 1:6–7 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 4:12–13 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

1 Corinthians 3:13 Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.

2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Revelation 3:18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.

10. Filled at the table



SHOP

The jar comes out ceramic. It is not for the shelf. It holds wine, oil, water. It is poured at the meal. A vessel of honour is a vessel in use.

WALK

Treasure in an earthen vessel. Filled, then poured. The banquet is why the pit was opened.

SCRIPTURE

2 Timothy 2:20–21 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master’s use, and prepared unto every good work.

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.

John 7:38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

Ephesians 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.