In the potter’s hands

“Yet Lord, you are our father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we all are the work of your hands” (Isaiah 64:8 CBS)

I happen to love pottery. I own a few handmade pieces, some of my favorites being coffee mugs. It’s a simple joy for me to pour my morning coffee and appreciate the beauty of my clay mug. It’s not surprising, then, that God would use something tangible, like pottery, to teach us more about Himself and those created in His image.

In Scripture, God used pottery to help us understand how He works to sanctify us. He is our Potter and we are the clay. This idea has proven extremely helpful in reminding me, as a parent, that my children are still works in progress. Our expectations of our children oftentimes exceed their capabilities. We want them to exhibit x, y, and z behavior but their hearts are still in the process of being shaped. We want an already usable coffee mug when instead we have been given a lumpy piece of clay.

God is the ultimate Potter, and He will determine our children’s final shape, but He has given us, as parents, the privileged responsibility to press into them, softening the clay for His use. And we do this by diligently teaching them about God and reminding them of His great works. We also pray for their precious hearts to be transformed by the gospel so they might know Jesus and love Him with all their might. We anticipate with hope that the Potter is gently forming a beautiful masterpiece little by little, like a lump of clay spinning on a wheel, designed with a specific purpose.

Life-transforming work doesn’t happen overnight, nor can the deadness of a heart be brought to life by outward behavior modification. It takes a supernatural work from the Lord to make alive what was once dead and to create a workmanship on mission for Jesus.

May we have patience with our children, remembering that they are works in progress---- just as we are works in progress. And may we continue to wholeheartedly seek to disciple them in the truth of God Word, faithfully praying that our little lumps of clay will one day be transformed into pieces of art that test true in the fires of this life.

Steps of Faith

Heavenly Father, I ask for the patience and wisdom to parent my children well for the sake of Your name and Your purpose. Help me to remember that we are clay in Your hands.

在窑匠的手里

“耶和华啊，现在你仍是我们的父！我们是泥，你是窑匠；我们都是你手的工作。”（以赛亚书64：8）

很偶然的机会我爱上了陶瓷，而我也收集了一些纯手工制作的陶瓷，其中最喜欢的要属咖啡杯。清晨沏上一杯咖啡，与可爱的杯子一起沐浴在晨光里，我最享受这种单纯的快乐。神使用这些形象的器物，例如陶瓷，让我们了解神和以 祂的形象所造之物。

在圣经里，神用陶器的比喻来帮助我们了解 祂如何使我们成圣： 祂是匠人，我们是粘土。这个比喻提醒我，为人父母，我们的孩子就如同陶瓷作品一样，仍在塑造过程中。我们希望孩子达到某些目标，经常是超出他们能力范围的一些期望，却没有意识到他们的心还有待成熟。手里明明握着一块粘土，却期待立刻拥有一个成型的咖啡杯来喝咖啡，这显然是不切实际的。

上帝是最终的匠人， 祂会决定我们孩子最终的形状。但 祂把特权赐予我们这些作父母的，让我们承担起管教的责任，软化粘土为 祂使用。我们苦口婆心地让孩子认识神，提醒他们神为我们做得奇妙的工；我们祈求孩子们被福音改变，从而信神，爱神，荣耀神；我们期待匠人对待面前转盘上的这块粘土，一刀一刃地塑造，为着 祂特定的美意，最终铸成一个杰作。

生命的转变不是一蹴而就的，也不可能通过外在修行让人死而复活。神用 祂的大能让我们舍弃旧我，为着耶稣的使命做工。

让我们秉持爱心和耐心，牢记孩子是正在塑造过程中的器皿；让我们全心全意地用神真理的话语引领孩子；让我们忠实地祷告我们手里的这块粘土终有一天成为经得起烈火检验的艺术珍品。

祷告：

亲爱的天父，求你赐予我耐心和智慧，为了你的名和你的义，好好地养育我的孩子。也求你时刻提醒我，我们就是你手中的粘土，一直在你手中直到塑造成你的形象。