



### Jeremiah 18:1-11 New Revised Standard Version

<sup>1</sup> The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: <sup>2</sup> “Come, go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.” <sup>3</sup> So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at his wheel. <sup>4</sup> The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him.

<sup>5</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to me: <sup>6</sup> Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the LORD. Just like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, <sup>8</sup> but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it. <sup>9</sup> And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, <sup>10</sup> but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it. <sup>11</sup> Now, therefore, say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: Thus says the LORD: Look, I am a potter shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you. Turn now, all of you, from your evil way, and amend your ways and your doings.



Between our home and offices, Marci and I have a few pieces of handmade pottery. Although we possess such pieces, that is by no means an indication that either of us is skilled at the art of pottery. Some were purchased and others were gifted to us. My



experience with any form of clay or modeling dough has been limited to the air-drying variety for a school project or the multicolored form which can be squeezed through a little mold and cut into strings of “spaghetti.” However, for those who have studied the art and worked to hone their skills, pottery can be a beautiful expression of creativity. Some of those expressions might be for practical/everyday usage, while others might be limited to the role of decorations. Either way, a lump of clay in the right hands can become so much more than a lump of clay.

The same can also be said for our lives. We have been created and continue to grow and develop as life moves along. Key to the outcome is who or what it is that is shaping our lives. Like the people of Judah in Jeremiah’s day, we try to resist the shaping power of the Master Potter and allow our lives to become “spoiled” or distorted from their God-given image. Anthea Portier-Young points out that unlike pottery which has been fired, our lives continue to be pliable and the possibility exists for a favorable or not so favorable outcome. As in the time of Judah, the words of Jeremiah continue to invite God’s people to think about what we are becoming and to realize there is the opportunity to change where we are heading. God will not force our change, but can create something beautiful from our self-driven efforts and feeble attempts at making our lives into a masterpiece.

1. There is always room for improvement.
2. We have opportunity to resist the shaping.
3. God is patient with the forming process.

**Prayer Pebble:** Lord, have your way in and upon my life. You are the potter and I am the clay.