



PERSPECTIVE: “God shaped purpose”

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Mark Wiltshire

This Study Guide provides a summarised study with additional discussion questions based on the scriptures mentioned in the sermon.

Connect:

1. Read Jeremiah 18:1-6

Engage:

2. How are we *made*?
3. ... *We are made soft and mouldable but the older we become, the more resistant to change we become.*

“God can take the mess in your life and bring a message out of it. He can take the test in your life and create a testimony out of it. He can take a crisis and show Christ through it.”

Rick Warren

Framework:

4. **Why the NEED to ‘RE-SHAPE’ us?**
 5. Discuss Jeremiah 18:4 - “And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do.” (ESV) – Why didn’t the jar turn out as the Potter had hoped?
 - **Hands** - Sometimes things go wrong
 - God decides to rework the clay (us) – into a new shape.
 - **Clay** - Can be difficult to work with.
- **3 Characteristics:**
1. **PLASTICITY is critical (very highly flexible)** - Without a very high flexibility, the clay simply won't be workable on the wheel. Even moderately plastic clays can take a toll

on the potter's hands and wrists, due to the strength and pressure required to make the clay move.

2. **STRENGTH** – **Must be able to stay upright when the walls are thin so throwing clay has coarser particles** (sand or 'grog' – previously fired clay particles which make it less plasticity but protects against cracking when drying / firing).

3. **WATER Absorption** – Clay absorbs water, so while on the wheel it can become very soft if the potter's hands are wet. **Balance is critical**, good throwing clay must be balanced between plasticity, strength, and water absorption.

“Godly reshaping sees potential, (re)sets perspective and stirs our passion.”

Mark Wiltshire

6. How can you work with God? (**Godly Re-Shaping**)

→ **“Sees Potential”** – Clay is not discarded!

- Read and discuss Colossians 3:12
- **Good news** – God wants to re-shape us, not scrap us!
- Find Balance of flexibility, strength, and not too wet!
- Expect... Look to 'discover' your Godly potential

→ **“Set's Perspective”**

- Read and discuss Galatians 5:22-23
- How are we with others – Self asses?
- Where do you think you're the most vulnerable/brittle?
- Where would others say you are the most brittle?

→ **“Stirs our Passion”** - God's Promise(s)

- Read and discuss Isaiah 41:10
- Do you choose to trust God?
- Don't be discouraged no matter how tough the past has been.
- What will 2019 bring? Do you want a repeat of 2018 or would you like to have a breakthrough year?

7. God calls who He will...

“This is what the Lord says: “I will go before you, Cyrus, and level the mountains. I will smash down gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron. And I will give you treasures hidden in the darkness— secret riches. I will do this so you may know that I am the Lord, the God of Israel, the one who calls you by name.”

Isaiah 45:2-3

- Superpower Gentile Ruler – Macedonia, India and North Africa
 - 200 years before Alexander the Great, 336BC
 - Mentioned 23 times by name, Ezra & 'God's Anointed' (Isaiah 45:1)
 - Cyrus Great, King of Persia ended Jewish Babylonian captivity
 - First year of his reign prompted by God to decree the Temple in Jerusalem should be rebuilt and Jews can return to their land.
8. Sorrow awaits those who argue against God...

“What sorrow awaits those who argue with their Creator. Does a clay pot argue with its maker? Does the clay dispute with the one who shapes it, saying, ‘Stop, you’re doing it wrong!’ Does the pot exclaim, ‘How clumsy can you be?’”

Isaiah 45:9

- Is it right to argue with God? Of course, the answer is ‘no’. God has a plan! (Romans 9:20)
 - Put effort into working with Him – Through prayer, reading the word, keeping a bible journal.
 - Ask for understanding
9. **Choose well, walk wisely (humbly, carefully)**
- Read and discuss 2 Corinthians 4:7
 - Shining light...God in creation ‘Let there be light in Darkness’.
 - Treasure is the knowledge of God revealed in Jesus Christ.
 - Gods Power is perfected in our weakness.

Prayer:

“Father help me to draw close to you, to understand my circumstances better and to know how to have your perspective in every situation. Help me to understand how to build my faith and understand your peace.

In Jesus name, Amen.”

Going Deeper

Personal Spiritual Response

How is God speaking into your life right now? What decisions need to be made?

Have you made a personal commitment to fully trust in Jesus? Have you been baptised? If not, there is information at bcc.church/baptism to learn more.

Why not contact the Pastoral team to consider whether baptism, an Alpha Course or joining a Life Group could be a next step for you? Contact info@bcc.church for more information.

Serving Opportunity

BCC's directory of service opportunities <https://bcc.church/ministries> may help you find an opportunity to grow spiritually, whilst helping others.

