

May 27, 2018

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Unfinished: Toward the Finished Work!

1 Corinthians

Why did the man credited with the naming of our community stop here in Damascus on his westward journey from Iowa? Would you believe he saw potential in the dirt? There is a parallel with those Corinthians who had identified themselves as followers of Jesus...

- I. Believers are INFUSED with potential.
- II. Believers may be INCAPACITATED by sin.
- III. Believers stand IN NEED of challenge.

The process of creating a finished clay pot, with just the right pressure to form and press and mold it into a useful vessel, provides an apt picture of God's work in the life of the believer. He will continue to shape us until we are finished, formed to be like Jesus when we stand in His presence.



Consider the concept of “creating an impression”—perhaps even get out some play-dough and make a few impressions to illustrate. Potters often use stamps to create designs by making such impressions, fired permanently into their finished product. Parents, share about some people or events that have “made an impression” on your life, shaping your character more into the likeness of Jesus. Talk together about how God works in our lives to create such impressions through different experiences, those that we consider “good,” and even those that are difficult.

**For Further Study, Thought, and Discussion:**

1. Identify some of the things God has allowed that infuse your life with potential. Consider those things particularly spiritual,

but other aspects of your life (strengths, traits, character, talents, opportunities, etc.) as well.

- What are some things you have done to make the most of your potential?
  - Are there any ways you are (or should be) seeking to develop your potential now?
  - If you have family (spouse, children), what potential do you see in their lives, and how can you encourage the full development of that potential?
2. As you think back through our study of 1 Corinthians, what were some of the sins Paul confronted that were incapacitating to the church in Corinth?
    - What did he suggest as a remedy for each?
    - Read Hebrews 12:1-11. What should be done with sin that “clings so closely” (ESV)?
    - In that passage, what will God do as the master potter, to shape us into a useful vessel?
    - In Hebrews 12:10, what is the end God has in view?

3. As noted in the message, Paul challenges believers on several sin issues that reveal their lingering worldliness and immaturity.
  - Do you think in doing this that Paul is pursuing love, as he commands them to do (1 Corinthians 14:1)? Why?
  - How open are you to a challenge that comes from a brother or sister regarding a sin or area of immaturity observed in your life? Is your tendency to assume they are acting in love for you? Should you assume so?
  - Do you love your brothers and sisters to the degree that you would offer them a challenge or warning about an observed sin (see Galatians 6:1)?
  - How can you make certain love is your motive in bringing correction? What lesser motives might “taint” the effort, and how can you put them in check?

**NEXT WEEK:** “In Process”