

STUDY THREE: GOD'S SHAPING HAND (Chapters 6-7)

Jeremiah 18:1-18

Open

1. Think of a time when you had a plan to create something but you couldn't complete the project because you needed someone else who wasn't willing to help. What were your reactions, internal and external, to the other person?
2. Now think of a time when your plan worked well because the other person was willing and eager to help. What were your reactions this time?
3. When has a person who seemed ordinary on the outside served you in a way that was particularly meaningful?

Study

Read Jeremiah 18:1-18.

4. What words would you use to describe God's feelings about the nation of Israel in this passage?
5. What words could be used to describe Jeremiah's feelings?
6. What would be a contemporary parallel to the analogy of the potter: someone who tries to create something but needs the participation of whatever is being molded?
7. In what ways did the nation of Israel resist being molded by God (vv. 13-15)?
8. What was God's response to their resistance (vv. 16-17)?
9. What are some of the ways that people today, especially Christians, resist being molded by God?
10. Jeremiah had to pay a price for allowing God to mold him. In fact he was repeatedly criticized, cursed, slandered and thrown into jail (v. 18). What price have you had to pay for following God in the past?

11. When has God showed patience with you, starting over in his effort to mold you?
12. Knowing that we all sometimes resist God's workings, why do you think God puts up with us?

Commit

13. What are some actions—however small—you can take to help God mold you into a more mature Christian?
14. What are some possible frustrations or hardships you might face by allowing God to mold you? Try to be specific.

Talk to God about the work he is doing and will be doing in you. Freely express your fear and hesitation as well as your excitement.