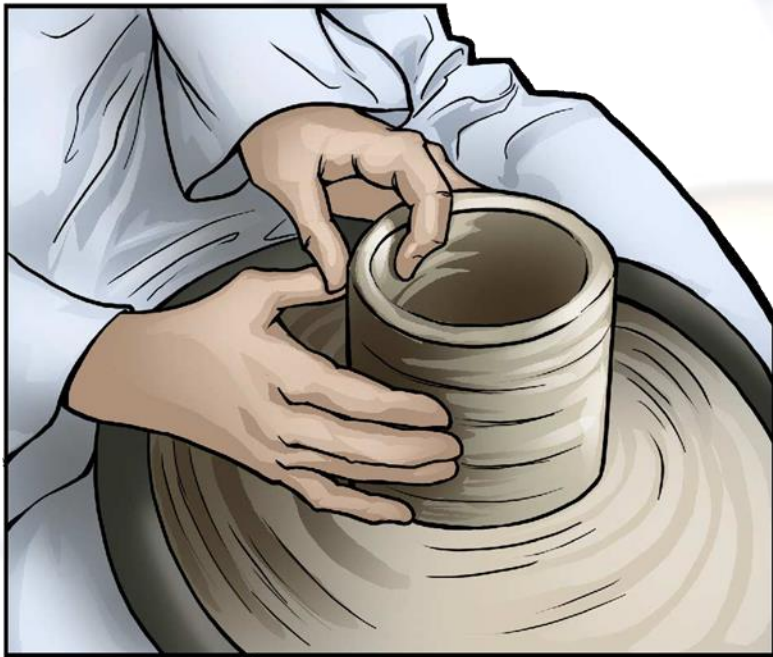


# The Pottery Exhibition

## 陶瓷展

The display cases at a pottery exhibition I visited recently were filled with items, large and small, some functional and some decorative, but all crafted with care. Practical coffee sets and elegant vases, ordinary fruit bowls and intricate ornaments, plaques and plates and figurines, mugs and jugs, jam jars and soup tureens, teapots, coffeepots, and sugar bowls—each item spoke of its creator's passion and attention to detail. The art of fashioning clay into bricks, tiles, or porcelain objects is one of the oldest known to the human race.

我最近參觀了一個陶瓷展，展覽館裡的展品琳琅滿目，大小各異，有實用的，也有裝飾用的，全都是精心製作。實用的咖啡飲具和雅緻的花瓶，普通水果盤和精細的飾品、匾、盤子、小雕像，馬克杯、水瓶、果醬罐，沙鍋、茶壺、咖啡壺和糖罐子，樣樣都表達出製作者的熱愛和對細節的注意。用黏土製作磚瓦或瓷器，是人類所知最古老的藝術之一。



Each item started off as a lump of clay, more or less. What made the difference? A pair of skillful hands, to be sure, but more than that: a purpose and a design. Will this item be a slender vase to display bouquets of flowers, or a set of dishes? Will the craftsman fashion a tiny pitcher to pour cream for coffee, or a large jar for pickling vegetables?

God is a potter. We are the clay vessels of His design. He fashioned each of us to be a unique vessel for a unique purpose. He knew exactly where to place each part, each handle, and each spout. He knew which areas needed to be solid and strong.



這些東西最初幾乎都是一團泥。造成差別的是什麼呢？一雙靈巧的手，這是一定的，但除此以外更重要的是：目的和設計。把它做成一個展示花束的纖巧花瓶，還是一套餐具？匠人會把它塑造成一個盛裝奶油、好把它加在咖啡裡的小壺，還是把它做成一個醃泡菜用的大罐子呢？

上帝是一位陶匠。我們是祂設計做成的陶器。祂把我們每個人造成一個獨特的器皿，以實現一個獨特的目的。祂很清楚該把每一部分、每一個把手、每一個壺口準確地安裝在哪裡。祂知道哪些部位需要結實、堅固。



No matter how inadequate I feel, and how many talents and qualities I lack, God knew what I would need for the purpose He created me to fulfill, my destiny. To grumble about or belittle what He has given me is as ridiculous as the fruit bowl lamenting, "I'm missing a spout," or the vase complaining, "I'm too tall," or the teapot moaning, "I'm just too fat." And what about the plate? Would he gripe, "Why am I so flat and plain?" No, each of these items is designed to fulfill its function.

無論我自覺有多麼不足，缺少多少才幹和優點，上帝知道我的需要為何，以完成祂創造我的目的，實現我的命運。抱怨或小看祂所賜給我的，就有如水果盤哀嘆說：「我少了一個壺口」一樣，又或是像花瓶抱怨說：「我太高了」，或是茶壺抱怨說：「我實在太胖了。」盤子又會怎麼樣呢？它會不會牢騷滿腹：「我為什麼這樣又扁又醜？」不會的，這些東西，每一件都被設計來執行它特別的功能。



I saw some beautiful examples of pottery at the exhibition, but when I got home, I didn't regret not owning any of them. I was happy to pick up my old favorite coffee mug, which faithfully fulfills its purpose each day.

I have a feeling that's how God sees us. He made us and equipped us for what He wants us to be and do in this life, and nothing pleases Him more than seeing us live up to that potential.

我在陶瓷展看到不少漂亮的樣品，但當我回家後，我並不遺憾自己不擁有其中的任何一件。我開心地拿起我最喜愛的那個舊咖啡杯，它每天忠實地完成它的使命。

我有種感覺，上帝也是這樣看待我們。祂創造並裝備了我們，使我們成為祂希望我們成為的人，及做到祂希望我們在今生去做的事，沒有什麼會比看到我們努力發揮自己的潛能更讓祂高興了。