



UNDER PRESSURE

UNDER PRESSURE, PART 4: THE POWER IN THE PRESSURE

We've all been there. The pressure of difficulty, pain, and hard seasons in our lives. We cannot pretend that there is not a side of pressure that is not just plain hard. Loss, betrayal, abandonment, abuse, death, divorce, sickness, loneliness, fear, confusion, anxiety, stress—the list of hard things is long and painful, and a place where most of prefer to spend as little time as possible. Yet God is creating something in our lives.

THE BIG IDEA: When we are under great pressure, God gives us His great power.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Definition of Pressure: n. : The burden of physical or mental distress, the constraint of circumstance, impression, the act of force against an opposing force, the stress or urgency of matters demanding attention.

1. As we have seen throughout this series, many people view pressure in a negative sense, yet without pressure? Life couldn't exist. How has your ideas of pressure changed over this series?
2. Chris said, *"The key to successfully throwing a pot is to keep these forces in balance. Apply too much external force and the clay will collapse. Allow friction and centrifugal force to take over too much and the piece will fly off the wheel. One of the most important steps is to center the clay, making it less vulnerable to the centrifugal force."* In what ways do you feel the forces of the wheel of life spinning you out?
3. Kim said, *"Paul's life was greatly changed and used by God. But even while He was doing what God wanted, he suffered beatings, imprisonment, starvation, shipwrecks, and snake bites. He was hated, falsely accused, betrayed, lied about, and continually attacked. Yet he persevered. Throughout his suffering, he finds strength and even joy as he counts it a privilege to suffer for the name of Christ."* Has there been a time in your life where you suffered hard things even though you had done nothing wrong? How did you react? In what ways can you find joy in suffering?
4. [With your Bible or Bible App, read 2 Corinthians 4:7-9.](#)

"We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves. We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed."

[2 Corinthians 4:7-9 \(NLT\)](#)

5. Pressed, Perplexed, Hunted Down and Knocked Down are all things Paul experienced. In what ways have you experienced these circumstances?
6. Not Crushed, Not Driven to Despair, Never Abandoned, Not Destroyed are also things Paul experienced. In what ways have you experienced these circumstances?
7. Kim said, *"When we are at the end of our rope, we are never at the end of our HOPE."* Describe a time that you felt at the 'end of your rope'. Where were you able to find hope?
8. What happens when you are pressed? What comes out of you when you get pressed?

When the potter's wheel is spinning, the objective of the potter is to fight this force. With the careful and intentional pressure of His hands, he manipulates the clay—pulling it upward against the force that is pulling it outward. The turning is part of the shaping. God—your Potter—controls the clay of your life with His hands. By His great power, He moves us towards the center of the wheel and shapes us in an even manner pulling us ever closer to Him.

9. How does the image of God pulling us toward Him give you comfort?

10. Chris said, “Life does not go back to normal after being pressed. We cannot be touched by His hands and remain the same. God as the Potter touches us and changes us. As He does? We begin to live differently. His pressing brings something new out in us and changes what comes out of us.” What is pressing you? Or better yet, WHO is pressing you? What is coming out of you as the result of the pressing? Good things or bad things? Explain.

11. [With your Bible or Bible App, read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.](#)

That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So, we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever. [2 Corinthians 4:16-18 \(NLT\)](#)

12. How can you choose to not give up? How does thinking about our home in heaven help your perspective of the troubles we face here on earth? What do our troubles here produce for us?

13. [With your Bible or Bible App, read Romans 5:3-5.](#)

We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love. [Romans 5:3-5 \(NLT\)](#)

14. Just look at the beautiful things that God can bring out of our problems and trials. Endurance, strength of character, confident hope. How do these qualities measure up in your life? Will you allow problems and trials to build these areas in you?

THINK ABOUT IT

Read the story about the [Hammer, the File, and the Furnace](#).

If you weren't important, do you think He would take this long and work this hard on your life? Those whom God uses most effectively have been spun out, pulled up, stretched out, and shaped on the wheel, and placed in the furnace of trials and heartache. Take time to thank your Master for any trials and heartaches in this season of your life. *God allows suffering in your life to shape you, not ruin you.*

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

It's easy to become disillusioned and possibly bitter from the problems, troubles and trials that come our way. But we must only remember that we are in the good hands of the Potter. Will you choose to stay or run from your difficult circumstances in which God is making and molding you?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. [2 Corinthians 4:7 \(NLT\)](#)