

Aspects of Character ~ The Refining Process

1. For Christmas, anniversaries or birthdays, jewelry is always a popular gift item. Gold jewelry is made from 14-karat, 18-karat, 22-karat, or 24-karat gold. What's the difference between them?

2. What do you know about the metal refining process that brings about such beauty and quality in fine silver and gold?

3. In the dictionary, "Refine" means several things:

- A. to reduce to a pure state, as with sugar, metal, or oil
- B. to free from moral imperfection
- C. to improve by pruning or polishing
- D. to free from what is coarse, vulgar, or uncouth, as with a refined person

4. When the Bible speaks of "refining," to which of these definitions does it refer?

5. What does the Bible say about refining?

A. Metal is refined and purified in a furnace; the Lord purifies and tests the heart. (Prov 17:3)

B. We must be refined before our offerings are acceptable to the Lord. (Malachi 3:2-4)

C. Refining is used by God to discipline us. Expect it and accept it. (Job 5:17, Ezekiel 22:21-22)

D. The Lord's people will be tested in the furnace of affliction (or great suffering). (Isaiah 1:25, 4:4, 48:10 and Jeremiah 9:7)

E. The Lord examines your heart for secret motives. (Jeremiah 17:10)

F. You may be refined by being persecuted. (Daniel 11:35)

G. Those who survive will be refined and tested by the Lord. (Zechariah 13:9)

H. Refining brings eternal glory. (2 Corinthians 4:17, Hebrews 12:11)

6. Describe a recent situation that at the time was difficult but later you could look back at it from the point of view of refining your character.

7. How can you get involved with the refining process today?

A. Remember, refining does not come from listening to sermons or reading the Bible. It comes from being exposed to difficult situations, enduring affliction, and remaining steadfast in your faith and your love of the Lord.

B. Pray that you recognize the hand of the Refiner in difficult situations.

The Refining Process ~ Scripture Verses

5. A. Prov 17:3 - Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but the Lord tests the heart.

B. Malachi 3:2-4 - ²“But who will be able to endure it when he comes? Who will be able to stand and face him when he appears? For he will be like a blazing fire that refines metal, or like a strong soap that bleaches clothes. ³ He will sit like a refiner of silver, burning away the dross. He will purify the Levites, refining them like gold and silver, so that they may once again offer acceptable sacrifices to the Lord. ⁴ Then once more the Lord will accept the offerings brought to him by the people of Judah and Jerusalem, as he did in the past.

C. Job 5:17 - “But consider the joy of those corrected by God! Do not despise the discipline of the Almighty when you sin.

Ezekiel 22:21-22 - ²¹ I will gather you together and blow the fire of my anger upon you, ²² and you will melt like silver in fierce heat. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have poured out my fury on you.”

D. Isaiah 1:25 - I will raise my fist against you. I will melt you down and skim off your slag. I will remove all your impurities

Isaiah 4:4 - The Lord will wash the filth from beautiful Zion and cleanse Jerusalem of its bloodstains with the hot breath of fiery judgment.

Isaiah 48:10 - I have refined you, but not as silver is refined. Rather, I have refined you in the furnace of suffering.

Jeremiah 9:7 - Therefore, this is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies says: “See, I will melt them down in a crucible and test them like metal. What else can I do with my people?”

E. Jeremiah 17:10 - But I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve.”

F. Daniel 11:35 - And some of the wise will fall victim to persecution. In this way, they will be refined and cleansed and made pure until the time of the end, for the appointed time is still to come.

G. Zechariah 13:9 - I will bring that group through the fire and make them pure. I will refine them like silver and purify them like gold. They will call on my name, and I will answer them. I will say, ‘These are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The Lord is our God.’”

H. 2 Corinthians 4:17 - 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!

Hebrews 12:11 - No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

Scripture verses above from the New Living Testament (NLT)