

Memory Verse

Isaiah 48:10

**Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver;
I have tried you in the furnace of affliction.**

GRACELIFE



CHURCH

GOD'S PURPOSES IN PAIN - PART 3

TO PURIFY US

We **first** considered **God's character** and having a **Biblical** and **proper perspective** of ***who He is***, and the *importance of this when it comes to understanding problems*. If we don't have a Biblical view of His character, then we will not be able to see His hand in the problems we face. **Second**, *one reason God **directly** brings or **indirectly** permits problems in our lives, is to **prove us or test us***. God tests His people: Abraham, to the

nation of Israel, to others, and us. God does this for a **variety of reasons**: to show us what is *in our heart*, to show us *where our love is*, to show us *if we will follow and obey Him or not*, to show *what is good*, and show us *where our faith is*, whether in Him or something or someone else.

A. Defining Purify

1. To **make pure** or **clear** from material defilement... or imperfection; to **free from** extraneous or noxious matter; as, to purify... metals... [or] air.
2. ...in figurative uses: To **free from guilt** or **moral defilement**; as, to **purify the heart**.
3. To **free from ceremonial or legal defilement**.



B. God Uses Problems to Purify Us

1 Peter 1:6-7 - In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by **various trials**, so that the tested genuineness of your faith - more precious than **gold** that perishes though it is **tested by fire** - may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

B. God Uses Problems to Purify Us

Malachi 3:2-3 - But who can endure the day of his coming [*Day of the Lord*], and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a **refiner's fire** and like fullers' soap. 3He will sit as a **refiner** and **purifier** of **silver**, and he will **purify** the sons of Levi and **refine** them like **gold** and **silver**, and they will **bring offerings in righteousness** to the LORD.

B. God Uses Problems to Purify Us

This refers to *the end times* and what God will do with the Levites, and the *nation of Israel* who survive until the end. **Zechariah 13:7-9** mentions this too. God did this previously with the nation, as Isaiah states.

Isaiah 48:10 - Behold, I have **refined** you, but not as **silver**; I have **tried** you in the **furnace of affliction**.

B. God Uses Problems to Purify Us

Step 1: The Brokenness. The refiner in biblical times broke up the hardened ore so that possible precious metals of gold and silver could be exposed to heat. In truth, we are all rough rock in need of brokenness and God's refining fire.

B. God Uses Problems to Purify Us

Step 2: The Crucible. The refiner puts the broken, crushed ore into a crucible - a fireproof melting pot able to withstand extreme heat. Then the crucible is placed into the furnace. Our Refiner puts us into a crucible and then into the heated furnace to purify our hearts. *“The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart”* (Proverbs 17:3).

B. God Uses Problems to Purify Us

Step 3: The Dross. The refiner watches as the ore melts in the crucible and sees a layer of impurities - called dross - form on the surface. Then he removes the dross. For us individually, “dross” represents anything that keeps us from being all that God wants us to be. *“Remove the dross from the silver, and a silversmith can produce a vessel”* (Proverbs 25:4).

B. God Uses Problems to Purify Us

Step 4: The Purification. The refiner skims the dross off the surface, looks into the crucible, and **sees a dim image of himself.** Then he carefully **turns up the heat** and places the crucible back into the blistering furnace . . . again and again . . . up to seven times. Why the higher heat? He knows that **only certain impurities are released at certain temperatures.**

B. God Uses Problems to Purify Us

Step 5: The Reflection. To gauge his progress, the refiner **looks for his own reflection** on the surface of the melted silver or gold in the crucible. The **more dross removed**, the **less distorted his image**. Only when the refiner sees a **clear reflection of himself** in the crucible is the process complete... As we **trust God to use our pain to purify our hearts**, our **character** will come

B. God Uses Problems to Purify Us

forth as gold. *“He knows the way that I take; when he has **tested** me, I will come forth as **gold**”* (Job 23:10).

From: <https://www.hopefortheheart.org/march-2015-gods-refining-process/>

B. God Uses Problems to Purify Us

Generally, *heat increases gradually*. Yet, there are times when we are "*thrown into the fire*" suddenly, when the test is immediate, such as a *sudden loss, catastrophe, etc.* But even in those, in the past, the *Lord heated up life before, to prepare us to face the current situation.*

B. God Uses Problems to Purify Us

1 Corinthians 10:13 - No temptation [*test*] has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted [*tested*] beyond your ability, but with the temptation [*test*] he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

C. What Does God Use to Purify Us?

Everything!

**While the Lord uses good things to shape us,
we are *most often shaped by our responses
to the difficulties we face.***

C. What Does God Use to Purify Us?

God uses all types of problems.

James 1:2a - Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds...

The word "*kinds*" helps us understand what James means, but the word "*various*" can mean "*different colors*."



C. What Does God Use to Purify Us?

1 John 4:18 - There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.

God's **holy love** purifies us through problems. *God does not leave us where He found us.* He changes us into the image of Christ.

C. What Does God Use to Purify Us?

Sometimes the **fire is mild** or the **color is light**. Sometimes it is **very hot**, or the **color is dark**. Other times, the *heat seems unbearable* and it seems we are *being colored in many ways!* But in every situation, or whatever "**color**" God uses, He is doing this ***because of His holiness and His love for you, and me***, and though we don't understand or even believe it at the time, we must trust in His character!

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace; behind a frowning providence, He hides a smiling face."

William Cowper

D. From What Does God Purify Us?

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Galatians 5:16-24 - But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity,

sensuality, 20idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24And those who

**belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the
flesh with its passions and desires.**

D. From What Does God Purify Us?

Paul **contrasts** the *works of the flesh*, or **fruit of our sinful desires**, with the **fruit of the Spirit**. He talks about the Law and says *those who continuously live in these sinful ways will not inherit the Kingdom*, and in the case of salvation, are not Christians. In *context*, he warns them not to be enslaved to the Law, and not to be enslaved to the flesh. Rather than *being led by the flesh*, in contrast, we are to be **led by the Spirit**.

D. From What Does God Purify Us?

*He uses problems to **build Christlikeness** in us, by burning what is not Christlike in us. Sometimes, in order to build up, you must tear down first. He must tear down our pride, our anger, our strife, our jealousy, our immorality, our divisions, our arrogance, to **build Christlikeness**. He also encourages us and confronts us where we have our fears, insecurities, struggles and baggage. Problems do this too, in order to **build Christlikeness**.*

Romans 5:3-5 - Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance (*patience*), 4and endurance produces **character**, and **character** produces hope, 5and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

D. From What Does God Purify Us?

God purifies us to *create a stronger character within us*, to become more like Christ. This means we learn to be more loving, honest, open, truthful, bold, and obedient.

Psalm 119:67 - Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word.

D. From What Does God Purify Us?

1. **Moses** – excuses, false humility, and inadequacy.
2. **Peter** – pride and self-reliance.
3. **Michael** – selfishness.