

REFINING FIRE



By Rhoda Collins

"But who can endure the day of His coming? And who can stand when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and He will purify the priests, the sons of Levi, and refine them like gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord offerings in righteousness." Malachi 3:2-3

How does God purify us through fire?

One of the ways that the Bible describes the process of being broken and made whole is through the example of the refiner. In [Malachi 3:2-3](#), it says that when the Lord comes to work on us (His temple) ... He is changing us into His image. As we yield or surrender to Him, we let our flesh be purified through His refining fire. When we don't surrender to God, preferring instead to do our own will, how can His will be done in us and through us?

There is a story of a man who purifies gold in the fire to take out all the impurities. He says that it has to stay in the fire, but the fire has to stay at just the right temperature. If it gets too hot, the gold will be destroyed. On the other hand, if the fire dies down too low, then the gold will harden with

the impurities still in it. So, he has to work on the gold and make sure the temperature stays just right. The man also said that the gold is pure and ready when he can look and see his reflection in it. Day by day as we come in the presence of the Lord, God refines us, removing the impurities in our character.

After our body and soul have been dealt with, then we can begin the process of being reformed in His image and likeness. This process of reformation can occur only after the flesh and the soul have been dealt with through the process of the Lord's pruning and His all-consuming fire.

James 1:21 "So get rid of all uncleanness and the rampant outgrowth of wickedness, and in a humble (gentle, modest) spirit receive *and* welcome the Word which implanted *and* rooted [in your hearts] contains the power to save your souls."

It is the Lord's intent and desire to restore us to His image and likeness. He is a willing Potter ready to do the work necessary to shape us as He wills. Our job, again, is to yield and submit to this process.

"But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand" (Isaiah 64:8).

Very often many people can be Christians all of their life and yet never be taught what it means to die to self. If we feed our Spirit with the Word of God, it will become strong enough that we will no longer let our flesh rule us.

"For the Word that God speaks is alive and full of power [making it active, operative, energizing, and effective]; it is sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating to the dividing line of the breath of life (soul) and [the immortal] spirit, and of joints and marrow [of the deepest parts of our nature], exposing *and* sifting *and* analyzing *and* judging the very thoughts and purposes of the heart." Hebrews 4:12

If we want God's best we must endure the fire of purification. It is necessary to complete the transformation that the Lord wishes for all of us to go through.

Surrender means pain before pleasure. Ultimately, only a select few will go through this process. As soon as pain starts, many run away. They won't continue to go through the process. How unfortunate. This is the road to restoration. This is the road to intimacy with God. This is the road to the greatest depth in and with God. The pruning deals with our flesh. The consuming fire deals with our soul. After these have been dealt with, then

the Potter can transform the clay, the dirt, from which He made the original Adam, into His image and likeness. This is His desire. I would ask you Saints, is it your desire?

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself (Luke adds the word daily), and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24).

He wants to complete this process in us for the rewards for us are great. We have His Word that He will commit to this process, if we will allow Him to. We allow Him to by being totally yielded vessels and by remaining soft and pliable in His hands, as He reshapes and forms us.

As always, we must be led by the Holy Spirit in all that we do. We must pray for discernment to know when to climb back onto the Potter’s wheel, to allow Him to continue to perform His work in us.

The fire of God comes to burn up all the useless things in our lives and leave what is left, to burn brightly for Him. Sometimes the fire of God comes through unpleasant circumstances and here God wants us to remain stable and display His character, as we go through tough times. We must learn to be content as we go through His fire. God will never put on us, more than we can bear.

Everyone wants to enjoy God’s benefits, but few are willing to go through the purification process.

Accept God’s refining fire in your life. Ask Him for the strength to endure whatever He needs to put you through. He wants you to be a success! To fulfill your destiny as a royal priest and joint heir with Jesus!

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