

Proverbs 27:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold; so is a man to his praise.

Analysis

As the fining pot for silver, and the furnace for gold (מַצְרֵף לְקָסֶף וְכָור לְזָהָב, matzeref lakkesef ve'khur lazahav)—the מַצְרֵף (matzeref, 'crucible, refining pot') and כָּור (kur, 'furnace') test metal purity by extreme heat, burning away dross. Malachi 3:2-3 uses this imagery for God's refining work.

So is a man to his praise (וְאִישׁ לְפִי מְהֻלָּלו, ve'ish lefi mehallelo)—how a man handles תְּהִלָּה (tehillah, 'praise, commendation') reveals his character. Does praise produce humility or arrogance? Gratitude or entitlement? The test of success often proves harder than the test of adversity. Herod accepted worship and was struck down (Acts 12:21-23); David deflected glory to God (2 Samuel 7:18-29).

Historical Context

Ancient metalworking required intense heat (over 1000°C for gold) to separate precious metal from impurities. Refiners watched the molten metal until they could see their reflection in its surface—a picture of God's refining work continuing until He sees His image in us (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How do you respond when praised—with pride, deflection to God, or awkward dismissal?
2. What does your reaction to recognition reveal about your identity and security?
3. Can you identify ways God has used both adversity and success to refine your character?

Interlinear Text

לְפִי אֲשֶׁר מִצְרַי מִצְרַי	לְזַהֲבָה בְּלַכְדָּה וְלַכְדָּה מִצְרַי	וְלַכְדָּה מִצְרַי וְלַכְדָּה בְּלַכְדָּה			
As the fining pot for silver and the furnace	for gold so is a man to his	and the furnace	for gold	so is a man	to his

מִפְלָלוֹ:

praise

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Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 17:3 (Parallel theme): The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.

Zechariah 13:9 (Parallel theme): And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God.

Psalms 66:10 (Parallel theme): For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

Malachi 3:3 (Parallel theme): And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

1 Peter 1:7 (Resurrection): That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

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