

Studies in the Book of Proverbs by [John T Polk II](#)
For [The Fellowship Room](#)

(#120) The Proverbs of Solomon 17:3- Christians Must Do "Hard Time"

Since God Created humans, only God can provide specific understanding of human behavior. God gave Solomon Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**) to explain what and why behavior is as it is, and **Proverbs 10:1 - 24:34** are randomly written, as if they were Judgments Solomon made about individual cases brought to him for Divine Wisdom (**1 Kings Chapters 3 and 10**), or simply God-given explanations about life. New Testament passages may help see the continuation of Wisdom offered through Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 17:3:

The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the hearts.

"Silver" increases in value when "refined" by extreme heat, which drives off its dross (non-silver particles). "Gold," likewise, requires a fiery "furnace" to release its impurities. The point of the proverb begins with the stated, understood fact that passing through an extreme circumstance is part of the refining process that purifies our precious metals.

Our experience in life is our "refining pot" or "furnace," which should be used for purifying our character.

You reject all those who stray from Your statutes, For their deceit is falsehood. You put away all the wicked of the earth like dross; therefore I love Your testimonies. (**Psalm 119:118-119**)

All who obey God's "statutes" can endure the process. This is supported in other Proverbs:

- Take away the dross from silver, and it will go to the silversmith *for* jewelry. (**Proverbs 25:4**)
- The refining pot *is* for silver and the furnace for gold, and a man *is valued* by what others say of him. (**Proverbs 27:21**)

We are tested by compliments, and no one should take credit for all of his accomplishments or blessings and ignore God's part in it, as King Herod did (**Acts 12:20-24**). Jesus warned against letting others' opinions direct our way:

Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for so did their fathers to the false prophets. (**Luke 6:26**)



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When Jerusalem “became a harlot,” it was like their silver became dross, so God promised to turn His hand against them “And thoroughly purge away your dross, and take away all your alloy” ([Isaiah 1:21-25](#)). The process was detailed in Ezekiel:

The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, the house of Israel has become dross to Me; they are all bronze, tin, iron, and lead, in the midst of a furnace; they have become dross from silver. Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “Because you have all become dross, therefore behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As men gather silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into the midst of a furnace, to blow fire on it, to melt it; so I will gather you in My anger and in My fury, and I will leave you there and melt you. Yes, I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you shall be melted in its midst. As silver is melted in the midst of a furnace, so shall you be melted in its midst; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have poured out My fury on you.’ ([Ezekiel 22:17-22](#))

Evidence that God lives, cares, and interacts to help Christians’ faith is that we are tested:

My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction; for whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights. ([Proverbs 3:11-12](#), quoted and applied to Christians in [Hebrews 12:3-11](#))

When things seem to go wrong for us, maybe we should examine ourselves to see if our faith needs refining.

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? --unless indeed you are disqualified. ([2 Corinthians 13:5](#))

