

The Flame That Forms Us [Heating]

Discussion Guide

Summary

This sermon discusses the concept of God as a refiner who purifies believers through life's trials and difficulties, similar to how precious metals are refined by fire. Jonathan draws parallels between the process of refining metals and how God shapes and molds believers to become more Christ-like. Just as a refiner carefully watches over metals during the purification process, God never takes His eyes off His people during their trials, remaining close until His image is reflected in them.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, as we gather to discuss Your refining process in our lives, we ask that You open our hearts and minds to understand Your purpose in our trials. Help us to see Your loving hand at work in our lives and give us the wisdom to learn from one another's experiences. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Ice Breaker

Share about a time when you bought something inexpensive that didn't last very long. What did you learn from that experience?

Key Verses

- Zechariah 13:9
- Malachi 3:1-3
- Proverbs 17:3
- 1 Corinthians 3:10-15
- James 1:2-4

Questions

- What is your initial reaction when you face trials or difficulties in your life?
- How does viewing trials as refinement rather than punishment change your perspective?
- The sermon mentions that God never takes His eyes off us during refinement. How does this truth impact your faith?
- What are some 'cheap materials' in your spiritual life that might need to be burned away?
- How have past trials helped shape you to be more like Christ?
- Why do you think it's difficult to 'consider it joy' when facing trials, as James 1:2-4 suggests?
- What does it mean to you personally to reflect God's image?
- How can we support each other as a group when going through seasons of refinement?

Life Application

This week, when you encounter a difficult situation, instead of asking 'Why me?', pause and ask 'What is God trying to build in me through this?' Keep a journal of your reflections and share with the group next week how this change in perspective affected your response to challenges.

Key Takeaways

- Refinement is not punishment, but preparation for God's purpose
- God never takes His eyes off us during the refining process
- The purpose of trials is to develop endurance and spiritual growth

- Purity comes through refinement
- We should embrace refinement with joy, knowing it makes us more like Christ

Ending Prayer

Lord, thank You for Your careful attention to our spiritual growth. Help us to trust Your refining process in our lives, even when it's uncomfortable. Give us the strength to endure trials with joy, knowing that You are shaping us to reflect Your image more clearly. May we support one another through seasons of refinement and celebrate the work You're doing in each of our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.