

## **As fine silver...**

Malachi 3:3 says: "*He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.*" This verse puzzled some women in a Bible study. They got to wondering what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out the process of refining silver and get back to the group.

That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest, so as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot, and then she thought again about the verse that says: "He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver." She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined.

The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed. The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?"

He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy - when I see my image in it."

So if today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has his eye on you and will keep watching you. His aim is not to abandon or destroy you, but to refine you - until he sees his image in you.