

QUESTION: What is the meaning of

Proverbs 27:21, which says, “The crucible is for silver, and the furnace for gold; and a man is tested by the praise he receives” (NIV)?

ANSWER: In biblical times, a crucible (a container for melting metal) and a furnace were places of intense heat used to purify precious metals. Metals like gold and silver were melted in these furnaces to separate them from impurities. The process reveals the quality of the metal by burning off the unwanted material, leaving behind something pure and refined. This concept is used in Proverbs 27:21 to describe how a person’s character is tested and revealed through the praise they receive.

When someone is praised, it acts as a test of their true character. Just as gold or silver cannot shine without passing through the fire, a person’s heart cannot be truly revealed until they are tested by the praise or recognition they receive. The Bible emphasizes this principle of refinement through testing:

What Does Proverbs 27:21 Mean When It Says, “A Man is Tested by the Praise He Receives”?

- *James 1:12 (NIV)* says, “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.”
- *1 Peter 1:7 (NIV)* also highlights this testing: “These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

What does this mean for us in practical terms? When a person is praised, whether for their abilities, wealth, or achievements, it becomes an opportunity for their character to be revealed. Are they humble or prideful? Do they use their success to serve others, or do they let it inflate their ego?

Examples of Tested Character:

- **Humility in Talent:** Someone may have a talent, like singing, and receive praise for it. If their character remains humble, without becoming arrogant, and they continue to honor God with their gift, they are like gold refined in the fire. The praise doesn't change who they are; their humility remains intact.

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1 Peter 5:5-6 (NIV) teaches, “In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, ‘God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.’ Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.”

- **Wealth and Responsibility:** Another person might become wealthy but use their resources to bless others and stay humble. Their wealth doesn’t make them look down on others or cause them to become self-centered. In fact, their wealth is a tool to further God’s kingdom and help those in need.

Proverbs 3:9-10 (NIV) says, “Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.”

- **The Danger of Pride:** On the flip side, someone may gain fame or education and let it change their behavior. They may start distancing themselves from those they view as “beneath” them, becoming proud, arrogant, and self-serving. This is a clear indication that they failed the test of praise and have not remained grounded in humility.

Proverbs 16:18 (NIV) warns, “Pride goes before destruction, a

haughty spirit before a fall.”

The Bible teaches that humility is the true measure of a person’s character. It is not enough to look good or receive praise it is how you handle it that reveals who you really are. Jesus Himself showed us the ultimate example of humility, despite being the Son of God. In

Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV), it says:

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!”

How Do We Handle Praise?

Ultimately, the way we respond to praise reveals our inner character. When we are praised, it can either refine us or expose

our weaknesses. As Christians, our goal is to follow Jesus Christ’s example of humility and service.

Matthew 23:12 (NIV) says, “For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” When we remain humble, regardless of success or praise, God promises to lift us up in His perfect time.

Are You in Christ?

If you haven’t yet made the decision to follow Jesus, now is the time. We are living in the last days.

Ephesians 5:15-16 (NIV) encourages us, “Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.”

Living life focused only on personal gain—eating, drinking, and building wealth—is not the purpose we were created for. God created us to do His will and to bring glory to Him. If you want to experience the purpose-filled life God has for you, surrender your

life to Jesus Christ today. When the final trumpet sounds, you'll be ready to join Him in eternity.

If you're ready to turn away from your sins and give your life to Jesus, say this prayer of repentance:

“Lord Jesus, I acknowledge that I am a sinner, and I believe You died for my sins and rose again. I ask You to forgive me and come into my life. Help me to follow You and live out Your will. In Your name, Amen.”

God bless you.

Shalom.

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