

# Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

## Refinement - Part 1

Heather Packett

### Introduction

The word 'unprecedented' has been used quite often lately to describe the times we are living in. We face external uncertainties and changes that affect us inwardly (mental and spiritual health) and outwardly (social life). The life of the leper in Mark 1 offers lessons that are relevant to our own challenges. His social life was stripped away. He couldn't see, touch or hug his family - and that must have brought mental health challenges. Out of desperation and adoration, worship and honour, he fell at Jesus' feet, even at risk of his own life. And his life was forever changed because Jesus cleansed him from his impurities.

### Read

Mark 1:40-45

### Discuss

1. Why did the leper come to Jesus? According to the Jewish law, how should a leper live (see Leviticus 13:45-46)? What challenges might this way of living present?
2. How did Jesus react to the leper? What did He do? In the cultural context of this verse, what did this response mean?
3. Read verse 45. The outcome for the leper was that he regained his place in society. What was the outcome for Jesus? What do you see when you compare these outcomes with the beginning of this passage?
4. Read Malachi 3:2-4 and 1 Peter 1:6-7. Gold is often used as a metaphor for faith. From the clip, we heard Pastor Heather explain the process of refining gold. Ask the group to retell this process in their own words. What stands out to you and how does that relate to your current reality?

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5. Considering the ups and downs due to the pandemic and lockdown that we are currently facing, have you come across your own 'impurities'? Why is it often difficult for us to face those 'impurities'?
6. What is your understanding now of the connection between Mark 1:40-45 and the process of refining gold? How about your faith journey?

### **Respond**

A goldsmith will stop the refining process when they can see their own reflection in the gold. As His disciples, it is important for us to know and understand that we are on a journey to become more like Jesus - to be Jesus with skin on. One way that this happens is when God, our Refiner, is able to process us in the crucible/melting pot. As we experience challenges, our impurities bubble up to the surface and that's when God can scrape them away. Have you allowed God to scrape your own impurities away? What is left when everything is stripped away from you?