

Topic: God is Long-suffering (Lesson 32)

Note: The practical applications provided in the lesson are offered as suggestions to help the saints in their preparation. They are not meant to direct or limit the ways in which the focus of the lesson can be applied. The saints are encouraged to pray and contact the Lord to receive His burden and guidance in teaching and applying the lesson. Fellowship with other saints, and inquiring of the children themselves, may also bring out many helpful applications.

Elementary:

Verse: "Jehovah is long-suffering and great in power" (Nahum 1:3).

Focus: To be long-suffering is to be patient towards people, even those who persecute you. It is to continue showing kindness to someone with the hope that one day they would be nice to you in return. God is long-suffering because even though many people do not believe in Him or say bad things about Him, God continues to show kindness to people with the hope that one day they would believe in Him.

Practical Application: Consider using the following example. Every year, on your first day at school you meet many new children in your classroom. Suppose that at first, one child is not very kind or nice to you. To be long-suffering means to continue being friendly with that classmate with the hope that one day he or she will become your friend.

Intermediate:

Verse: "You also be long-suffering; establish your hearts because the coming of the Lord has drawn near" (James 5:8).

Focus: To be long-suffering is to endure mistreatment. The Lord Jesus has endured much mistreatment from people. We need to follow the pattern of the Lord Jesus and be long-suffering towards people. We do not give up on the troublesome ones but bear them in love.

Practical Application: We all probably know someone who is not nice to us. We want them to be our friend but they reject our friendship and are even mean to us. We should not abandon them or be mean to them. But with long-suffering we should bear their mistreatment of us and continue to be friendly to them with the hope that one day they will be our friend. Consider asking the children if they have a story about how the first time they met someone who did not like them or vice versa but after a while they got to know that person and he/she eventually became one of their very good friends.

Advanced:

Verse: "The Lord does not delay regarding the promise; as some count delay, but is long-suffering toward you, not intending that any perish but that all advance to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Focus: The Lord Jesus in His long-suffering has withheld His judgment of the sinful people for centuries. The sinful people mock the Lord's long-suffering towards us as a delay, tardiness, or slackness. We should regard the Lord's long-suffering as a salvation instead of a delay.

Practical Application: In eternity past God chose you to be one of His believers. In time you were born nearly 2,000 years after the Lord Jesus lived, died, resurrected and ascended to the heavens as the Lord of all. The Lord has the right to come back at any time to judge the sinful people on the earth, as He has promised to do. It is a salvation to you that the Lord has not come back yet. This has given you time to be saved. A farmer is long-suffering over his land with the hope that it will bring forth much harvest. Each year a farmer will suffer much hardship laboring on the ground and will continue each year to work the land through all kinds of hardship in anticipation of a harvest.