

# Knowing God More

## Lesson 4 - God is Longsuffering

Exodus 34:5-6 Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him (Moses) there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth..."

This week we will look at the fourth characteristic the Lord proclaimed to Moses:

### ➤ Longsuffering

Begin this study with prayer, asking the Lord to reveal Himself in His word that you might know Him more.

### The Meaning

In Exodus 34:6 we find two common translations for the Hebrew word *arek* are longsuffering and slow to anger. The New Testament word *makrothymia* is translated longsuffering and patient.

1. Let's start with definitions for two of these words in order to get a better idea of the true meaning of this aspect of God's character.

a. longsuffering:

b. patient:

2. When we include a third translation for this word, slow to anger, we can see how all of these definitions and translations infer two things:

- there is an offense or provocation
- longsuffering describes the reaction or lack of reaction to that offense

a. What has man done that he needs the longsuffering of the Lord?

b. Without longsuffering, what would be the just response from the Lord for man's offense?

## **What does scripture have to say?**

1. What do the following scriptures have to say about the longsuffering of God?

a. 2 Peter 3:9

b. 2 Peter 3:15a

2. The scriptures talk about God being “slow to anger”. Read Joel 2:13 and share what you see as the offense that could have caused anger and note the Lord’s response.

## **Manifestation of His Name**

We will look into both the Old Testament and the New Testament for examples of the longsuffering of God.

### **Ezekiel 20:15-17**

In the Old Testament we see the longsuffering of the Lord over and over again is in His dealings with the children of Israel. You will see this as you read Ezekiel 20:15-17.

1. What was the offense of the people?

2. Two responses of the Lord are given. Write the response of discipline and the response of longsuffering below.

### **2 Peter 3:9**

Read 2 Peter 3:9 for our New Testament example of the longsuffering of God.

1. Fill in the blanks below for the first part of 2 Peter 3:9 NKJV.

The Lord is not \_\_\_\_\_ .....

2. From this phrase in 2 Peter 3:9, how do some view the longsuffering of God toward man in this day?

3. Now read the rest of 2 Peter 3:9 and write the reason for God's longsuffering below.

4. Looking back to 2 Peter 3:7 we can find the judgment that is withheld for now by the longsuffering of the Lord. This is the righteous judgment for sin. Stop now and pray for the lost, that their eyes would be opened to the salvation of the Lord while His longsuffering holds back their judgment.

5. Read John 3:16 and write out below the reason for the longsuffering of God.

### **The Effect of Understanding God's Character**

We have talked about the meaning of longsuffering but it is often by considering the opposite meaning that we can identify the evidence or the lack of it in our walk. Some words that describe the opposite of longsuffering are:

anger, impatience, intolerance, unforgiveness, revenge

1. If we want to be more like the Lord and walk in His character, then we must examine ourselves, laying our hearts open to the Lord. Ask Him today to reveal any of the traits above in your own life, then repent, ask forgiveness and ask His Holy Spirit to help you walk in longsuffering toward others.

2. What instructions for our walk in the Lord, and specifically in longsuffering, do you find in the scriptures below?

a. 1 Corinthians 13:4

b. Ephesians 4:1-3

c. Colossians 3:12-13

d. 2 Timothy 2:12

3. Paul's life is an example of the fruit that can be produced in our lives because of the longsuffering of God toward us.

However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life... 1Timothy 1:16

a. What do you know of Paul's life that is evidence of this longsuffering?

b. What can you see in your own life as a result of the longsuffering of God?

c. How are you showing this pattern of longsuffering to others?