

The Longsuffering Of God

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Introduction: What is your God like?

- A. Some think of God as they would men.
 - 1. The story of an atheist in the 1800's who cried out in his lecture: "If there is a God, let Him strike me dead now!" After a moment he said: "See there is no God!"
 - 2. Someone replied in the newspaper the next day by telling a story of an ant that climbed upon a railroad track and proclaimed there is no train!
 - 3. We can be glad that God does not act like men!
- B. God's word makes it very clear that our God is longsuffering!
 - 1. God made this clear in the giving of the 10 commandments. **(Ex. 34:4-7)**
 - 2. Moses used this certain character of God in his prayer to Him. **(Num 14:17-19)**

I. Who Needs the Longsuffering of God?

- A. What do we mean by "longsuffering"? **(Rom 2:4)**
 - 1. In **Rom. 2:4** the Greek word is "makrothumia"
 - 2. Thayer's dictionary gives two definitions.
 - a) patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance.
 - b) patience, forbearance, longsuffering, slowness in avenging wrongs.
- B. All sinful men need the longsuffering of God!
 - 1. Men refuse to see the righteousness of God and thus minimize their own sins. **(Rom 3:23-26)**
 - 2. Every man on earth needs it, both the righteous and the unrighteous.
 - 3. In the scriptures, when a man appears before God he immediately becomes aware of his sin and thus his need of longsuffering and forgiveness. **(Isa. 6:5-7)**

II. The Fruits of the Longsuffering of God

- A. It produces gratitude and humility. **(1 Tim 1:15-16)**
 - 1. Paul clearly understood the longsuffering of God. Are we any different?
 - 2. God wants our hearts. The revealing of His goodness changes ours!
 - 3. What if God gave us what we deserved immediately? (ex. Preacher who asked this question.)
 - 4. What if the Lord had returned in December of 2004? What if He came today? **(2 Pt 3:9)**
 - 5. Am I only deferring His anger of having it quenched?
- B. It produces hardness and arrogance. **(Rom 2:3-4)**
 - 1. Again some view God as they would a man....delay means weakness.

- 2. The sinner gains nothing by delaying God.
- 3. The real danger in each of us is becoming hardened to the grace of God.
- C. It produces change and growth in men. **(1 Tim 1:12-16)**
 - 1. We need to know what can be and to know that God will be with us.
 - 2. God knows how to build men.
- D. It produces confidence in the justice of God. **(2 Cor 5:10)**
 - 1. Was God's longsuffering good news or bad for Israel? **(Isa 48:9)**
 - 2. Is God's longsuffering good or bad news for us? **(Rom 2:5)**
- E. It makes us aware of the providence of God. **(Rom 9:22-23)**

III. The Fruits of Our Own Longsuffering

- A. Longsuffering is a sign of real maturity.
 - 1. It is a fruit of the spirit. **(Gal 5:22-23)**
 - 2. It is a product of faith. **(Col 1:11)**
- B. Longsuffering is a choice....we put it on! **(Col 3:8-14)**
 - 1. This will eliminate the "short fuse" and hasty accusations. It will also eliminate gossip. It will eliminate revenge and cursing.
 - 2. Some mistake longsuffering for ignoring the person or even worse for harboring hate in silence!
- C. Longsuffering is essential for the growth of Christians and the church.
 - 1. How can true unity be possible? **(Eph 4:1-2)**
 - 2. The atmosphere of a church can be that of optimistic growth and encouragement or that of distrust, suspicion and revenge. Which will it be? (Ex. Those who try to guess why the preacher preaches a lesson.)
- D. Longsuffering must abound in those who teach! **(2 Tim 4:1-2)**
 - 1. Will I let God's word do its work?
 - 2. Many refuse to give the seed time to work. (Ex. Lima bean in jar.)
 - 3. We must make a judgment in those we are trying to restore. **(Jude 22-23)**
- E. Longsuffering in my life will have an influence on others. **(2 Tim 3:10-12; Rom 12:17-21)**
- F. Longsuffering must be in our homes!

Conclusion: Longsuffering is essential for our salvation.

- A. That which is in the character of God must become a part of our lives!
 - 1. Please do not stop with the knowledge of a few facts!
 - 2. Let God's longsuffering work for your salvation. **(2 Pet 3:14-15)**
- B. Let God's longsuffering cause you to be urgent! **(2 Cor 6:2)**