

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT
LONGSUFFERING
Family Study Guides

FRUIT OF GOD'S SPIRIT

"Long Suffering"

Family Study Guide

Families will:

- List ways God is longsuffering with us—and explain why He is longsuffering.
- Describe how God gives us His Spirit so we can develop His characteristic of longsuffering.
- Explain why we need longsuffering in our lives and what we can learn from it.
- Detail Bible examples of longsuffering and how they can apply to our personal lives today.

Longsuffering is one of God's characteristics.

Discuss what these descriptions of God mean in His relationship to us.

- **Psalm 86:15** *But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.*

Why is God longsuffering?

Discuss what the following verses say about **WHY** God is patient and longsuffering with us and with all humankind.

- **Romans 2:4 (International Children's Bible)** *God has been very kind to you, and he has been patient with you. God has been waiting for you to change... Perhaps you do not understand that God is kind to you so that you will change your hearts and lives.*
- **2 Peter 3:9 (Worldwide English Bible)** *God will do what he promised. He is not slow though, as some people think he is. But he is waiting a long time for you. He does not want anyone to die, but he wants all people to stop their wrong ways.*

[God is patient with us for the same reason parents are patient with their kids. As parents teach their children, they are "longsuffering" with their mistakes because they hope they will turn out to be good and productive adults.]

What are two main areas or reasons we need patience?

One is when dealing with "things" or circumstances, the other is in dealing with people.

Merriam-Webster defines *long-suffering* as: "patiently enduring lasting offense or hardship"

1. Longsuffering in life's CIRCUMSTANCES:

- **James 1:2 (NCV)** *My brothers and sisters, when you have many kinds of troubles, you should be full of joy, 3 because you know that these troubles test your faith, and this will give you patience. 4 Let your patience show itself perfectly in what you do.*
 - **Revelation 1:9 (ESV)** *I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus.*
- ✓ Are there things your family members—or others—are going through that require patient endurance? What can you do to have more patience, or help others in their trials?

2. Longsuffering and patience in dealing with PEOPLE.

- **Ephesians 4:2 (NLT)** *Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.*
- **Colossians 3:12-13 (NCV)** *God has chosen you and made you his holy people. He loves you. So always do these things: Show mercy to others, be kind, humble, gentle, and patient (longsuffering). Get along with each other, and forgive each other. If someone does wrong to you, forgive that person because the Lord forgave you.*

Just like God is patient, kind and merciful with us—He wants us to do so with others.



Do You Have A Long Nose?

Something interesting you probably do not know, is that the word *longsuffering* in the Old Testament literally means “long nostrils” or “long of nose.” *Longsuffering* in Hebrew is (*arek*) “long” and (*af*) “nose.” It is actually how God is described:

- **Psalm 103:8** *The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*
- **Exodus 34:6** *The LORD passed before him, and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger [longsuffering-KJV], and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (NRSV).*

The Hebrew phrase “long of nose” was an expression that was used of someone who was patient or slow to anger.

- **“Short of nose”**—Ancient Hebrews saw someone’s nose turning red or nostrils flaring as a sign that they were quick-tempered or getting angry. So the word for “nose” and the word for “anger” became synonymous.
Proverbs 14:17 *A short-tempered person acts stupidly* (God’s Word Version)
(Today we might say the person is a “hot head” or has a “short fuse”).
- **“Long of nose”** Some people in old times felt that blood flowed from the toes to the nose. If a person didn’t anger easily—if it took a long time for his nose to turn red—he was “long of nose” thus “slow to anger.”
It would be like someone saying, “OK, take a deep breath (*breathe in through the nose*) and relax!”

As a helpful way remember to be patient with things and people:

Before reacting—imagine your blood is flowing from your toes. Count how long it takes for the blood to flow from your toes to your nose! It is kind of like counting to 10 in order to help you calm down and think about how you are going to react.

When something bad happens to you in life—or when a person behaves badly towards you – will you have a “short nose” and get angry—or a “long nose” and be patient?

[Remember this is a figure of speech. We should always be kind regarding people’s features]

**God wants us to grow in the Fruit of the Spirit so that we become like Christ.
What part does longsuffering play in how those Fruits are developed?**

1 John 3:2-3 (NIV) *“...we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.”*

James 5:7 *Therefore be patient brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.*

- Discuss what this verse means in relation to our becoming a part of the Kingdom of God and our growing into the image and likeness of Christ.
- Find as many parallels as you can between a farmer growing his crop and God “growing” us.
- Why is longsuffering so important in the process?

With God’s Spirit helping us, we can have patience and longsuffering to live a godly life. Examples in the Bible help us understand.

- **Hebrews 6:11-12 (NIV)** *We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.*
- **James 5:10-11 (NLT)** *For examples of patience in suffering, dear brothers and sisters, look at the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. We give great honor to those who endure under suffering. For instance, you know about Job, a man of great endurance. You can see how the Lord was kind to him at the end, for the Lord is full of tenderness and mercy.*

New Testament Example: Anna—Luke 2:36-38 (she waits for the birth of Christ)

Read **Luke 2:36-38** and/or this paraphrase.

Anna was an elderly woman who had lived only seven years with her husband when he died. After her husband died, she lived as a widow the rest of her life. Anna dedicated her entire life to God, year after year she honored Him at the temple, where she fasted and prayed. She did this until she was very old.

One day Anna saw Simeon, another faithful servant of God, with the Christ child. She was so excited that she told everybody about the Messiah. Seeing Christ was the proof of God’s promise. Throughout her long life she waited patiently and had faith in the promise that God would send a savior to the world. Now she had proof.

- ✓ Discuss whether there are grandparents or great grandparents, or members in the church who have been faithfully waiting for Christ to return. What have they been doing to show faithful service to God and others over the years?
- ✓ Is there a time that we must have patience to wait for what we are told?

The Bible teaches us that Christ will return to the earth one day. In the meantime, we must patiently and faithfully wait for what the Bible says is true.

Matthew 24:13 says, “*But the person who endures to the end will be saved*”

- ✓ Read the context of **Matthew 24:13** and discuss why and how God’s spirit of longsuffering is necessary in the life of a Christian.

Biblical Example: Joseph in Genesis 39

Paraphrase the basic story of Joseph, which begins in Genesis 39.

- ✓ Have family members discuss their favorite parts of Joseph’s story.
- ✓ In which parts of Joseph’s story did he require longsuffering with **circumstances**?
 - What happened—and how long did he have to “wait” until things turned out OK?

- In what ways was he ultimately blessed for his faithfulness and patient endurance?
- ✓ In which areas of Joseph’s story did he require longsuffering with **people**?
 - Who were some of the people who treated Joseph badly?
 - What was the final result of Joseph’s faithfulness and longsuffering?
 - Compare the following two scriptures and discuss how the principles of longsuffering apply, not just to them, but to us and our role in being the children of God.
 - **Genesis 50:19-21 (NIV)** *But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.*
 - **2 Peter 3:9** *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

Joseph must have wondered many times why he had to go through the things he had to endure. It was only time—and faithful patience—that revealed God’s hand in his life.

Biblical Example: Noah in Genesis 6-8

Genesis (chapters 6-8) talks about one of the most well-known stories in the Bible: The story of Noah and the ark. At that time people were so bad and so wicked—that their only hope was for God to mercifully take them out of that evil world—and resurrect them at the time of the Great White Throne Judgment (**Revelation 20**).

Because Noah and his family were righteous and following God’s ways—God wanted to save them—and anyone else who would repent of their evil ways.

Discuss as a family everything you know about Noah, the ark and the great flood.

- Who besides Noah’s family would be saved in the ark?
- What did Noah and his family have to do to get ready for the flood?
- How long would it take to build the ark and for the flood to actually happen?
 - The ark was about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high.
Suggestion: To demonstrate the size of the ark, go outside and “walk off the size” or visually demonstrate how large it was. Discuss why it would have taken so long to build.

One of the things Noah did during this time was to preach God’s ways and warned the people around him of what was to happen. (2 Peter 2:5 [God] spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.)

- What do you think other people were doing while Noah built the ark?
- Do you think they admired Noah for obeying God?
- How many people changed their ways as a result of Noah’s preaching?
- Do you think people made fun of Noah? How might they have treated him?
- Do you think Noah and his family ever felt disheartened and discouraged?

- Imagine how hard it must have been to work for so long and hard to follow God’s way.
 - Have people ever ridiculed you for what you believe?
 - Have you ever felt like giving up because things were so hard—or people were treating you badly?

God wants all of us to do the same thing that Noah did—something even more important than building an ark. He wants us to “walk with Him,” to be “just and perfect” (**Genesis 6:9**). He wants us to be longsuffering our whole lives! We have to do what is right and obey God, even when it’s hard.

Noah patiently obeyed God even when others made fun of him for doing God’s work. It is important for each of us to develop and express godly patience.

2 Peter 3:9 (GNT) *The Lord is not slow to do what he has promised, as some think. Instead, he is patient with you, because he does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants all to turn away from their sins.*

- ✓ What would it be like if God was not patient with us?
We must be patient and wait for God. Sometimes we want God to answer our prayers when we want, the way we want. We are to be patient with God and trust that He is always allowing the best thing for us.
- ✓ Is there anything God tells you to do (or not do) that people might think is strange?
i.e. Discuss how observing the Holy Days can cause you to appear different. How can you be patient as you explain God’s truth?
- ✓ What does it mean to “walk with God”? How does that require us to be longsuffering?
- ✓ What was Noah’s reward for being longsuffering and building the ark? What is our reward for being longsuffering and obeying God our whole lives?
- ✓ When we wait for God’s Kingdom or other important promises in our life, what makes it seem like it’s never going to happen? What are some things to remember so we can wait patiently?

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| Additional Family Discussions or Activities: |
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- What would happen if God was not patient with us? Why should we be thankful that God is patient with us?

- Talk about ways God blesses for our patience and obedience. (Discuss the blessings of keeping the Holy Days and God’s coming Kingdom, as well as other physical blessings.)
- Discuss ways to show more patience in everyday life.
- Plant a mini garden together, even if it is just a few plants. Take special care to tend to the plants. Talk about how you must calmly wait for the plants to grow and produce fruit. Thank God for the patience He is developing in each of us in preparation for His Kingdom.
- Discuss other ways in which God shows His patience with mankind. Can you think of any other biblical examples that were an example of patience? (Job, Abraham and Sarah—waiting for a baby.)
- How can developing God’s characteristic of patience help us help Jesus Christ in working with people in the Millennium?

Additional Resources that you can use in your family studies:

Sermon by Gary Petty: [Fruits of the Spirit, Part 6: Longsuffering](#)

Outline:

1. None of us like suffering whether it is physical, mental or emotional, but suffering is part of life.
2. There are reasons why we suffer:
 - We suffer because of our own sins.
 - We suffer because of the sins or mistreatment of others.
 - We suffer because of bad judgment.
 - We suffer because we live in Satan’s world.
 - We suffer because spiritual growth is sometimes painful.
3. God wants us to learn patience, endurance and perseverance which are all part of longsuffering. Most of all, He wants us to learn to trust Him, even in suffering. He wants us to understand that nothing can separate us from His love. And He promises to relieve all suffering when we are changed into His spirit children to live in His family forever.

Article by Mr. Don Hooser: [Longsuffering: A Fusion of Patience and Power.](#)

Possible Classroom Activities:

1. **Demonstrate the size of the ark** (roughly 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high) by going outside or marking it on the floor and having them stand in it. Discuss why it would have taken so long to build.

2. Ask the students to share some things that are hard for them to be patient with. Then discuss how they can wait more patiently.
3. **Review the example of Job**, and find how he remained patient in spite of severe trials and pain. **James 5:11 (NLT)** *We give great honor to those who endure under suffering. For instance, you know about Job, a man of great endurance. You can see how the Lord was kind to him at the end, for the Lord is full of tenderness and mercy.*

4. Growing Seed Activity and Lesson Application

Supplies:

- Small box or goody bag for each student
- Green bean seeds
- Instruction sheet for growing beans

Prepare:

- Before class, put two green bean seeds into each box/bag and wrap it. You may wish to write out directions and an explanation for the students to take home with them about the seed/plant.
- Put the boxes on the students' chairs. Give each child a blank piece of paper and crayons or colored pencils.

Say: You may hold the package, but you must wait patiently until the end of class to open it. I will tell you when you can open it. While we are talking, I want you to draw your best picture of a farm. It can have crops, fruit trees, animals, the farmer and his/her family, and other things you think belong on the farm. Have the children draw a picture of a farm during the discussion. You can tie this activity to **James 5:7**.

Discussions:

If we obey God and wait for His promises, calmly with a good attitude, trusting in God for the right answer at the right time not complaining and whining. God will bless us.

Who do you know in your life that is patient? How are they a good example for you?

Are you always patient?

No one is patient all the time. God does expect us to work hard at being patient and to continue improving. Then He will bless us for our patience and obedience.

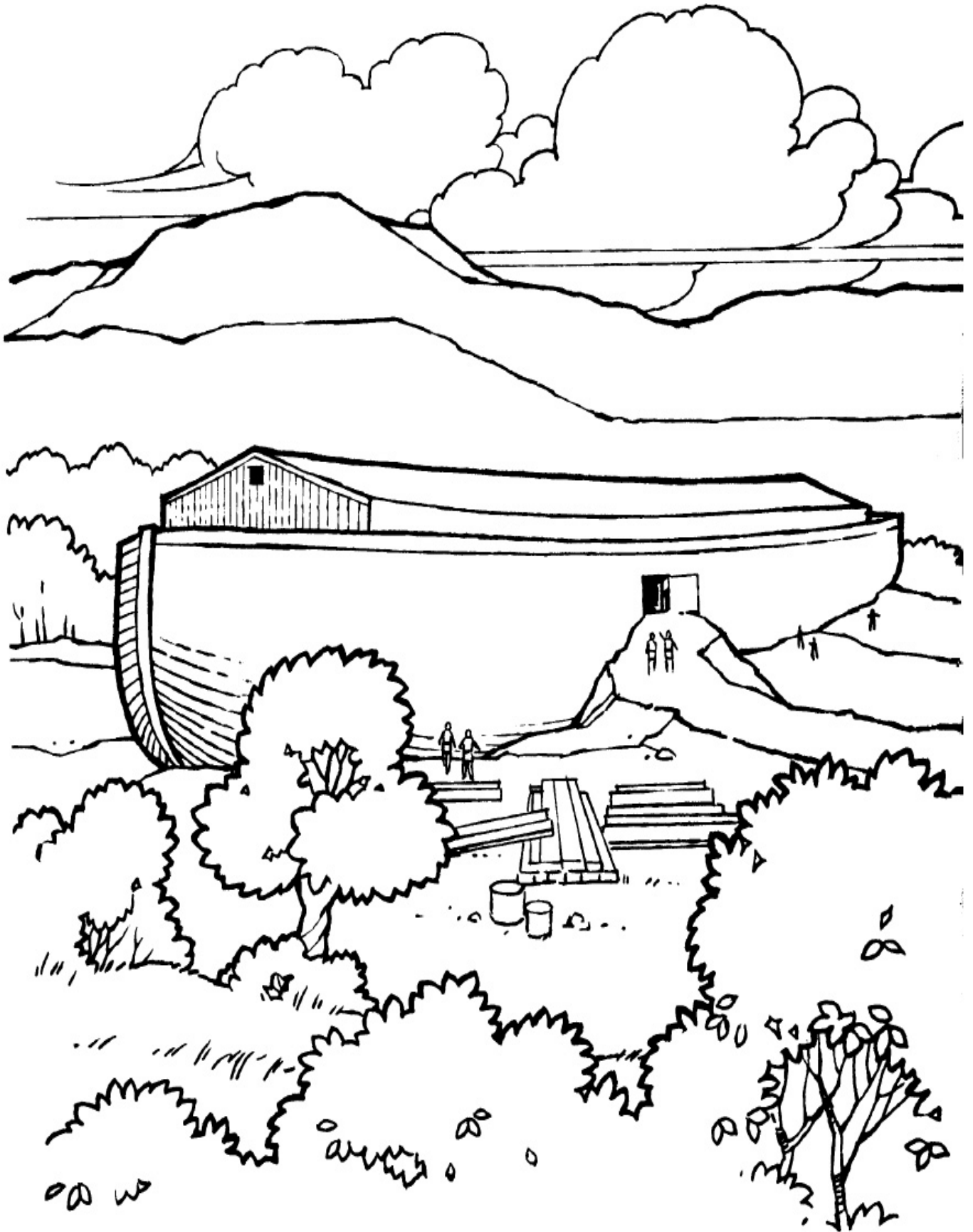
Today we discussed the importance of patience, and you have been very patient. I am sure you are wondering what is in your box. You can now open it and carefully look inside.

What is in your box?

It is a bean seed. But there is also something inside the bean seed. You are going to have the opportunity to find out what is in the seed. But it is going to take patience to find out what it is inside.

Who thinks they know what is inside the bean seed?

Inside is a bean plant, and eventually green beans. You have a chance to be farmers between now and the next Youth Instruction Meeting. You can bring your seed home and follow the instructions in the box. You will have to be patient and tend to your plant while it sprouts, grows leaves and then begins to produce beans. You need to calmly wait like the farmer. As your plant grows, think and recite **James 5:7**.



7. NOAH BUILDS THE ARK

(GENESIS 5:28-6:22)

N P G G F O O D B G P O P O Q L L J L G
W O D S F F Q X W I N D O W O L B D R Q
D I Y A L I F U W Q D F W I H D R I D E
S R V R K U R V Y W Q U J L A N E N O P
C Y O E R H C Y O R T S E D M V O U H G
N R O C S O G E U G J W H D E A O V Y G
P E K O I D S Z K X I D A D H K W C Q L
C X P R Q I O U Y C J N N S R K H G K M
X V Z R S P O O K W I I F A V A C O E Y
C T S U S K W E W M C V G U Y O J H H T
X O T P O R D U A R X E I J M U S C G P
P J V T E N J L H D E M E M X W T Q O V
R C G U E H S H F I V H A L C I N A J E
E Q O S Z E C I T C D N P J P K A E M N
M L S M P N V E Q E D F L O O D I G N J
H P W K F A H X M E H N G T G Y G A R L
Y V D S E O Y Q D A I P B I R D S T M O
Y G K Y U I R B X P L B A B J Y S N I R
M Y A X V P G T H L M A W J N E R B F D
B Q L I V E M V M O O S K V B H V K J A

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| ANIMALS | EVIL | GRIEVED | PITCH |
| ARK | FLOOD | HAM | SHEM |
| BIRDS | FOOD | JAPHETH | SORRY |
| COMFORT | GIANTS | LAMECH | WICKEDNESS |
| COMMANDED | GOD | LORD | WINDOW |
| CORRUPT | GOPHERWOOD | NOAHWIVES | DESTROY |

HELP THESE PENGUINS FIND THEIR WAY TO THE ARK

