

Topic: God is a God of Endurance (Lesson 23)

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: “Now the God of endurance and encouragement...” (Romans 15:5a).

Focus: Endurance means to persist, to not give up when something becomes difficult. God is a God of endurance. He does not give up and He never fades away. He is always there!

Practical Application: How many times have we started a chore or our homework and have given up before we finish? Sometimes when we are asked to tidy our room we might begin enthusiastically, but begin to tire after 5 minutes when we see how much more work we still need to do to get our room tidy. When God starts something, He finishes it and He never fades or tires.

Intermediate:

Verse: “And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the endurance of Christ” (2 Thessalonians 3:5).

Focus: Endurance is to withstand and continue in any kind of environment, to work in any kind of condition, and to take any kind of opportunity. God has been working with man for 6,000 years. Regardless of what is happening on the earth, God has continued to work out His plan for man even when man rejects Him and is in a bad condition.

Practical Application: The early settlers of the West had to travel across America and face many different kinds of environments: extremely cold winters and hot summers. They also had to face all kinds of conditions: hostile people, droughts, famines, and illness. Many gave up and returned home, but some endured all the way to the end. Suggested Story: Read a short story about the life of a family on the Oregon Trail or tell the story of Ernest Shackleton and the ship *Endurance* (see next page).

Advanced:

Verse: “Looking away unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down on the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

Focus: Endurance is not merely to be patient, but to have the ability to endure suffering in tribulation, regardless of pressure, oppression, persecution, poverty, or any kind of trial. The Lord Jesus lived for 33.5 years. As a child He had to endure poverty (He was the son of a carpenter) and oppression (He lived in a despised place). When He was carrying out His ministry to redeem fallen sinners, He was despised and suffered persecution from people. Ultimately, He had to endure the death of the cross, which was considered a shameful way to die in those days. Yet if He did not endure these things He would not have accomplished redemption by dying in our place to take God’s judgment of sin for us. Thank the Lord that He did not give up.

Practical Application: Have the children read the description of the Lord's life of sorrow in Isaiah 53 and also the account of His being judged and crucified in Matthew 26:57-27:44. Have the children list the things that the Lord Jesus endured in order to die for their sins on the cross.

ENDURANCE: Story of Survival, Story of Success

by Jim M. Allen

More than 100 years ago, on December 7, 1914, Ernest Shackleton and a crew of 28 men aboard the ship **Endurance** entered the pack ice off the continent of Antarctica. Their goal? To be the first party to trek across the continent on foot. It was a goal they would never achieve.

A century later, the tale of **Endurance** remains one of the most fascinating examples of human triumph in the face of adversity.

The **Endurance** would sail, through the ice, for just over a month until January 18, 1915 when the ship was trapped in the crushing ice of the Antarctic pack. Despite the efforts of the crew, **Endurance** would remain lodged in the ice for the next nine months.

The thick ice of the Antarctic pack pressed constantly, threatening to crush **Endurance** to splinters. That threat forced the crew to abandon ship in October 1915. From now on the party would live on the ice. One month later, the ship sank, stranding the crew -- with minimal stores and three short-boats -- on the drifting pack ice. The men survived for the next six months, killing seals, penguins, and ultimately their own sled dogs for food.

In April 1916, the 28 men spotted an island on the horizon. The ice floe broke just enough, allowing them to put to sea in some of the roughest waters on Earth. Seven days later they landed on the uninhabited and inhospitable Elephant Island. Far from regular shipping lanes, Shackleton knew the chances of a rescue from their location were nonexistent. They may be on land but they were far from safety, farther from home. On April 24th he set sail, with a crew of five men, for the populated island of South Georgia -- *800 miles away*.

They sailed for 17 days, navigating by sextant, fighting their way through storming high seas of freezing water and they made it. They reached South Georgia Island! The weather and their own condition forced them, however, to land on the uninhabited side of the island. Shackleton and two other men were forced to trek on foot across the island. In 36 hours they traversed 22 miles across the glacier-clad, thousand-foot high mountains to reach the whaling port of Stromness on May 20, 1916.

His attempts to rescue his crewmen left behind on Elephant Island would not be successful until August 30, 1916, a full 22 months *after* they'd initially set out. Remarkably, all 28 men survived the ordeal.