



In 1718, a Norwegian pastor's wife named Giertrud Rask received God's call to become a missionary. Her husband, Hans Egede, was preparing to leave their homeland and take the gospel to Greenland. But Giertrud was not ready to go, and with good reason. She was forty-five years old at the time, with four children to care for and the youngest barely a year old. It would be a dangerous journey for all of them, and Giertrud herself did not have a strong constitution.

The family's biographer reports that when Hans announced his plans, "his own and his wife's friends wrote to express their severest reprobation. . . . His mother-in-law further inflamed the feeling against him, and even his wife began to hint that she repented having attached herself to a man who by such plans was going to ruin himself and those belonging to him." Giertrud must have felt much the same way that Moses felt when God called him to lead Israel out of Egypt. "Send someone else, Lord! Let somebody else do it... anybody but me!"

In this chapter we come to the end of Moses' encounter with the God of the burning bush. The prophet had received his basic instructions. God had called him to go back to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let God's people go. Moses had also raised some questions: "Who am I? Who are you? How will they ever believe me?"

These were only the first three of what turned out to be five objections in all. As objections go, they were not altogether unreasonable, and in his patience God was willing to answer them. But the longer the conversation went on, the more obvious it became that Moses simply did not want to go. His final two objections show that when it came right down to it, he wanted God to send someone else.²⁰

ICEBREAKER

What's the most reluctant or apprehensive you've ever been to go on a trip? Why did you feel that way?

²⁰Philip Graham Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory*, Preaching the Word, ed. R. Kent Hughes (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), chap. 9, "Here Am I . . . Send Someone Else (Exodus 4:10–17)."

READ IT

Read Exodus 4:1-17

EXPLORE IT

1. Which item common to shepherds and leaders (Numbers 17:1-3) does God ask Moses about? (v.2)
2. What three powerful signs does God give Moses to demonstrate to the Egyptians that God sent him? (vv. 1-9)
3. After he saw the first two signs demonstrated, why did the third sign require Moses to trust God? (v. 9)
4. What profound truth did God bring to Moses' attention after Moses criticized his own speaking abilities? (v. 11)
5. Which righteous emotion does God demonstrate when Moses runs out of excuses and asks God to choose someone else? (v. 14)
6. What additional resource does God give to Moses with which to carry out his ministry role? (v. 14-16)

APPLY IT

Moses Third Excuse: “They Will Not Believe Me.”

In response to Moses’ objection that Israel “will not believe me or listen to my voice” (v. 1), God gives him signs (vv. 8, 9). These serve as confirmations of God’s word and pictures of God’s power. As confirmations, they were meant to persuade Israel to “believe that the LORD . . . has appeared to you” (v. 5). As pictures, they demonstrate how God will act as Israel trusts him: as sovereign King he will seize the tail of Egyptian power (in the serpent). As the Redeemer he will purify his unclean nation (in the leprous hand). God condescended to Israel’s weak capacities in giving these signs to strengthen their hearts.

He continues to do the same for us today in his signs of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, signs that confirm his promises and picture his good news for us.²¹

- 7. Put yourself in Moses’ shoes. If God called you to take a trip with a confrontational public speaking role, what would be your reaction? What excuses might you give for not going?**

- 8. How would you rate your own confidence in bringing God’s truth to someone who might not want to hear it: red, yellow, or green? Why did you pick that color?**

- 9. Moses didn’t think people would believe him or his message, but his behavior showed that he had the same problem with disbelief! What is one excuse for not obeying that you are making to God right now?**

²¹ Bryan Chapell, ed., *ESV Gospel Transformation Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019).

10. God provided the signs, “that they may believe that the Lord... has appeared to you” (v. 5). What other accommodating things has God done throughout salvation history to help people believe Him? Three stories you could check out include Gideon’s story (Judges 6:39-40), Mary’s story (John 2:1-11), and Thomas’ story (John 20:27).

Moses’ Fourth Excuse: “I Am Not Eloquent.”

Moses resists a fourth time, appealing to his inability to speak well (v. 10). To be “slow of speech and of tongue” may refer to a speech impediment or may refer simply to a lack of persuasive eloquence. The context supports the latter, since the Lord promises to teach Moses “what you shall speak” (not “how to speak,” v. 12; cf. comment on 6:10–12). Either way, the Lord is asking him to do something he feels unqualified to do.

The Lord meets Moses’ weakness with his own strength and presence. In terms of strength he is the sovereign King; he has made people’s mouths so they can speak, and he can make people deaf or mute, seeing or blind (v. 11). How much more can he do something as simple as enabling Moses to speak well! In terms of presence he promises, “I will be with your mouth”—the word “I” is emphasized in Hebrew—“and teach you what you shall speak” (v. 12). **What he requires of his servants he equips them to do.** Indeed, Moses’ two uses of “I” in verse 10 are met with the Lord’s two uses of “I” in verses 11–12. “Moses feels his ‘I’ is inadequate for the task; Yahweh responds by saying that it is his ‘I’ that is to be reckoned with.”²²

11. What do you feel is your most limiting factor in the area of serving God?

²² Jay Sklar, “Exodus,” in *ESV Expository Commentary: Genesis–Numbers*, vol. 1, ed. Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., and Jay Sklar (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2025), commentary on Exodus 2:23–4:17.

12. Read 2 Corinthians 12:9. Why do you think God chooses to work through people who feel unprepared, like Moses and Paul, rather than waiting until they feel ready?
13. How would you explain stepping out in faith to an 8-year-old girl? Is there another story or verse from the Bible that you think would help them grasp the wisdom in trusting God?
14. In what ways has God overcome your most limiting factor in the past? In what ways can you pray for God to overcome that in the future?

Moses' Fifth Excuse: "Please Send Someone Else."

Moses does not embrace his call but resists a fifth and final time. Unlike with the first four instances, he now provides no excuse. He simply asks the Lord to send someone else—anyone but him. His refusal of the Lord's call is now clear (v. 13).

Whereas the Lord previously responded patiently, this time his anger is aroused (v. 14). The Lord is abundantly merciful with our weaknesses and lack of faith, but there comes a point when he says, "Enough! You must take me at my word!"

Even here, however, he accommodates Moses' fear by providing a support in the person of his brother, Aaron, three years his elder (7:7) and able to speak well (4:14). The mention of Aaron's being a Levite perhaps prepares us for his priestly role, or it may be a play on words anticipating Aaron's joining with Moses. The mention of Aaron's being glad when he comes assures Moses that Aaron still loves him after all these years and will be happy to work with him (v. 14). But even here the Lord reemphasizes his own empowering and guiding presence: "I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do" (v. 15b; cf. v. 12). The Lord's help remains his people's ultimate need.²³

- 15. God has entrusted Christians with the message of the Gospel. On a scale of 1 (Toe In) to 10 (All In), how urgently do you think people at Village Bible Church share the Gospel? What makes it hard to move closer to a 10?**

- 16. What are three ways to overcome your feelings of inadequacy in the area of sharing the Gospel?**

²³ Sklar, "Exodus," at Exodus 2:23–4:17.

17. Who is an Aaron in your life who supports you as you serve God? How do these kinds of relationships help?

18. Serving God doesn't have to mean preaching on a street corner. What's one definable step you can take this week to serve God, whether praying for a neighbor, reaching out to a friend with truth from God, or serving somewhere new? Pair up with 1 or 2 other people at small group to pray for God's power as you take that step.