

# PLEASE SEND SOMEONE ELSE

Exodus 4:10-17

NBC debuted a new game show in 2001 called “Fear Factor.” An instant hit, the show pitted people against one another in stunts designed to test them physically and mentally under the premise that the activities forced them to confront their ‘fears’. The voyeuristic pleasure that spurred the rise of reality television in the early 2000’s played a role in the show’s popularity, which drew on viewers’ recognition of how fear impacts thinking and behavior. Good reasons generally prompt fear’s impact – the potential for harm, even if generalized, non-specific, or irrational, motivates fear.

Fear plays a role in evangelism. In a 2018 survey, the Barna Group noted that fear occupied the number one reason self-identified Christians said they avoided evangelism.<sup>1</sup> Fear’s impact on evangelism motivates this lesson, which explores Moses’ fears about the commission God gave to him in Exodus chapter three.

## Moses’ mission

God appeared to Moses while Moses was shepherding his father-in-law’s flocks near Mount Horeb (*Exodus 3:1-6*). He revealed Himself to Moses for a reason - God had “seen the affliction of [His] people who [were] in Egypt”<sup>2</sup> and was commissioning Moses to go to Pharaoh so that he could lead them out of their slavery in Egypt (*Exodus 3:7-10*).

Additionally, God informed Moses that his mission would be complicated by Pharaoh’s hard heart. He knew “the king of Egypt will not let [the Israelites] go unless compelled by a mighty hand” (*Exodus 3:19*). So, God told Moses he would “strike Egypt with...wonders” that would cripple their resistance (*Exodus 3:20-21*).

Rather than rejoicing over God’s plan to redeem his people or over his selection as God’s representative, Moses repeatedly tried to convince God to send someone else (*Exodus 3:11, 13; 4:1, 10, 13*). Consider:

- Notice the exchanges between God and Moses:
  - “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” (*Exodus 3:11*). God’s response - “**I will be** with you” (*Exodus 3:12*).
  - “They will not believe me or listen to my voice” (*Exodus 4:1*). God’s response - He gave Moses signs demonstrating the authenticity of his God-given authority (*Exodus 4:2-9*).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.barna.com/research/reasons-for-reluctance/>

<sup>2</sup> All quotes from the Bible come from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV Permanent Text Edition, Crossway, 2016) unless otherwise noted.



- “I am slow of speech and of tongue” (*Exodus 4:10*). God’s response - “**I will be with your mouth**” (*Exodus 4:12*).
- “Please send someone else” (*Exodus 4:13*). God’s response - I will send Aaron with you, and **I will be** with you both and teach you both what to say (*Exodus 4:14-16*).
- God’s announcement, “**I AM WHO I AM**” (*Exodus 3:13-14*), uses the Hebrew verb “to be,” which God repeats in His responses to Moses’ excuses (*Exodus 3:12, 14, 12, 15*). **God met Moses’ excuses with promises to demonstrate His identity through him.**

We can appreciate Moses’ resistance to the mission God gave him. First, Moses’ previous rescue attempt failed, leading to his humiliation and exile from Egypt (*Exodus 2:11-15*). Second, God announced that the task would be challenging and would include exercising compelling force against the unwilling Egyptians. However, God’s selection of Moses pursued an agenda larger than Moses’ comfort. His selection of Moses – an unlikely rescuer – and the plan to rescue the Israelites – a lengthy plan that involved escalating punishments against a Pharaoh whose heart God hardened – reveals the larger purpose of the exodus. God desired to accomplish more than merely bringing the Israelites out of their slavery; **God used the exodus to show His unique sovereignty to the Israelites, Egyptians, and nations** (*Exodus 6:6-8; 7:5; 9:13-16; 10:1-2*).

## Applications

God selected Moses for a specific mission – to bring the Israelites out of slavery. But the mission served a purpose more prominent than the problem it addressed – it sought to convince the world of God’s sovereign identity and invite people to submit to His rule (*cf. Exodus 12:38*).

God similarly calls us to announce His sovereignty through our mission to proclaim the freedom Jesus offers to people enslaved to sin (*cf. John 8:31-36*). Consequently, we can gain some insights into our mission from Moses, like:

- Evangelism does carry risks (*cf. John 15:18-20; 1 Peter 4:1-6*).
- It is OK to feel scared when talking about evangelism.
- Evangelism’s goal does not center on our peace, security, or comfort; it instead focuses on helping individuals come to understand God’s unique sovereignty.
- While God gives us a weighty responsibility, He also equips us to accomplish that task (*cf. 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Romans 8:26-28*).
- We are not in it alone; God works through us when we humbly submit to His plan.

May God help us trust Him more, and may He strengthen us to more fully represent Him and His will through our speech and conduct.

