

October 4, 2020

## Our Mysterious but Approachable God

### Exodus 24:1-12

As humans, we assume a lot of things about God. And to muddy the waters even more, the Bible sometimes seems to offer contradictory information. As the student book author points out, this week's Focal Passage says God has feet (and thus, a body); and later text says that God does not have a body that we can see. Scripture says no one can see God, and yet it tells of people having visions of God. God is mysterious. Because of this mysteriousness, we may project our own feelings as what God wants.

I am the caretaker of two very ill-behaved dogs. They are precious to me, but they are obedience school dropouts. They just don't listen! But I know that they love me. They are caring, loyal, and feel guilty when they've done something to upset me. Right? According to an article in *Psychology Today*, their emotions might be all in my head. "Our best friends are often misinterpreted—in particular as their behavior often looks so similar to what we as humans do when we feel guilty or jealous."<sup>1</sup> It turns out Stanley only looks guilty because he knows he's supposed to when I scold him for chewing on the remote control. He doesn't actually feel guilt. I'm projecting my human emotions onto a nonhuman in order to understand him better.

I admittedly do the same with God. I do not understand God. I don't always understand what God wants me to do, so I project. "God wants me to act or react this way." God is mysterious to me. Thankfully, as the student book author writes, God is also approachable: "We can never understand God; God lies beyond us, but this God allows us to come near (spiritually and emotionally) and even takes the initiative to reach out to us."<sup>2</sup>

While we may not understand the mystery of God, we must do our best to be obedient. Many of the rules of Exodus seem strange in 2020, but the call for obedience in God's people remains steadfast: "Everything that the Lord has said we will do, and we will obey" (Exodus 24:7-8). God knows our spiritual lives are fraught with questions. God is accessible to us through prayer; God is always with us. God will not abandon us, regardless of how much we do or do not understand about God's mystery.

1. How might you project your own wants and desires as the will of God?
2. How is God accessible to you in your daily life?
3. What are ways in which you can be more obedient to God?

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<sup>1</sup>From [psychologytoday.com/us/blog/smarter-you-think/202009/do-dogs-feel-jealousy-or-guilt](https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/smarter-you-think/202009/do-dogs-feel-jealousy-or-guilt).

<sup>2</sup>From *Adult Bible Studies*, Fall 2020, by Chuck Aaron (Cokesbury, 2020); page 50.