

The Nature of God

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God is not an ogre. He is a forgiving, loving and merciful God. How do we know this? Well Jesus said so and also showed it by his actions. Jesus forgave sinners; he did not condemn the woman caught in adultery. He said, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her' (Jn 8:7). He healed the sick, looked on and loved people. God is also not unreasonable. He sees the circumstances and prioritises human welfare, as in 'The Sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the Sabbath' (Mk 2:27). There is also a reference that Jesus made to an event in the Old Testament that leads me to believe that God sees extenuating circumstances and is lenient. It is the passage that refers to the bread of the presence, when Abiathar was high priest and David and his men ate of the bread (Mk 2:26). It was out of necessity they ate the holy bread. Trust God to be kind. If he is so good and kind to us should we not do likewise to one another?

One of the things Jesus asks, which I find most difficult, is to 'Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven' (Mt 5:44–45). Children copy their parents. Perhaps this is why Jesus was able to call God his father. He had the complete nature of God in him. He did what he saw his father doing. In God each person has value, good and bad alike. In fact, I believe there are no truly bad people, just bad behaviour. We are all of us worth something. That includes the weakest among us. I have a mental illness. It has taken me a long time to have a sense of self worth. God does not create rubbish and he created me ... and all of us. When I feel scared, I think of God's goodness and what Jesus did for all humanity. He gave his life on the cross. Perhaps you might say I have a simple view of the world, but maybe that is what is needed. Often we overcomplicate things. We worry even when we have no control. God is good and merciful. Be not afraid.