

# Grace for the Day

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## Not-So-Secret Service Agents

By Rev. Peter Eng

*In recent days, the Lord is impressing on me to share a subject with you. Perhaps, there is someone out there who needs to hear this message. It is about being God's agent. We are all God's Service Agents. Some may be secret service agents, but most of us are not-so-secret service agents.*

### Tattle-tales and whistle-blowers

A mother receives complaints about her grown son with Down Syndrome. She knows her son is no angel, but over time, it has become apparent that his immediate supervisor has been picking on him. Upon further investigation, she discovers that the supervisor has been picking on people he does not like. Since his victims are powerless to object or argue their own case, he takes on the power of a demigod.

His co-workers know his abuses, but choose to do nothing about it. In a strange way we grow up in a culture that makes it a presumed fault to tell on someone. A child who does it is a tattletale, and an adult who does it is a whistle-blower.

Of course there are times when one ought to overlook minor irregularities for it is impossible to work in a fault-finding environment. But when there is systemic and persistent abuse, shouldn't our moral-ethical obligation as Christians drive us to act? Did God put us in this environment to be his agent of change?

This mother decides it is time to confront the matter. Of course, there are the usual fears, like, "What if this does not work? What will happen to my son?" But as she checks out the issues, she becomes more and more convinced that she has to do something because her son is not the only victim.

In an attempt to justify his abusive behavior, the supervisor steals a paycheck and plants it in the bag of his victim. But his duplicity is uncovered.

Is this woman acting as a mother or as a Christian? She is both. We often cannot see abuses until we become victims. When we become victims we can still back away from opportunities to serve as God's agent. We can simply take our marbles and go home.

### Incidents in the Bible

Sometimes we are placed in situations where we are powerless to effect change. Sometimes, the Christian thing to do is to suffer wrongs and seek God's deliverance. There is great virtue in this.

The Bible is also clear that sometimes we are called to be God's agents for service or for change. Ordinary Christians can do extraordinary things—if they only see themselves as God's agents.

The Bible tells us the story of Esther. She is a Jew who enters the harem of the Persian king and becomes a favorite of the king. The fact that she is a Jew is kept hidden (Esther 2:10,20). Esther is probably not very religious. She has no qualms being in a harem! (Esther 2). There is little to show in terms of her spirituality.

Haman the anti-Semite wants to annihilate the Jews, and Mordecai her relative sends word to Esther for her to help. As we may rightly expect, Esther is not too keen to play this role. If she approaches the king without being summoned, she risks death (Esther 4:11). Mordecai reminds her, "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape" (Esther 4:13).

Mordecai closes his argument saying, "For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place ... . And who

knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14).

It is never easy to be God's agent for change. Esther risks her own life to do it. It does not matter that there is self-interest in the matter. We rarely notice a need or an injustice when there is no self-interest. That is just our sinful, selfish, fallen nature. But self-preservation alone will prompt Esther to hide. At the end of the day, she rises to the occasion and becomes God's agent for change.

A less know incident involves a woman by the name of Jael. Jael is the wife of Heber the Kenite. Her husband is allied with the enemy, with Jabin the Canaanite king, who sends his general Sisera to fight against the Israelites. But God delivers the Israelites, and Sisera flees for his life. He then finds refuge in the tent of Jael. She sees an opportunity to be God's agent. She kills Sisera and thus ends the blood bath he would have unleashed had he returned (Judges 4:17-24).

In the New Testament, Paul and his missionary companions have no intention to bring the gospel from Asia to Europe. But through several turn of events, they are directed towards Europe. Then, Paul had a dream. He sees a man from Macedonia calling him to cross the sea and serve in Europe. Paul's obedience to God brings the Gospel to Europe. Paul is God's agent of change.

### We are God's Agent

If we seek only what is convenient, if we will not venture outside our comfort zone, if we will not think beyond family and self, we will never realize God's purpose for our lives.

Nothing brings energy into our lives like the realization that God has something for us to do. Something bigger than the little concerns of our little world.

Your unique gifts and circumstances present opportunities to you that no one can fill but you. You are not an accident. "Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:16). Before we ever lived a single day, God saw all of them!

We can spend our days navel-gazing till our eyes are crossed, and our mind exhausted by the worries of self-interest. We can first meet all our needs before we look to the desperate needs of others; and we will never come to that point when we answer God's call to be his agent for change or for service.

There are very few who are so poor, so burdened, or so weak, that they cannot be God's agent. But there are many too poor to help others because they spend it all on themselves. There are many, so laden by the possessions of this world, that they fail to see that giving lightens that burden. There are many so weakened by laziness that they never learn that strength comes from using our talents and resources.

Maybe, just maybe, God has bigger plans for you than you assume. "And who knows but that you have come to ... position for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14).

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**Rev. Peter Eng** is an ordained minister from the Reformed Tradition, but he is truly global in perspective. He served the Lord in various capacities starting from his teenage years in the 70s. His undergrad studies were done in Singapore, his grad studies in the USA, and post-grad studies in the United Kingdom, with additional post-grad research in Germany.