

Grace Notes

"God's grace for everyday living"

The Moses mantra

By: Debora M. Coty

Has God ever asked you to do something you felt sure you *couldn't* do? I remember hearing a Christian friend once admit, "I'm reluctant to say to God, 'Do with me as you will,' because I'm afraid he'll send me as a missionary to the deepest, darkest African jungle. You see, I hate bugs and love Big Mac's."

Another Christian responded with confidence, "God would never ask you to do something you didn't want to do." I was relieved to hear that because there were many ministries tapping me on the shoulder to do things that were out of my comfort zone. I was glad to have a *spiritual* reason to decline.

Now, in retrospect, I see serious flaws with this viewpoint.

During the last five years, I've rounded a corner in my Christian walk and have strived to take my faith to the next level. Sincerely desiring to be used by God to further His kingdom, I've earnestly prayed, "I'm yours, Lord. You gave me the gifts and abilities you've chosen for me and I make myself available to be used in whatever way you see fit. Use me."

But when He actually took me up on it, I balked. I discovered the Moses mantra (Moses' reaction when God asked him to leave his comfy lifestyle and return to Egypt to set his people free from slavery): "Me, go? Ho-ho-ho!" Or better yet, "Answer's no; ask no mo'!" (My paraphrases, obviously.)

To my chagrin, I find that I'm a prime illustration of the Moses mentality: *I'm the wrong person for this job, Lord!*

I can identify with Moses' astonishment in Exodus 3:11 (CEV), "Who am I to go...?" In other words, "What in the world are you thinking, Lord? I can't do it! You should find somebody more qualified for this job."

God has prodded me for years to be bold and step forward to pray for hurting people. I'm most happy to do that privately, but I die a thousand deaths when the situation arises publicly. Like Moses in Exodus 4:10, I whine, "I have never been a good speaker. I wasn't one before you spoke to me, and I'm not one now. I am slow at speaking and I can never think of what to say."

Last Sunday, I was hiding out in the shadows at the back of the church during prayer and worship time, lost in my own little personal fellowship with the Lord. Suddenly, a well-dressed man came to stand five feet away from me against the back wall. I didn't know him, and would have moved farther away to maintain my "space" if I hadn't already been in the corner. He stayed through the entire worship song and I was a bit annoyed that my privacy had been breached.

The next song began, a little quieter than the first, and I became aware of stifled sobs beside me. I stole a peek and realized the man was struggling to control his emotions. My first (incredibly spiritual) thought was, "Why on earth did you send him back here, Lord? Nobody will see that he needs help."

The man swayed in my direction. The truth dawned. "Oh no, not me! I can't do this. Send somebody who really *can* pray."

A full minute passed and I realized



no one else was coming. I spent the next sixty seconds fighting the impulse to flee. In the end, I nervously stepped closer to the man with the broken spirit and asked if I could pray for him. He nodded appreciatively, removed his glasses and wiped his eyes on his starched dress shirt.

It was a pretty anemic prayer but he appeared encouraged and touched that someone cared enough to try. God seemed to be right there in our little circle of two and the man walked away holding his head a little higher.

Afterward, I felt as though my feeble attempt at obedience had parted the Red Sea. I truly grasped God's assurance in 2 Corinthians 12:9, "My power is strongest when you are weak."

I'd been elevated to a higher spiritual plane because of my *inabilities* and basic dependency on God. He had filled in the holes of my inadequacies just as He'd promised. It mattered not what my gifts and abilities were at the moment, only whether I chose to be obedient to His calling.

I'll bet Moses felt the same as he watched Pharaoh's army doggie paddling in the Red Sea.

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