

Plea for an Enemy

In *The Grace of Giving*, Stephen Olford tells of a Baptist pastor during the American Revolution, Peter Miller, who lived in Ephrata, Pennsylvania, and enjoyed the friendship of George Washington. In Ephrata also lived Michael Wittman, an evil-minded sort who did all he could to oppose and humiliate the pastor.

One day, Michael Wittman was arrested for treason and sentenced to die. Peter Miller traveled 70 miles on foot to Philadelphia to plead for the life of the traitor.

“No, Peter,” General Washington said. “I cannot grant you the life of your friend.”

“My friend!” exclaimed the old preacher. “He’s the bitterest enemy I have.”

“What?” cried Washington. “You’ve walked 70 miles to save the life of an enemy? That puts the matter in a different light. I’ll grant your pardon.”

And he did. Peter Miller took Michael Wittman back home to Ephrata – no longer an enemy, but a friend.

Do you have an enemy, a critic, someone who constantly opposes you? It is contrary to human nature to act with kindness and compassion to such individuals, but God’s grace – the grace that we, ourselves, experience – can work in miraculous ways when applied to the human heart, and change relationships for the better. Let us be an instrument of applying that grace.

--Beecher Hunter