

The Tator Family
Presented by Mary Lowman
Air Dates: Sept. 30 – Oct. 4, 2024

Day One

I want to introduce you to a family I think you need to get to know. They're the Tator family, and every few years I re-introduce them to you, because you seem to enjoy them so much. And I think we can learn some things from the members of this Tator family.

The first Tator I'd like you to meet is the father of this family, Dick Tator. I'd have to say Dick Tator is not a very teachable person. Dick finds it difficult to admit he's wrong about anything, and I've noticed he always must have things done his way.

Have you run into Dick Tator somewhere along the way? I wish I could sit down with Dick and share a few verses with him from God's Word. Proverbs 19:20 would be appropriate for Dick.

Listen to advice and accept discipline and at the end you will be counted among the wise (Proverbs 19:20).

Dick finds it very difficult to listen to others and as a result, he does things his way, and frankly, his way is not always the best. He'd be real smart to learn to listen to others and take advice. Proverbs 15:22 could help Dick understand why his ideas frequently fall flat on their face.

Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed (Proverbs 15:22).

I sure wish Dick Tator could learn to ask others for their counsel and advice. He'd be much more successful.

Another problem Dick Tator has is he always wants to be the one up front, in control, telling everyone else what to do. Now, it's true we need leaders; people who can and will take charge and get the ball rolling. But Dick needs to learn about servant leadership. That's the best way to lead.

Jesus told us ...whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many (Matthew 20:26-28).

I don't think Dick Tator has ever stopped to understand what Jesus was teaching us. Before you can tell other people what to do, you have to do it yourself. You lead best by getting out in front and doing the job; then others can follow your example.

Lots of people are like Dick Tator; they want the glory of giving orders but aren't willing to be the servant of those they want to lead. That's the mark of a great leader. Dick Tator needs to learn servant leadership.

Day Two

This week I'm introducing you—again—to the Tator family. If you've never met them before, you'll want to get to know them. Most of us can learn a lot from the Tators. Yesterday, we met the father of this family, Dick Tator.

Today I'd like to introduce you to the mother of the Tator family, Emmy Tator. Now, Emmy is a nice lady, but to tell you the truth, she spends most of her time worrying about what other people think of her, trying to be like everyone else, trying to find acceptance by going along with the crowd. Have you ever met Emmy?

Emmy Tator is sometimes obsessed and addicted to her need for people's approval. She is often unhappy with herself and appears to be very frustrated at times. That's because she's trying to please everyone else and be like everyone else.

Now, I certainly wouldn't want Emmy to purposely set out to be different just for the sake of being different. But it's really important for her to realize there's no way in this world she'll ever please everybody. That's been a tough lesson for me to learn. I seem to think if I just try hard enough, surely everybody will like me and approve of me. But it never works. You truly cannot please all people.

Emmy Tator needs to realize she is an original, created by God to be unique, and she doesn't need to pattern herself after others. Emmy needs to be reminded when she compares herself to others and tries to be like them, she is in effect saying God has made a mistake in the way he made her, and she could have done a better job than God in his design. Instead of accepting who she is in Christ, she keeps trying to be someone else. Poor Emmy Tator. That's a frustrating way to live.

Day Three

Have you ever met the Tator family? I have a feeling you may have met some of them before. Monday, we got to know the father in this family, Dick Tator, and yesterday, his wife, Emmy Tator. Today, I'd like you to meet their daughter, Hessie Tator.

Now, I'm quite certain you'd like Hessie all right; she's a pleasant enough person. But Hessie has a real problem. You see, she just can't seem to get going on anything. She has lots of plans and ideas, but nothing ever seems to happen as a result of her planning.

I've noticed procrastination is one of her biggest obstacles. She just keeps putting things off. Her intentions are terrific, but the follow-through breaks down very often.

Perhaps Hessie needs to remember what Jesus said to his disciples: *Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them* (John 13:17). Blessing comes in doing, but Hessie can't seem to get to the "doing" stage, so she keeps missing the blessing.

Jesus' life on earth confirms he didn't procrastinate. When he said he would travel to Jerusalem, he did so, even when he knew the cross awaited him there. What he promised, he fulfilled in every instance. Jesus was a doer, and Hessie Tator needs to allow Christ to live that unhesitating life through her.

I wonder if Hessie Tator has ever considered the parable Jesus told in Luke 6 about the one who hears the truth but does not act accordingly. Jesus said that person is like one who builds a house on the sand, and as soon as the storms come, the house collapses and is ruined because the foundation is not firm. When a person is a hearer but not a doer, they are inviting disaster into their lives and denying the blessings God has in store for them. Remember, the blessing is in doing, not in knowing.

Oh, I think sometimes Hessie Tator puts things off because she's afraid of failure. You know, whenever you do anything, you do run the risk of failing, but if that fear controls you, you'll simply never do

anything. And besides, no one ever succeeded without many failures along the way. Failure is part of the process.

Day Four

I've been introducing to you the members of the Tator family. You may have met them before, but in case you haven't, I wanted you to get to know them. We met the mother and father, Dick Tator and Emmy Tator. Yesterday we got to know their daughter, Hessie Tator.

Today I'd like to introduce their son, Aggie Tator. Now, I know we generally think of boys as being full of mischief, but Aggie's problem is much more than the normal boyish spirit. Aggie is really a troublemaker. He literally looks for ways to cause discord and disrupt the family unity.

Have you ever known someone like Aggie Tator? They use words as instruments of pain, to hurt people. They say things that cause suspicions to arise in the other person's mind. Sometimes it's the smallest little seed of discord they sow, but it leads to much trouble when it takes root and grows.

In Proverbs 6:19, we read one of the seven things that are detestable to the Lord is a person who stirs up dissension among brothers. I'm afraid that's Aggie Tator—stirring up dissension wherever he can.

Have you ever wondered why Aggie Tator is so intent on causing problems? Proverbs 29:22 gives us a clue.

An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins (Proverbs 29:22).

Anger that is not dealt with properly will explode on you in ways that are out of control and totally inappropriate. I think that happens with Aggie Tator. He's got anger inside him which he's never dealt with, and that anger has grown into bitterness, which displays itself by causing trouble for others.

If only Aggie could turn to the Lord with his anger and give his bitterness over to the Lord. He'd find healing for those wounds and release from all that anger. He'd find his hot temper could be controlled by God's Spirit, and as a result he wouldn't be causing all those problems all the time. You have to feel sorry for Aggie Tator; he makes his own life miserable as well as everyone else's.

Day Five

If you've been with me this week you've met the Tator family: the father, Dick Tator, his wife, Emmy Tator, their daughter Hessie, and their son, Aggie Tator. We can learn a lot from the Tator family. There's one more member of this unique family that I'd like you to get to know. It's Grandpa Spec Tator.

Now, everybody loves Grandpa Spec; he's a comfortable, likeable person. But all his life he's been one of those people who watches what everyone else is doing, criticizes them when they make a mistake, comments freely on their performance, but never ever gets involved. Spec Tator is always on the sidelines, telling everybody else how it ought to be done, but never doing it.

Someone has said the church today is much like a football game. The majority of the people are watching a small minority perform. And those watching desperately need exercise, while those performing desperately need rest.

You know, there are an awful lot of people like Grandpa Spec Tator around today. They stay in the bleachers, yelling at everyone else, but never getting involved in the fight. The 80/20 factor is a well-known measure in the business world. We usually get 80% of our business from 20% of our customers and 80% of our problems from 20% of our customers. Unfortunately, so often the body of Christ has that same problem. So much of the work is done by so few.

How wonderful it would be if the Spec Tators of the world would join in and pull their share of the weight. I've noticed the Spec Tators are the first to criticize, the first to find fault. A person who is involved in the performing and doing is much more understanding and tolerant than those who simply stand on the sidelines and watch.

Well, they're quite a family, this Tator family: Dick, Emmy, Hessie, Aggie and Spec Tator. If you run into them somewhere along the way, perhaps you'll remember what I've said about them. Or maybe it'll cause you to ask yourself if any of these Tators has gotten into your family—into your life.