



Written by  
Cora Alley

## "The Portrait of Jeremy Coombs"

**Scripture:** Colossians 3: 1-17

*Keeping a godly focus, and a description of holiness, as well as, a warning against a breaching Christian integrity.*

**Dramatic Category:** "Dream Skit"

### What is a "Dream Skit"?

"Dream Skits" are Christian dramas in which the central character finds him or herself in a "Twilight Zone"- type situation that simply does not happen in real life, but these unreal happenings give real-world insights. Sometimes, the actor imagines a scene, then that "memory" is acted out on another side of the stage, or the scene takes a turn that projects the character's insecurities or alter-ego. The audience gets a first-hand look at psychological struggles as they manifest themselves in "odd" happenings.

A "Dream Skit" provides a very memorable introduction, conclusion, or mid-way example for the pastor as he presents the sermon. It gives your drama ministry a first-hand opportunity to link with the pastor to create a sermon illustration that will compliment any topical or expository sermon.

**Topic:** Personal holiness of the believer

**Performance time:** 8 minutes + sermon

**Number of Players:** 6 players (3 men, 2 women, 1 little girl) + many guests

### Objective:

A mind set on Christ translates into a life of holiness, which makes for a "beautiful picture" of what life should look like. A mind set on worldly values creates an "ugly picture" of life. When Heaven fills our thoughts, the picture changes and everything becomes new.

**Synopsis:**

This "Dream Skit" borrows its concept from the classic, "The Portrait of Dorian Grey." Jeremy Coombs is having a party in honor of his "Best Selling" book, *Golden Rule... Ancient Secrets for Modern Success*. To celebrate, his wife had a professional portrait of him made, and she enlarged it to hang on the wall.

Each time Jeremy makes an ungodly choice in his thoughts, speech, or actions, the pictures change to become gradually more foul. As he shows his portrait to people, Jeremy notices the difference, but the people who see it compliment him on the amazing likeness. The picture eventually frightens Jeremy and he breaks down, begging God to take over his mind and set it on heavenly things. During this repentant moment play a "repentance song" as the picture dissolves backwards and returns to Jeremy's original, handsome, likeness.

**Cast:**

Jeremy Coombs:	<i>A strikingly handsome, dignified man</i>
Katherine Coombs:	<i>Jeremy's adoring wife</i>
Amanda Coombs:	<i>Jeremy's five-year old daughter</i>
Mike:	<i>Jeremy's lawyer, who has no problem bending the rules</i>
Sam:	<i>An apologetic employee</i>
Kari:	<i>Jeremy's secretary, who is romantically interested in him</i>
Guests:	<i>Any number of guests attending the reception</i>

**Costumes:**

Semi-formal attire for the entire cast  
Pajamas and slippers for Amanda

**Lights:** Full stage lighting with three spotlighted areas (see stage diagram below).

Party Spot 1  
Party Spot 2  
Platform Spot

**Sound:**

Eerie sound effects during the "dissolving" between the pictures (recorded on the DVD)  
A "voice-over" of Amanda's voice reading the letter  
(*if the pastor chooses the "option 2 or 3 ending"*)

**Music:**

Play Keith Green's "My Eyes Are Dry" or some other song of repentance  
Sing "Amazing Grace" offstage when Jeremy repents  
(*if the pastor chooses the "option 3 ending"*)

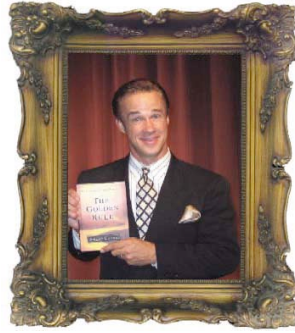
**Music Note:**

Use the regular worship band as the musicians for Jeremy's reception. Dress them in nice shirts, ties, coats, so they look like musicians who have been hired to perform at the reception. They leave the stage when the guests are excused, after the first scene.

**Technical Note:**

This is a "Dream Skit" that involves taking four different pictures of the "Jeremy" character; each pose shows him becoming more depraved and meaner, until the last one is hideous. The outward picture represents the inward change toward depravity. (See examples below)

**Jeremy, pose 1:**



**Jeremy, pose 2:**



**Jeremy, pose 3:**



**Jeremy, pose 4:**



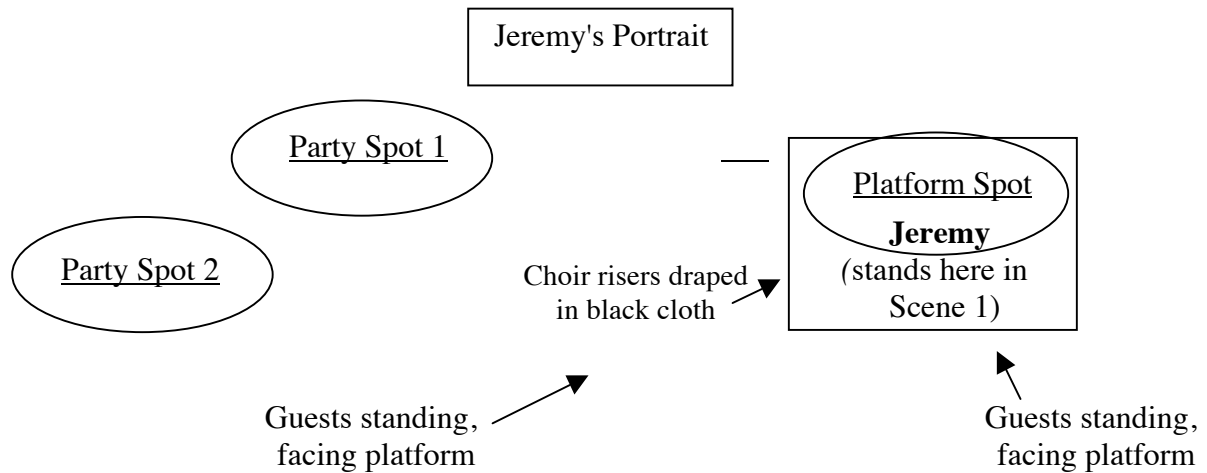
These four photos change by slowly “dissolving” to the next photo, each time Jeremy makes ungodly choices. This can be done by making a video of the images dissolving from one image to another. Make a DVD of the video and hit "pause" for each scene, then hit "play" to show the dissolving sequence, with sound effects.

Project the fourth pose of Jeremy throughout the sermon. If your DVD won't allow an extended “pause” during the sermon, you may opt to project a still image of the pose, matched to the same size as the DVD image, using an alternate source, such as PowerPoint. After the sermon, Jeremy repents and prays for forgiveness. After the prayer, return to the DVD to show the pictures dissolving backwards until the portrait returns back to its original, handsome Jeremy. This sequence of “reversing poses” has a thoughtful song of repentance as the soundtrack. The suggested song is Keith Green’s “My Eyes Are Dry.”

**Props:**

- A book cover entitled,  
“The Golden Rule” *Ancient Secrets For Modern Success*, by Jeremy Coombs
- Several cameras with bright flash attachments
- 2 sets of papers to sign
- A cell phone
- A “PDA” (“Palm Pilot”)
- Airplane tickets and an itinerary
- A letter in an envelope
- A doll for Amanda

**Stage Plan:**



**NOTE:**

This “Dream Skit” is also a “Skermion” in that it is designed to combine a scene from the skit with the sermon. At the end of the script, there are four options for ending the skit, and segueing into the sermon. The pastor can decide which one he chooses, depending on his own preference. The pastor may choose to enter the party scenes and refer to the items left there; each item represents a metaphor for the "ugliness" of soul that occurs when we take our mind off of "the things above."

## The Script:

**LIGHTS:** FULL STAGE UP,  
PLATFORM SPOT ON JEREMY

**SCREEN:** JEREMY, POSE 1, ON CENTER SCREEN

**NOTE:**

Distribute the cameras with flash attachments among the “Guests” standing in front of the platform. The “flashes” occur after Jeremy’s first greeting.

**Scene 1: "The Reception"**

*(Jeremy Coombs stands center stage, facing the audience and proudly holding his book. His pose matches his portrait that hangs over his head. The handsomely dressed crowd faces him, with their backs at a quarter turn to the audience, facing Jeremy and applauding his success. (See "Stage Plan" above.)*

**Jeremy:** *(graciously)* Thank you, thank you, dear friends.

*(holding up his book)* My book, “*The Golden Rule...Ancient Secrets for Modern Success*” would never have been completed, much less made it to the top ten on the "New York Best Seller's List" without the support of my lovely wife, Katherine, and the inspiration of our little princess, Amanda.

*(He extends his hand; Katherine mounts the stage, accompanied by his little daughter, Amanda. Jeremy scoops Amanda up in his arms and hands her the book. They pose, as a lovely little family, with Amanda proudly holding the book, as cameras flash. The guests applaud again.)*

**Katherine:** Jeremy Coombs, ladies and gentlemen,  
Isn't he the picture of success?

*(She points to the portrait; the guests look up at it and applaud again.)*  
It's a perfect likeness, my dear; congratulations.  
*(more applause)*

**Jeremy:** *(Admiring the size of the portrait)* I have to admit,  
*(to Katherine)* that is my biggest surprise yet,  
but I am grateful, darling, thank you.  
*(He hugs her)*

**Katherine:** *(addressing the guests)* Thank you all for celebrating my husband's success.  
He's catching a late flight tonight to begin his book-signing tour,  
*(a few more people applaud )* so we'll have to say good night.

*(Jeremy puts Amanda down, Katherine takes her hand, and they step down from the risers. Jeremy steps off in a different direction. Amanda stops mid-way down, runs over to Jeremy and says:)*

**Amanda:** Daddy, can I give you my present before you go?

**Jeremy:** Give me a minute, honey; I have to talk to my lawyer.

**Amanda:** What's a lawyer?

**Jeremy:** The man who makes sure that I'm doing everything right.

**Amada:** Don't you know when you're doing everything right?

**Jeremy:** *(caught off guard)* Well, yes...of course, I do.

**Amanda:** Then why do you need a lawyer?

**Jeremy:** *(hesitating)* Ah...because...  
he protects me from other people who do things wrong.

**Amanda:** Can I have a lawyer, too?

**Jeremy:** No, honey, you don't need one.

**Amanda:** Can I have one when I get bigger?

**Jeremy:** Hopefully, you won't need one.  
*(He turns her off in the direction of her mother, Katherine.)*

You go get ready for bed. I'll come in and say good night.

**Amanda:** *(Shouting off in the direction of Katherine as she exits.)*  
Mommy, Daddy says I can't have lawyer.

**LIGHTS:** SLOW FADE DOWN ON FULL STAGE AND PLATFORM SPOT,  
UP ON PARTY SPOT 1

## **Scene 2: "The Letter of the Law"**

*(As Jeremy steps down into "Party Spot 1," his lawyer, Mike, meets him. They shake hands and greet each other.)*

**Mike:** If you'd sign these papers before you go,  
that Ontario property can be in escrow while you're gone.

*(They move over to the table in "Party Spot 1.")*  
We should close the first of next month.

**Jeremy:** How does that new siding look around the front door?

**Mike:** Good as new. *(He looks over his shoulder to be sure no one is listening.)*

**Jeremy:** So, that means no inspector will be able to tell that the whole front side has been eaten away by termites?

**Mike:** No, but as your legal counsel, I feel compelled to warn you that...

**Jeremy:** Good, I'd rather have termites eating the wall than repair bills eating my profit margin.

*(also, looking over his shoulder to be sure they are alone.)*  
What about that eminent domain easement?

**Mike:** *(looking through the papers)* As far as I can tell, there's no mention of it in on the property map, but if...

**Jeremy:** The buyers would have to know where to look in the city planning office to figure out that their front door is going to be three feet from a four lane highway next year.

**Mike:** Do they?

**Jeremy:** Do they what?

**Mike:** Know where to look?

**Jeremy:** No...it's an elderly couple. *(signing two copies)*

**SCREEN:** **(Push "Play" on DVD) PICTURE DISSOLVES TO POSE 2 *(a mean snarl)***

**MUSIC:** **DISSOLVING MUSIC CUE (contained on DVD?)**

**SCREEN:** **(Push "Pause" on DVD at end of dissolving music) PAUSED ON POSE 2**

**Jeremy:** .... we've got it covered, then?

**Mike:** I appears that you do.

**Jeremy:** That's all I care about.

**Mike:** Here's your copy. *(He leaves a file on the table.)*

**Jeremy:** *(Shaking his hand)* Good work. I'll see you when I get back.

**Mike:** *(starting to exit, but noticing the portrait)* I have to tell you, that's an amazing likeness.

*(He exits.)*

**Jeremy:** *(turning to look at the portrait as Mike leaves)*  
I know; I had no idea that Katherine ordered ...

*(Jeremy does a double take as he notices the change in the expression on the face of the portrait. He steps back and looks at it from a different angle. He is visibly shaken as he backs into "Party Spot 2.")*

**LIGHTS:**     **SLOW FADE DOWN ON PARTY SPOT 1  
                  UP ON PARTY SPOT 2**

### **Scene 3: "Forgive and Remember"**

*(Jeremy backs into a table as he stares in disbelief at the change in his portrait. His associate, Sam, enters, but he does not see him. He still stares intently at his portrait.)*

**Sam:**           *(shyly)* Excuse me, Sir, may I talk with you for a minute?

**Jeremy:**       *(disengaged, still shocked by the change in his portrait.)*  
Make it quick, Sam. I've got a plane to catch.

**Sam:**           I just wanted to say, Sir, that I'm sorry.

**Jeremy:**       All right.

**Sam:**           I had no right to mouth off at that board meeting.  
I'm sure you don't give out the best sales territories  
to people who lick your boots.

**Jeremy:**       Then why did you accuse me of setting people up for failure?

**Sam:**           I guess I was just humiliated.  
My quotas were below par again last quarter,  
and I know about the "Three strikes and you're out" rule.

*(growing increasingly more nervous.)* I just hope you'll forgive me.  
I say stupid things when I get frustrated.

*(extending his hand to shake Jeremy's)* No hard feelings?

**Jeremy:**       *(hesitating, then extending his hand)* Okay, forgiven.



**Sam:** Thanks.

**Jeremy:** *(forcing a smile)* And forgotten.

**Sam:** Really?

**Jeremy:** *(taking his cell phone out of his pocket and pressing a speed-dial number)*  
Really. And to prove it; I'll tell my secretary to re-assign you right now.

**Sam:** *(encouraged)* You will? Thank you!

**Jeremy:** *(He speaks into his cell phone.)*  
Kari, find me before you leave.  
I want you to re-assign Sam Horton to Baltimore.

**SCREEN:** **(Push "Play" on DVD) PICTURE DISSOLVES TO POSE 3** *(a hateful expression)*

**MUSIC:** **DISSOLVING MUSIC CUE (contained on DVD?)**

**SCREEN:** **(Push "Pause" on DVD at end of dissolving music) PAUSED ON POSE 3**

**Jeremy:** *(not noticing that his picture has changed)* It's covered.  
Everything should work out for the best, now.

**Sam:** *(extending his hand)* Thank you, sir. It's more than I deserve.

**Jeremy:** No, you deserve it.

**Sam:** *(As Sam exits, he notices the portrait.)* Great portrait, sir.  
It captures the real you.

*(Sam exits.)*

*(Jeremy looks at the picture, and staggers back over to the table for support. He is shocked that the portrait has taken on such a sinister pose. He leaves his cell phone on the table.)*

#### **Scene 4: "Too Close For Comfort"**

*(Jeremy stares in disbelief at the portrait. Kari enters behind him.)*

**Kari:** Jer, are you okay?

**Jeremy:** Does that portrait look different to you?

**Kari:** *(confused)* Different from what?

**Jeremy:** *(irritated)* Different than it looked at the party?

**Kari:** No. I am amazed at the way the artist captured your eyes.

**Jeremy:** *(in disbelief)* You are?

**Kari:** *(surprised at his sharp reaction)*  
Yes. It's an amazing likeness. I should know;  
working beside you sun up to sun down for a solid year  
is a long time to find out what a person looks like.

**Jeremy:** Do I really look like that?

**Kari:** Yes, that is exactly you!

**Jeremy:** *(slumping down in the chair.)*  
Maybe I'm just tired.

**Kari:** *(looking over her shoulder, then coming up behind Jeremy)*  
Why are you sending Sam Horton to Baltimore?  
Everybody fails in Baltimore.

**Jeremy:** I know.

**Kari:** Oh, so that's your plan. "Three strikes and he's out."

**Jeremy:** Exactly.

**Kari:** That's one way to get what you want.

**Jeremy:** I always get what I want. *(He gives her a suggestive look)*

**Kari:** *(uncomfortable, and changing the subject)*  
So, where are you sending the other sales reps?  
The only itinerary I have ready is yours. *(She holds out his tickets)*  
After the book-signing tour, you'll be in the New York territory.

**Jeremy:** *(Standing up and taking out his "Palm Pilot.")*  
I've got it right here.

*(He touches the keypad and the assignments come up. Kari and Jeremy stare at the "Palm Pilot" during this conversation.)*

**Kari:** You've got it all worked out.

**Jeremy:** I've got it covered.

**Kari:** *(reading the screen)* Parker and Phillips are in Los Angeles.

*(Jeremy touches the keypad again.)*

*(reading the screen)* Grant and Hendricks are in Memphis.

*(Jeremy touches the keypad again.)*

*(reading the screen)* Sam is alone in Baltimore.

*(looking up at Jeremy)* That leaves me. Where am I going?

*(Jeremy touches the keypad again.)*

*(reading the screen)* New York?

*(looking up at him)* You'll be in New York.

**Jeremy:** *(slyly)* I always get what I want.

**SCREEN:** **(Push “Play” on DVD) PICTURE DISSOLVES TO POSE 4** *(a hideous, sinister pose)*

**MUSIC:** **DISSOLVING MUSIC CUE (contained on DVD?)**

**SCREEN:** **(Push “Pause” on DVD at end of dissolving music) PAUSED ON POSE 4**

**Kari:** *(She puts the tickets on the table. and backs away.)*  
Here's your tickets.

*(She gazes at the portrait of Jeremy, while Jeremy gazes lovingly at her.)*

Do you think I could get a wallet-size of that portrait.  
It's such an amazing likeness.

*(She exits)*

**Jeremy:**

*(turning to look at the portrait again, but this time he lets out an audible scream when he sees what he has become)*

Ahhhh...no, that can't be me....

*(The final portrait is hideous. He falls back into the chair, covers his face in his hands, and groans in disbelief.)*

## Ending Option 1: Jeremy in shock at his hideous soul

*Jeremy freezes during the sermon, while the pastor talks around him, then leaves after the sermon.*

### “Skerman”

The pastor steps up to the stage and crafts his sermon around the props lying on the stage.

**NOTE:** All these props could be packed into Jeremy's briefcase, and the pastor simply unpacks the briefcase during the sermon.

Jeremy freezes; he does not react to the pastor. The pastor may choose to use the props to make connections to the categories of "unholy" vs. "holy" living admonished in Colossians 3.

<b>Prop</b>	<b>Sermon Point</b>
The every-degenerating "portrait"	We see the evil, when others don't, but God sees how black our souls become.
Jeremy's book: <i>The Golden Rule</i>	Though we know what to do; we choose not to do it. We ignore biblical truth.
The real estate contract	Greed, lying, lack of integrity
The cell phone	Anger, rage, malice, slander, unforgiveness, prejudice
The plane tickets (on the table in front of Jeremy)	Impurity, lust, sexual immorality
Jeremy's "Palm Pilot"	Control, ego, our own plans
The "reverse dissolving" of the portrait images	We are made new in Christ when we repent and walk in His ways.
Jeremy exits after the sermon.	

## Ending Option 2: Little Amanda convicts Jeremy

*The skit continues from Kari's exit (Scene 4) and includes the following:*

### Scene #5: "Good Night"

*(Jeremy is crushed at his hideous appearance. His little daughter, Amanda, walks up to him, carrying her doll, and puts her arm around him.)*

**Amanda:** *(tenderly)* Are you alright, Daddy?

**Jeremy:** *(regaining his composure, and taking her into his arms.)*  
I'm okay.  
What are you doing still awake?

**Amanda:** You said you'd come and say, "Good-night," but then you didn't come, I had to come out and find you.  
I have a present for you. *(She hands him a little envelope.)*  
Mommy helped me with the words, but it was all my idea.

*(Jeremy starts to open it.)*

No Daddy, don't open it now.  
Open it on the plane, when you miss me more.

**Jeremy:** Okay, what kind of a present do you want me to bring home for you?

**Amanda:** Could I have whatever I want?

**Jeremy:** Sure, as long as it fits on the plane.

**Amanda:** Anything?

**Jeremy:** Sure.

**Amanda:** You promise.

**Jeremy:** What do you want?

**Amanda:** Can I have a lawyer?

**Jeremy:** *(amused)* I told you, you don't need a lawyer.

**Amanda:** Well, if I don't need one, then you don't need one either,  
'cause we both have God telling us what's right in our hearts.

**Jeremy:** I suppose we do.

**Amanda:**     *(She gives him a kiss on the cheek.)* Good night Daddy. Have a good trip.

**Jeremy:**     Good night, Princess.

*(Amanda shuffles off the stage in her slippers, dragging her doll. When she disappears out of sight, Jeremy opens the letter, written on a paper red heart, like a valentine. He reads it, and we hear a "voice-over" of Amanda's little voice.)*

**SOUND:**     **PLAY VOICEOVER OF AMANDA**

**Amanda's Voice:**

Dear Daddy,  
I want to be just like you when I grow up.  
I miss you when you're gone. Hurry back.

Princess Amanda

*(Jeremy collapses into the chair, buries his head in his hands, and groans. He freezes when the pastor approaches.)*

**"Skerman"**

*(Same points and props as "Option 1." Jeremy leaves after the sermon.)*

### **Ending Option 3: Jeremy's repentance**

*After the pastor's message, Jeremy repents and the "portrait" images dissolve backwards to pose 1.*

**NOTE:** This option can occur with or without Scene 5 (as described in "Option 2"), with Amanda.

*(Either after Kari leaves, ("Option 1") or after Amanda leaves, ("Option 2") Jeremy sinks his face into his hands and prays silently; obviously wrestling with the choices he has made. He freezes in a prayerful pose as the pastor steps onto the stage.)*

**"Skerman"**

*(Same points and props as "Option 1." The pastor leaves Jeremy on stage after the sermon. Jeremy "unfreezes.")*

**Jeremy:**     *(in agony)* Oh God, what have I become?  
My soul is hideous in your sight.  
Forgive me; re-make me; accept me again.

**SCREEN:** (Push “Play” on the DVD) **THE POSES DISSOLVE “BACKWARDS” FROM POSE 4, BACK TO POSE 1.**

**MUSIC:** **REPENTANCE SONG (included on DVD? Live?)**  
Suggested song is Keith Green’s “My Eyes Are Dry.”

*(Jeremy continues to mumble a prayer, sighing his way through it. As he prays, the portrait slowly dissolves backwards, until it returns to the original, handsome Jeremy (pose 1). During the reverse dissolving sequence, a song of regeneration and recommitment, like Keith Green's "My Eyes Are Dry," is played (or sung by an off-stage voice). After the song is over, Jeremy rises and exits.)*

#### **Ending Option 4: Jeremy takes action**

*After the pastor's message, and after the "portrait" dissolves back to normal, Jeremy acts on his repentance.*

*(Jeremy lifts his head from his prayer of repentance. He calls his secretary, Kari, on his cell phone.)*

**Jeremy:** *(into his cell phone)* Kari, contact Mike.  
I need to meet with both of you before I go.

*(He starts to walk off stage and talks as he exits.)*

I have to make some changes.

**The End**