



*Written by
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“Good Deeds”

Scripture: James 1:22

“...prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”

Dramatic Category: “Rewind Skit” (With a “Skermion” option that involves the pastor.)

What is a “Rewind Skit”?

These skits begin with very specific blocking motions and lead up to a wrong conclusion in which some spiritual principle has been violated. The characters freeze in position, the pastor approaches them and comments on the “error of their ways,” then, on his cue, the actors “rewind” the scene, doing all their blocking backwards, until they end up where the scene started. Play “carousel music,” or the hymn, “Since Jesus Came Into My Life,” as they rewind. They do the scene again, using much of the same blocking; however, this time the dialogue reflects a renewed spirit in Christ, and the outcome is a testimony of the power of God to change the human heart.

Topic: Sanctification vs. hypocrisy: Consistently living out one’s Christian convictions.

Performance Time: 7 minutes

Number of Players: 2 eccentric, old ladies

Objective:

To show that our actions must follow our convictions as Christians, and that there is not room for “appearing” to be sanctified, while secretly engaging in the “ways of the world,” in this case: gossip and fraud.

Synopsis:

This is a “Rewind Skit” in which Maribell and Elizabeth, two elderly sisters, gossip furiously about Amanda’s drinking problem, while overtly cheating on their income tax by claiming that they are “sole support of an aging parent,” who has been dead for 20 years!

At the end of their scene, they freeze as the pastor comments on living a life of integrity once we profess Christ as Lord of our lives. Sanctification is expressed in moment-by-moment living. On the pastor’s cue, the sisters rewind their scene by performing their

blocking backwards, as “carousel music” or the hymn, “Since Jesus Came Into My Life,” is played.

This time, the sisters comment on the blessings Amanda has enjoyed since they helped her get rid of her drinking problem, and they lament the fact that they “...can’t claim papa life we used to,” because, after all, “We mustn’t cheat.”

Cast:

Elizabeth: *An elderly woman, who is burdened by figuring the taxes.*

Maribell: *Elizabeth’s sister who is head of the “Ladies Aide Society.”*

Costumes:

Dress Maribell for going out: hat, purse, shawl

Dress Elizabeth for staying home: house dress, slippers

Props:

Forms that look like taxes and an envelope for mailing

A hat, purse, and shawl for Maribell

A church paper (the kind that is mailed home)

A table

A chair

Lights: General stage lighting

Sound:

Carousel-type music or the hymn, “Since Jesus Came Into My life,” to be played during the rewind

STAGING NOTE:

The stage blocking is essential in this “Rewind Skit” because it has to be done backwards. Pay close attention to the stage directions marked in bold.

The Script:

NOTE: Blocking notes are essential; therefore, they are in bold.

The Scene, Take One:

(ELIZABETH is seated at a table, hunched over a ledger, sorting receipts and figuring their income taxes. MARIBELL enters the room, sorting the mail.)

MARIBELL:

(casually entering as she reads the mail. She gasps as she reads the church paper, and speaks to herself.)

Amanda Montgomery appointed missions Chairman!
Sister, look! *(She shoves the paper under Elizabeth's nose.)*

ELIZABETH: *(Hardly looking up from her work)*

What is it dear? More bills that I can deduct from this year's income!
Oh, Maribell, I don't know why I have to figure our taxes, each year.
You know I don't have a head for numbers.
(She tosses a few receipts up casually.)

MARIBELL: Look!

(MARIBELL shakes the paper for ELIZABETH to read. ELIZABETH'S face reveals her shock as she reads about Amanda.)

ELIZABETH: No! Not Amanda Montgomery! Why land sakes, how could anyone ever give that woman such a position of responsibility?

MARIBELL: Why, I don't know. Don't forget to claim Papa as a deduction, sister. *(She points to a column.)* Right here. We're sole support of an aging parent.

ELIZABETH: *(writing in the information)* How old would our dear Papa be if he were still with us, Maribell?

MARIBELL: Let's see, *(She fans herself with the paper.)* I believe he would be one hundred and eight years old this November!

(The two women stare at each other and exchange a brief glance reflecting the slightest hint of guilt.)

ELIZABETH: Maribell, are you sure the Internal Revenue Service won't find out about...

MARIBELL: Papa? Don't be silly; those people at the infernal revenue are way too busy to fret over us!

ELIZABETH: *(grabbing the church paper from Maribell)* Pick a number for this year's charitable contributions, sister. It will take your mind off this frightful disgrace!

MARIBELL: *(thinking it over)* Ah, how about \$780.00 to the United Way.

ELIZABETH: We should have receipts for that.

(MARIBELL gives ELIZABETH an incredulous look!)

MARIBELL: Oh, that's right, receipts. In that case, tell them we gave it to transients. They don't give receipts.

(MARIBELL takes the church paper from ELIZABETH again as ELIZABETH writes down the charitable contribution. She leans over to ELIZABETH secretly and whispers:)

MARIBELL: Does anyone know the truth about this woman?

ELIZABETH: *(while writing in the figures)* Seven hundred and eighty...
I should hope so. The woman has no principles.

MARIBELL: Do the elders know she has served time in prison?

ELIZABETH: For perjury! Sign here sister.

(MARIBELL takes the pen that ELIZABETH hands her, but looks at her with a puzzled expression.)

ELIZABETH: Sign it right here, dear.

MARIBELL: Isn't this where you sign?

ELIZABETH: We're filing joint! *(after Elizabeth signs)*
How long was she in the joint.

MARIBELL: The what?

ELIZABETH: In jail, how long was Amanda in jail?

MARIBELL: Oh, two years. She swore an oath in a court of law and lied.
Can you imagine that sister? *(leaning conspicuously over to Elizabeth)*
And what about her other problem? You know.

ELIZABETH: *(while signing the return)* Her drinking?
(She pantomimes downing drink after drink.)

MARIBELL: Yes, someone should alert the elders!

ELIZABETH: I've heard she went to one of those programs, you know, to help her quit, but the woman just has no sense of personal Christian propriety!
(She stuffs the returns into an envelope)

MARIBELL: *(Elizabeth hands the envelope to Maribell to lick and seal.)*
I've never seen her at the Ladies Home Aid Society.

ELIZABETH: *(pointing to the time on the church paper)*
Of course not, it meets in the afternoon and you know what condition she's usually by afternoon!

MARIBELL: Indeed!

(Elizabeth gathers up the papers on the table and place them neatly in little files.)

ELIZABETH: Well sister, looks like we've reported to the government for another year.

MARIBELL: *(leaning over to see Elizabeth's watch)*
Oh my! Where has the time gone? I have a Ladies aid society meeting at church, and as president, I can't be late!

ELIZABETH: Of course not. Oh, while you're there, dear, drop in on pastor and tell him about Amanda.

(ELIZABETH tucks the files under one arm and Maribell carefully places the church paper in her purse.)

MARIBELL: Indeed I will. We can't have a woman like her in a position of leadership.

ELIZABETH: Certainly not! She has no scruples.

(ELIZABETH and MARIBELL nod to one another knowingly.)

THEY FREEZE IN THIS POSITION

THE PASTOR WALKS UP TO THE FROZEN COUPLE AND COMMENTS ON THE SCENE.

PASTOR: *(He may choose to re-state what they have said about "having scruples," and comment on the fact that our actions must follow our convictions as Christians, and that there is no room for "appearing" to be sanctified, while secretly engaging in the "ways of the world," in this case: gossip and fraud.)*

"God wants us to live lives that shine in a dark world.

Don't you wish you could start some conversations over?

Let's see what would happen if they could take it all back and begin again, this time letting the sanctified life shine through."

(ON THE PASTOR'S CUE, MARIBELL AND ELIZABETH REWIND THE SCENE. THEY DO ALL OF THEIR BLOCKING BACKWARDS UNTIL MARIBELL IS READY TO ENTER TO SCENE AGAIN.)

SOUND:

They may suggest dialogue, speaking backwards so that it sounds like gibberish; however, this must be done very quickly. “Keystone Cops,” carousel-type music, or the hymn, “Since Jesus Came Into My Heart,” works better, without hearing dialogue. They mouth the words, but don’t bother with trying to say them. Again, this is done double-time, so that it looks like a movie in rewind; it becomes a very funny moment for the audience to enjoy.

ACTIONS: Rewind these actions:

1. ELIZABETH and MARIBELL nod to one another knowingly.
2. ELIZABETH tucks the files under one arm and Maribell carefully places the church paper in her purse.
3. MARIBELL leans over to see Elizabeth's watch.
4. ELIZABETH gathers up the papers on the table and places them neatly in little files.
5. ELIZABETH points to the time on the church paper.
6. ELIZABETH hands the envelope to Maribell to lick and seal.
7. ELIZABETH stuffs the returns into an envelope
- 8, ELIZABETH signs the return and pantomimes downing drink after drink.
9. MARIBELL leans conspicuously over to Elizabeth.
10. ELIZABETH signs.
11. MARIBELL takes the pen that ELIZABETH hands her, but looks at her with a puzzled expression.
12. MARIBELL takes the church paper. She leans over to Elizabeth secretly and whispers.
13. ELIZABETH grabs the church paper from Maribell.
14. The two women exchange a brief glance reflecting the slightest hint of guilt.
15. MARIBELL fans herself with the paper.
16. ELIZABETH writes in the information.
17. MARIBELL points to a column.
18. MARIBELL shakes the paper for ELIZABETH to read.
19. ELIZABETH'S face reveals her shock as she reads about Amanda.
20. ELIZABETH tosses a few receipts.
21. MARIBELL casually enters as she reads the mail. She gasps as she reads the church paper, and speaks to herself.
22. MARIBELL shoves the paper under Elizabeth’s nose.
23. ELIZABETH is hunched over a ledger, sorting receipts and figuring their income taxes.
24. MARIBELL enters the room, sorting the mail.

NOTE:

Have the actors practice this before a mirror. First do the action forwards, and then practice doing it backwards. This will work after they really study themselves a few times.

The Scene, Take Two:

MARIBELL: *(enters, caring the mail and gasps when she sees the headline. She whispers to herself.)* Amanda Montgomery appointed Missions Chairman, sister Look!

ELIZABETH: *(Not looking up from her work)* What is it? More bills to subtract from this year's income! Oh, Maribell, I don't see why I have to figure our taxes each year. You know I don't have a head for numbers.
(She tosses the receipts casually.)

MARIBELL: It's your gift dear, you know I always round off to the nearest fifty cents in my checkbook, so I don't have to borrow and carry. Sister, Look!
(She hands her the church paper.)

ELIZABETH: *(after reading it)* How wonderful! After all she's been through, she needs a little excitement in her life, don't you think?

MARIBELL: Why yes, the poor dear. After Frank died, she had nothing but legal problems, he left her penniless, you know?

ELIZABETH *(figuring their taxes also)* Yes, and since Papa died, we haven't done so well either. We can't deduct him like we used to!

MARIBELL: Of course not! That would be cheating and we all know that...

BOTH: We mustn't cheat!

ELIZABETH:
(Pointing to where Maribell must sign. Maribell takes the pen and signs while Elizabeth continues to study the church paper)

Well, if anybody ever takes the missions committee to court, Amanda will do fine!
She's a pretty smooth talker!

MARIBELL: *(grabbing the paper from Elizabeth)* Elizabeth! Watch your tongue!
You mustn't say such things. All that is behind her, and we are not to judge!

ELIZABETH: I know, but remember the drinking? Oh, she had such a passel of problems!

(She begins to fold the taxes and put them in the envelopes. She hands them to Maribell for sealing)

MARIBELL: Yes, sister, and we are to be a part of the solution not part of the problem!

ELIZABETH: We were!

MARIBELL: Remember the night we helped her clean her house, just after she got home from the...
(she hesitates to say the word, "jail.")

ELIZABETH: Slammer?

MARIBELL: Elizabeth!

ELIZABETH: Yes, we poured out every bottle of alcohol she had hidden away!

MARIBELL: Oh, she was mad!

ELIZABETH: But, only for the first hour, then we cried and prayed with her most of the night.

MARIBELL: *(after licking and sealing the last envelope)*
Amanda has come a long way, and I'm glad we could help a little.
Missions chairman, imagine that! Such a responsible position!

ELIZABETH: Yes, indeed!
(Holding up both envelopes for Maribell to inspect.)
We only owe the government \$240.00.

MARIBELL: \$240.00? Did you record every receipt I gave you?

ELIZABETH: Every one!

MARIBELL: *(Maribell digs around in her pocket and finds one more, much to Elizabeth's surprise.)*
Oh no! Here's one to the United Way for \$38.00!

ELIZABETH: No, Maribell. I'm all done. Save it for next year!

MARIBELL: But, sister. It's dated for 2003.
We can't claim it next year, that would be cheating, and we both know...

BOTH: We mustn't cheat!

LIGHTS: BLACKOUT

MARIBELL and ELIZABETH Exit...sermon continues