

God Is Speaking

A Christian Actor's Devotional

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my good friends and drama team leaders, Yvonne Timmerman and Joan Reinders. Yvonne, your quiet demeanor and thoughtful direction is always there to calm me, focus me and massage my soul while you, Joan, motivate, inspire and encourage me to express myself dramatically. What a team we make! God has blessed me and equipped me for service by introducing you both into my life, and I believe He has wonderful things in store for us! Acts 1:8.

INTRODUCTION

"In the beginning ..." God created the canvas, prepared the stage and set the scene for the greatest drama ever. Jesus, the Master Storyteller, shared parables, provided object lessons, and used dramatic detail to teach, to encourage and to cause His followers to reflect upon the mighty power of God. Creativity is an attribute of God. Ministry in the form of the dramatic arts allows us the opportunity to be witnesses for Christ and to use our gifts to present the truth of God's Word in a dramatic way.

Drama is mobile, flexible, and can have an impact on participants and audiences alike, as long as the focus on Christ is maintained. Trying to keep this focus can be a challenge for directors and it is with this thought in mind that "God Is Speaking, A Christian Actor's Devotional," has been prepared.

Although an appreciative and responsive audience is the culmination of much time, toil and effort, as directors of Christian drama we need to know that our cast and crew have also reaped rewards from their participation; rewards that go beyond the congratulatory remarks and fine applause. Was God truly speaking through our performance? Has a heart been stirred as a result of our presentation? Has *my* heart been stirred?

"God Is Speaking, A Christian Actor's Devotional" offers a unique "to be picked up at any time" type of book that can be used at meetings, at rehearsals, as a relaxation tool to calm the butterflies prior to a performance, or as a private devotional.

God has set the stage. Auditions are over. The cast has been selected. Where does everyone fit into the big picture? "God Is Speaking, A Christian Actor's Devotional" will shed some light for readers and hearers and doers and even dreamers as the focus is upon the Good News of Jesus Christ; a focus that will catch the attention of youth and adults who are interested in Christian dramatic arts.

May God bless your ministry dramatically!

Take 1: Did Adam and Eve Have Belly Buttons?



The Script: For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. *Psalm 139:13-14.*

Center Stage

Everyone loves a baby. They're cute (most of the time) and they do goofy things like burping in church during the sermon.

Maybe you recall from Biology 101 that, before you took your first breath, God had issued you a lifeline. That lifeline, or umbilical cord, connected you to your mom while you were in her womb. Through this incredible structure, you were nourished. Although the menu didn't include a triple deluxe burger with a side order of deep-fried zucchini sticks, the nutrients provided were perfect to help you grow into a cute little chubby-faced crumb crusher.

At birth, your umbilical cord was cut. Sure, you were tiny and dependent and all you did was eat and sleep and have your diapers changed, but

you were a unique individual on the road to independence. Soon you would stuff your own face and eventually choose the food you wanted to eat (like a triple deluxe burger and a side order of deep-fried zucchini sticks)!

God has offered you another lifeline. Rather than a physical connection, He offers you spiritual nutrition through His Word. It soon becomes clear that God has created you exactly to His own specification. You are not a result of some protoplasmic explosion but rather a carefully planned out creation with a particular purpose.

What better way is there to give praise to God than to tell others about His mighty works using the gifts and abilities that He has given you?

Curtain Call

Consider your belly button. Think about how long you would have lasted if your umbilical cord was obstructed. Think about the importance of maintaining a lifeline with your Creator. How can you show God today that you praise Him for creating you unique?

Hmmm ... Let Me Think: *(Jot your thoughts on separate paper.)*



Encore

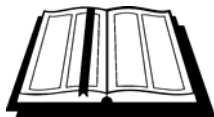
If you offer babysitting during your next production, take a quick peek in the nursery at the babies before you go onstage and remember that God has created us one of a kind. Thank God for your lifeline.



Prayer

Great Creator, You are an incredible artist. You have taken my small life and allowed me to express myself in a unique way. I thank you that You gave me breath. I too often forget that my abilities are because of You. Without my lifeline, I would not be effective for Your kingdom. I pray that I will always desire to serve and praise You, Lord. Amen.

Take 2: Beauty and the Beast Within



The Script: Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. *2 Corinthians 1:4.*

Center Stage

Jessica's piercing, sapphire-blue eyes twinkled when she laughed. Her peaches and cream complexion accented by roseblush cheeks bore a tiny scar just over her left eyebrow. "It's nothing; it happened a few years ago," she would tell the inquisitive. Nobody in the youth group knew much about Jessica.

Charlie said with a wink, "My premature gray hair is no longer premature!" Charlie liked to laugh now, and if he managed to give someone else a chuckle, he felt like a million dollars! It wasn't that many years ago that Charlie thought he would never laugh again. Isabelle loved working in the church nursery. She wanted to be where the babies were. Sometimes when Isabelle rocked a baby to sleep, she would shed a tear. Her friends would laugh and call her "hormonal."

She would smile and retreat into her thoughts.

In drama sometimes we use masks to create a different character. Used properly, the transformation can be an effective one because we cannot use facial expressions while wearing a mask; we rely upon body language and the delivery of lines to convey emotion and attitude.

Jessica, Charlie and Isabelle had a secret: they each wore a mask. Jessica had been physically and sexually abused by her father. Charlie was a reformed alcoholic. Isabelle was the product of a botched abortion attempt.

We do not have to travel far to arrive at the mission field. Often, God points to our own flock where many hearts are aching and struggling to grasp what it truly means to forgive or to be forgiven.

Curtain Call

Have you ever acted using a mask? Is your approach to acting different when you don't use a mask? What kind of "mask" do you wear in your everyday life? Can we ever help people remove their masks? Is this a wise thing to do?

Hmm Let Me Think: *(Jot your thoughts on separate paper.)*



Encore

If you are going to use a disguise in your production, consider the character that you want to portray. Think about your audience and remember the Jessicas and Charlies and Isabelles. Ask God to make you more sensitive to others.



Prayer

Heavenly and loving Father, may my direction always come from You. Help my focus shift from self to others. Allow me to discover the incredible mission field that needs to hear about the Truth of the Gospel and the Way to eternal peace. Let me never attempt to disguise my feelings about You. Amen.

Take 3: The Shirt Off My Back



The Script: In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35.

Center Stage

It was coffee break. Trevor and his dad pulled up to the drive-thru speaker and asked for their usual "double-doubles." The bubbly, anonymous voice thanked the hardworking father-son duo for their order and asked them to drive to the first window to pay for their purchase.

As the grinning girl in the chocolate brown uniform cheerfully handed the steamy brew over, she noticed Trevor's red hooded sweater. "Where did you get your sweater?" the smiling coffee server boldly asked. "Uh ... I can't remember" came the puzzled reply. Trevor looked at the red sweater he was wearing, wracking his brain to recall where it came from. "I've been looking for one of those." She smiled and bid the father and his teenage son farewell and ceremoniously told them to enjoy the rest of their day.

Amused by the brief encounter, Trevor and his dad continued on their way, sipping their coffee.

"Should I?" Trevor asked. "Why not?" answered his smiling father. Dad stopped the car in the parking lot. Trevor pulled off his sweater and went into the coffee shop.

"Here you go," Trevor thrust the sweater into the hands of the surprised girl wearing the headset. "You might want to wash it before you wear it." He smiled and left. "I wish I had left a tract in the pocket," Trevor grinned as they headed back to work. "I should have told her that I gave her my sweater because that's what Jesus would want me to do. I hate it when I miss an opportunity to witness!"

His dad grinned. "I don't think you missed anything, Trev. Check out your T-shirt." Trevor looked at the picture on his shirt: Jesus with outstretched arms and nail-pierced hands and a caption reading, "I love you this much."

Curtain Call

The costumes we wear onstage are temporary coverings intended to create atmosphere and presence and to help us assume roles and enhance characterization. When the production is over and you remove your costume what sort of character emerges then?

Hmmm ... Let Me Think: *(Jot your thoughts on separate paper.)*



Encore

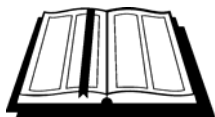
To truly give is to truly serve. Giving can take many forms, whether giving of your time, talents or material possessions. Jesus laid it out for us when He told us that it is better to give than to receive, and when we put it into practice it sure feels like the right thing to do. During rehearsals (while you are waiting for your entrance) take a moment to reflect upon who you really are underneath the costume.



Prayer

Gracious Father, You supply our every need. You clothe us and feed us and tend us as a shepherd cares for his flock. Make our motivations proper and pleasing to You. Allow us to find opportunities to give of ourselves whether it be through talent or treasure. Use us for Your purpose. Amen.

Take 4: The Bittersweet Taste of Freedom



The Script: Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey." *Exodus 24:7.*

Center Stage

Pavlov was missing. He made his great escape early one morning, slipping out when the back door wasn't closed properly. The determined pooch yearned to experience liberty and headed for the hills.

Pavlov wasn't a bad dog; just carefree. It seemed his desire for freedom monopolized his moments and he sought ways to escape. Something had to be done, for this was not the first time he had attempted to bolt, but it seemed opportunity had presented itself and Pavlov was taking advantage.

The solution? Obedience class. Once Pavlov learned to abide by instruction and was able to decipher commands, he was able to experience true freedom. No longer would he have to be tied up for he could be trusted to stay close and to respond appropriately.

At times we are like Pavlov and long to do things our way. We think we know what is best and we often complain about restrictions or direction. God gives assignments to people and sometimes we are to take the initiative and lead but other times we are to heed direction

Curtain Call

Imagine the resulting chaos if each actor felt he had the freedom to state his opinion every time the director spoke during rehearsals. Not much would be accomplished for the Kingdom. When is it most difficult to obey? Why?

Hmmm ... Let Me Think: *(Jot your thoughts on separate paper.)*



Encore

Think about all the different people who are involved in making a successful production and pray for each one individually over the next week. Think about the "script" God personally penned for your life. Try your best to stick to it.



Prayer

Lord, I know You hear my prayers and that Your will is always done. Help me to be obedient to You always. Forgive me for blunders and for the times I try to rewrite the "script." I desire to glorify You; thank you for the freedom I have in Jesus. Amen.

End of Freeview

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