

“THE MASK”

by
Terry L. Stanley

Synopsis

We come to church; we smile and greet one another with a holy kiss; a hug with a compassionate pat on the back. How are you? Great!...and you? Blessed! Sounds familiar? Probably so, but in reality, all is not well with many people. Most of us (Christians) struggle to overcome personal hurts, bad habits, and hang-ups. This Reader's Theatre piece exposes the false persona, (the "mask") we wear to disguise how we are really doing. It examines why we wear a mask; what's the impact of wearing our mask; and how we can remove our mask and recover for the sin and pain in our life.

Scripture(s) :

Romans 7:14-25

Ministry Lesson

Jesus freed us from the bondage of sin, but He did not free us from the temptation of sin. Paul confesses that he constantly struggles to do right but always seems to do wrong. Like Paul, we struggle with sinful desires all the time. Only by the power of the Holy Spirit can we control the desires of the flesh and recover from the hurts and pains of life.

Ministry Focus: Overcoming Sin

Genre: Dramatic Reading

Cast/Readers

Reader 1 - Bad Habit - Male

Reader 2 - Hurt - Female

Reader 3 - Hang-Up - Male

Props

Small black 3-ring notebooks containing scripts (3)

Masks (3) - Covering the eyes only, not the entire face.

Time: 4 min.

Costumes: Readers should wear all black (optional)

Writer's Notes

The concept for this piece is based on the Saddleback church Celebrate Recovery Program¹. Each reader represents a distinct sin or personal challenge. As with all Reader's Theatre presentations, the Readers should try to find a creative way of expressing each line. The purpose of this piece is to minister to that "inner person" inside each of us; to expose the fact that everyone struggles with, and sometimes fall into, temptation (which we hide from others). If you are planning to start a program at your church to help people who are struggling with sin and other problems, this is a good script to introduce the topic.

¹This script is not endorsed by, or affiliated with, the Saddleback Church or the Celebrate Recovery Program®, nor do I personally endorse any specific program.

READERS ENTER. THEY ARE WEARING MASKS OVER THEIR EYES

*Speaking to someone
(Pretending to be happy)*

Hang-up: Good Morning! (beat) Oh I'm blessed and highly favored!

Hurt: Oh yes, everything is fine. God is so good!

Habit: That's right, all we have to do is put our faith in the Lord and He will see us through!

EACH READER LIFTS THEIR MASK UP ONTO THEIR FOREHEAD

*Speaking to themselves
(Relieved it's over)*

Hang-up: I sure hope they believed me.

Hurt: I've said it so many times; I almost believe it myself...almost.

Habit: If they only knew what I am really going through.

Hang-up: Its best they don't.

Habit: So I present this false persona...my mask...to hide who I really am

Hurt: How I really feel.

Hang-up: The things I'm dealing with in the dark.

Habit: Who would want to be my friend if they knew the addiction I'm struggling with?

Hurt: The hurt and abuse I've had to endure.

Hang-up: The anger that's built up inside me.

Hurt: I once tried to open up about my situation.

Habit: I just want someone to listen.

Hurt: But I'm afraid of what they will say; what they will think.

Hang Up: No, its best that I hide my secret life behind this mask.

Hurt: I don't want anyone to see how I'm struggling emotionally and psychologically.

Habit: I don't want anyone to know that I can't break free of my bad habits.

Hang-up: I don't want anyone to judge me.

EACH READER PULLS DOWN THEIR MASK OVER THEIR EYES

*Speaking to another person
(With Enthusiasm)*

Habit: Oh, praise the Lord Pastor (or Reverend)! That was a great sermon.

Hurt: Yes, I will celebrate my 10th wedding anniversary next month. God is so good!

Hang-up: Of course I'll be at bible study. The bible says, "Study to show thyself approved", right?!

All: (Waving goodbye) Goodbye. God Bless!

EACH READER LIFTS UP THEIR MASK UP ONTO THEIR FOREHEAD

*Speaking to themselves
(Confused)*

Habit: I don't understand; I thought becoming a Christian would free me from my bad habits.

Hurt: Take away the all the hurt and pain in my life.

Hang-up: Am I the only one who has a hang-up?

Hurt: Is this mask my scarlet letter of shame?

Habit: I feel like a caged bird.

Hang-up: But I'm locked inside myself; holding myself prisoner.

Habit: Sometimes when I look in the mirror I don't recognize the person staring back at me.

Hurt: I'm too ashamed to ask for help. I dare not let others know I need prayer.

Habit: I feel empty inside when I think of the things I've done...the things I still desire to do.

Hang-up: Is this what the Apostle Paul meant when he said, "When I want to do right, I don't do it..."?

Habit: "and when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway"...

- End of Preview -

As the script continues--the characters come to realize that they are powerless to control their thoughts and tendencies. Only by the power of the Holy Spirit can they deal with their habits, hang-ups, and emotional pain.
