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"A Second Chance at Christmas"

Ву

Brent Holland

What Two years after his divorce, Tyler is still unsure of his direction and misses his

family. A late night encounter at work on Christmas Eve changes everything.

Themes: Forgiveness, Salvation, Family, Grace

Who Roles for 10. 1male, 1female and 8 flexible. (cast list below)

When The Present

Costumes Business casual for Jim, Erica, and Tyler. Janitor apparel for Alex and Chris

Police uniforms and winter wear for Lindsay, Darren and Jessica.

Props Office chairs, desks, a picture of Tyler and his family. A broom, and janitorial

Supplies.

Why Romans 3:23, Acts 2:21.

How The show takes place in two locations: An office and a church. Both sets can

Be simplistic and representational.

Time 25 minutes

Cast List

Tyler Wilson: (m) A middle aged business man suffering from depression at Christmas. He has been divorced for 2 years and his mother has recently passed away. His oldest child Darren went against his father's wishes and chose to pursue a career in Hollywood over going to college. His daughter lives with her mother. Basically a good man, but lost.

Chris: (m/f) An angel, or something very close to it.

Lindsay Wilson: (f) Tyler's ex-wife. Pretty, outgoing, and a devout Christian. Lindsay has never given up hope that her former husband would come to know Christ.

Jessica Wilson: (m/f) A freshman in college and Tyler's daughter. Loves her father, but is recently alienated from him.

Darren Wilson: (m/f) 14 years old. Had a good relationship with Tyler up until the divorce.

Jim Carter: (m/f) Tyler's best friend and co-worker.

Erica Jones: (m/f) Another co-worker and friend of Tyler.

Police Officer One: (m/f) A police officer called out to the office on Christmas Eve.

Police Officer Two: (m/f) Another police officer called out to the office.

Alex: (m/f) A custodian that works for the same company as Tyler.

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The lights come up in an office building which is closing for the day. There are three desks covered in typical office materials.

Erica: That's it! Five O'clock and time to go!

Jim: About time! (gathering paper while looking at **Tyler**) Hey Ty! It's quitting

time! Chop chop! (looks back to see Tyler still working) Hey! Earth to Mr.

Wilson! (*Tyler looks up*) Good! You *are* awake. Time to go, dude.

Christmas eve and all.

Tyler: Sorry. I'm pretty deep into this report. I probably need to stay a bit

longer and get a head start on this for the new year.

Erica: (putting her coat on) It can wait! Come on, get your stuff! You are not

going to make me feel like a dog for leaving you here working on

Christmas Eve.

Tyler: No, you guys go ahead. I'm not going to be here much longer.

Seriously. Just take off. Merry Christmas and all that.

Erica: You sure?

Tyler: Yes. Absolutely. Now go! I don't want to have to explain to your

husband why you aren't home yet.

Erica: Ok man. Merry Christmas, Ty.

Tyler Merry Christmas, Erica.

Erica puts on a scarf and heads out. **Jim** has put on his coat, but has not made a move to leave. A few moments pass, Jim is standing behind **Tyler** unnoticed.

Jim: Hey, Ty.

Tyler: Why are you still here? Get home to your family.

Jim: Yeah... about that. What are your plans tonight? You know you are

more than welcome to come eat with Lisa and I. The kids would

absolutely love to have you there.

Tyler: Thanks, but no. I'm good with being alone tonight.

Jim: No way! No one needs to be alone on Christmas. Have you spoken to

your girl today? She's in town right?

Tyler: No, I haven't, and as far as I know, yes, she is in town.

Jim: Have you talked to her since she left for school?

Tyler: No. We've texted a couple of times.

Jim: Have you spoken to Darren? Lindsay?

Tyler: No and no. Look, I will call and talk to Jess and Darren tonight. I

promise. Right now I just want to get finished looking at this report,

ok?

Jim: Fine. I'm sorry. (starts to leave but turns back) Look, Ty. I know this has

got to be tough for you. I remember the first Christmas after my mother died. I just want you to know that we will be up half the night,

so feel free to come by.

Tyler: Thanks Jim. I'll give you a call tomorrow.

Jim: Merry Christmas, Tyler. Hey! If you fall asleep at your desk again, how

about spitting your gum out first. I'm not coming back here tonight to

cut gum out of your hair again.

Tyler: What are the odds of that happening twice?

Jim: With you? Who knows. Seriously though, call me if you need me. Just

not for gum in your hair.

Tyler: Go home, Jim!

Jim: Yeah, yeah. (he leaves)

Once **Jim** is out the door, **Tyler** lets a beat pass before opening his desk and unwrapping a piece of gum. He pops it in his mouth and he gets back to work.

Blackout.

When the lights come up **Tyler** is still at his desk. The lights are out and he is asleep with his head down in his work. There is a sound from outside the office and then an offstage light. **Chris** comes into the office pushing a mop and bucket. He is dressed in typical Janitorial garments and is whistling to himself when he sees **Tyler**.

Chris: (more to himself than to anyone else) It sure is good to see that

someone else has to work on Christmas Eve! (to **Tyler**) So what keeps you around here so late? (no answer) Hello? (no answer still, **Chris** gets right up to **Tyler's** ear) Wake up! You're gonna sleep through Christmas

with your face planted on a manila folder! (**Tyler** pops awake)

Tyler: (half asleep) Huh? What? Oh, I'm sorry. You scared me. I thought I

would be the only one left in the building tonight.

Chris: I wish. But hey, I've got like forty-seven toilets to clean and the boss

lady says it's gotta happen tonight, and seeing as how she didn't give me much choice in the matter and offered to pay me double time, scrubbing the John didn't sound like too bad a proposition, I guess. Well, that just about catches you up to date on my life situation,

what's keeping you here?

Tyler: It's just this work.

Chris: On Christmas Eve? What kinda work are you doing there? Are you

about to come up with the cure for cancer or something?

Tyler: (laughing) No. It's not that. I guess I just wanted to get a jump on this

research for the new year. It's really not all that important.

Chris: Not that important? Then what are you still doing here? Go home.

Deck the halls, leave out some milk and cookies for Santa. Drink eggnog, decorate the tree, eat some mistletoe... or hang some

mistletoe. Either way...

Tyler: (cutting him off) Yeah, yeah, I know. Look, I will. I just need a little

while longer to sort some of this junk out. When I get ready to leave,

I'll let you know. What did you say your name was?

Chris: I didn't. But it's Chris, and I am gonna be on this floor for a while.

Tyler: Nice to meet you, Chris. Odd that I've never seen you around.

Chris: Just started this week, been doing the graveyard shift. (looking at

Tyler's shirt) Is that gum on your shirt?

Tyler: What?

Chris: (picking it off his shirt) It's not safe to fall asleep with gum in your

mouth. Didn't your mom ever tell you that?

Tyler: Probably. It's your first week, and they're making you work Christmas

Eve?

Chris: That's what I'm saying! I oughta quit. (looking at the picture on **Tyler's**

desk) Is that your family? Nice looking kids. Pretty wife. What are you

still doing here if you've got that waiting at home for you?

Tyler: What? Who said they're waiting at home for me? Sadly, that's my

ex-wife, she's probably at church tonight and could care less where I

am. My kids are probably with her.

Chris: Sorry to hear that. So, they're down at your church? Why aren't you

with them?

Tyler: It's the "ex" part of ex-wife. I wasn't invited.

Chris: They haven't ever invited you to go to church with them?

Tyler: Well, yeah, of course they have.

Chris: At Christmas?

Tyler: Yes...

Chris: Then they obviously want you there with them!

Tyler: What? (a beat passes) Why do you care?

Chris: Sorry man. Just passing the time. Talking to you beats chumming it up

with the urinals.

Tyler: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to snap at you.

Chris: It's cool. (he starts to leave)

Tyler: Anyways, church isn't my bag. That's really a lot of the reason why

Lindsay is my ex-wife and not my now-wife.

Chris: *(interested again)* How so?

Tyler: You know the story. My wife went and got all religious. One day we're

a happy couple, the next she is telling me what a sinner I am and how much I need Jesus. Then I feel like she went and turned my kids

against me.

Chris: Yeah, gotta hate when that happens. Someone you love goes and

starts acting like a Christian. Geez, busting the ten commandments on you, loving you to death. Man, I hate when that happens. Rather have them go join a street gang. Hold me at gunpoint, take my wallet...

Tyler: (catching on) Yeah, yeah. Joke all you like, but I'm serious here. I mean

I don't have anything against church and God and all, it's just that I haven't figured it all out yet. I mean I worship in my own way, you

know?

Chris: Hey man, I know where you're coming from! I mean, I like to clean

toilets my own way. But you know how the boss is. (imitating) Chris,

you gotta scrub the whole thing! You see those rust stains?

Counterclockwise! Put your back into it!

Tyler: Are you ever serious?

Chris: Yeah, sometimes.

Tyler: When?

Chris: How about now? I have a question for you. Do you still love her?

Tyler: Huh?

Chris: Do you still love her?

Tyler: My wife?

Chris: (dead pan) Have we been talking about anyone else? (pause) Of course

your wife! Do you still love her?

Tyler: Love her? Nah... I mean, we've been divorced almost two years now.

Of course I don't still love her. Not anymore. Not that much anyways.

(he is very unconvincing)

Chris: You expect me to believe that?

Tyler: Why do you even care? Aren't you getting paid double time to scrub

toilets?

Chris: I'm on break.

Tyler: Since when?

Chris: Since now. So, you expect me to believe that?

Tyler: Believe what?

Chris: That you don't love your wife.

Tyler: (angry) Yeah. You know what? I do. You know why? Because there's

nothing I can do about it. I left her. So what if I regret it? She can't

possibly still love me after what I've put her through.

Chris: So, that's what you think.

Tyler: Yes. That is what I think.

Chris: Now this next part is going to sound a little crazy, but stay with me for

a minute. What if I told you that you were wrong?

Tyler: I would say that you are nuts.

Chris: What if I can prove it?

Tyler: Is this the crazy part?

Chris: It gets more crazy than this. But, as I was saying... what if I can prove

lt?

Tyler: You can't.

Chris: Come here, Tyler. I want to show you something really crazy.

Tyler: (getting up) How do you know my name?

Blackout.

When the lights come back on we are in a church and **Lindsay** and **Jessica** are in prayer at the altar. **Darren** is in the front row also in prayer. The lights are dim and there is no one else in the sanctuary. They are motionless.

Tyler: (disoriented) Whoa! Where are we? (looking around) How did you do

that?

Chris: I told you it was about to get crazy.

Tyler: I'm asleep. I must be asleep. But if I were, I'd wake up, right?

Chris: Odd. It seems that you are still here.

Tyler: Yeah, yeah I can see that. I must have passed out. Maybe I can't wake

up.

Chris: Or maybe this is real.

Tyler: Yeah, ok. Next you will be introducing me to the Easter Bunny too,

right?

Chris: No can do. He's hibernating. Hit me up in the spring.

Chris is about to reply when the scene next to them comes alive.

Jessica: Mom, can we go home now?

Tyler: (surprised) Whoa! Jess! You almost scared me to death.

Chris: She can't hear you.

Tyler: (getting right in front of **Darren** and waving and talking loud) Jessie!

Hello! Hey!

Chris: Told you.

Tyler: Shut up. (he is quiet now but still waving his hands)

Chris: She can't see you either.

Tyler: Yeah, I noticed that. How do you do that?

Chris: That's not important. Remember, I said it was going to get crazy.

Jessica: Mom?

Lindsay: (now paying attention to **Jessica**) Yeah. I guess we can.

Jessica: Why are we having to stay so late tonight?

Lindsay: You know why we're here.

Jessica: But it's Christmas.

Lindsay: And that's why we're staying! You understand that, right?

Jessica: No, maybe I don't. I mean, I know that you're praying for Dad... we all

are. I pray for Dad all the time. But the service ended half an hour ago!

Let's go home.

Lindsay: Just a few more minutes, Jess.

Jessica: It's been two years. You need to move on. Dad made his decision, and

it wasn't us. (*Lindsay* has put her head back down again) I'm sorry,

Mom. I didn't mean to say that. It's just that ever since you two split up

I have seen you get (at a loss for words) more like this.

Darren: Don't be like that.

Jessica: I'm just saying what we're both feeling.

Lindsay: I know. But we shouldn't stop praying. Whether he chose us or not, we

Still want to see him saved don't we?

Jessica: (softly) Of course we do, it's just that...

Lindsay: Trust me, Jess. You'll understand when you get older.

Jessica: About?

Lindsay: All of this. Why you don't give up. And...

Jessica: And what?

Lindsay: And why I still love your dad.

Chris: Boom! I told you! And that took, what... three minutes? I am way

too good at this!

Darren: We all do.

Chris: I mean, I knew I could back it up, but how about that timing?

Tyler: Could you be quiet? I'm trying to hear!

Lindsay: You still love your dad, Jess.

Jessica: Of course I love him! And he loves himself. Look, no one wants Dad to

come to know Jesus any more than I do, but the more we've tried the more he has pushed us away. I can hardly even speak to him anymore

without him snapping my head off.

Darren: So we should give up?

Jessica: No.

Darren: Then let's stay five more minutes. Five more minutes for Dad. Ok?

Jessica: (more upbeat) Okay, okay. I'm in. But it's Christmas eve, and I think we

can spend the rest of the night appreciating what Christ has done for

each of us and what he is *going* to do for dad.

Darren: Exactly. It's going to happen one day. Dad's not stupid. He'll come

around.

Lindsay: Maybe not stupid, but he's definitely hard headed. (to **Jessica**) You get

that from him.

Jessica: Yeah, yeah. Five minutes. Then we go home. We can honor dad when we get there by watching Die Hard. He still swears that's a Christmas

movie.

Lindsay: I have to agree with him on that.

Jessica: Can we get our five minutes started now?

Lindsay: What's your hurry?

Jessica: What's my hurry? It's Christmas, Mom!

Darren: Presents. That's a reason to be in a hurry. That sounds like a great

reason to go home.

Lindsay: You act like you two deserve anything you want this year.

Jessica: (playing along) Are you saying we don't?

Darren: I definitely do! But I wasn't talking about me...

Lindsay: (dubious) What?

Darren: I'm totally talking about the awesome stuff we got *you*. (joking) I

mean, who cares about anything we get... right, Jess?

Jessica: Oh, absolutely.

There is a pause and then laughter.

Lindsay: Whatever! (taking a moment) I wouldn't trade you two for anything...

you know that right?

Jessica: Duh!

Lindsay: Let's give God five more minutes for your father.

They kneel and pray.

Tyler: Why are you showing me this?

Chris: To prove I could.

Tyler: No jokes. I need to know why I'm here.

Chris: Oh, that's easy.

A beat passes.

Tyler: And?

Chris: And what?

Tyler: What's easy?

Chris: Why you're here.

Tyler: And that is?

Chris: To show you that it's not too late. Not for you, not for your marriage.

Tyler: You know, it's not like I don't believe in anything! I just felt pressured

all the time. I just don't understand. I felt like they couldn't love me

and accept that I still haven't figured all of this out yet.

Chris: Maybe it's *because* they love you that they can't accept it.

Tyler: What?

Chris: And if they accept you just as you are, then they accept that if you die,

they'll spend all of eternity without you.

Tyler: Only if they're right.

Chris: And what if they *are* right?

Tyler: Well, what if they're wrong?

Chris:

Then I guess it all comes down to what happens when your heart stops beating. What do you believe in, Tyler? That there is nothing beyond this? Then I guess when you and your family die then that's just it, right? Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. But what if they know the truth? I'm sure you know what would happen then. I don't think they want to chance it. And that's why they never gave up on you.

Tyler: (after a beat) So, you're gonna preach at me now? You know what I

think? I think I'm a pretty good person. I think God would know that. I

think God knows what kind of person I am.

Chris: So, what you believe is that God is some sort of spiritual Santa Claus

that is going to just let you into heaven because you're a "good guy"?

Tyler: What's wrong with that?

Chris: I'm not one to criticize what you want to believe in. Even if it's wrong.

Tyler: Well, what's the truth? What do you think?

Chris: Why are you asking me?

Tyler: Because of all this (points around) I mean, I figure you have to have a

leg up on this right? The average guy can't stop time and teleport

people around.

Chris: I thought you were asleep.

Tyler: If I were asleep, I would have woken up by now.

Chris: Maybe you're really, *really* asleep.

Tyler: Stop ducking the question.

Chris: Which was...?

Tyler: What is the truth?

Chris: I don't think you really want to hear the truth.

Tyler: (angry) Maybe I do! Maybe I want to hear the truth right now!

Linday: (finished praying) Amen.

Chris: (calmly) It's time to go, Tyler.

Lindsay: Let's go open some presents.

Darren: That's what I'm talking about.

Darren, Lindsay, and Jessica exit.

Tyler: Time to go? Go where? Where do you plan on taking me now? Are we

going back to Jessica's? (correcting) To our house?

Chris: I'm taking you back. Back to your office. I showed you what I wanted

to show you. You said that your wife didn't love you, and I proved she

did. It's time to go home.

Tyler: Just like that?

Chris: Just like that. I'm a one trick janitor.

Tyler: (after a beat) Fine. Take me back.

Blackout.

When the lights come back on, we are back at the office. But things are not like they were when the two left. There are two plain-clothes **Police** dressed in trench coats and ties discussing something near a stretcher. A body is on the ground, covered in a white sheet.

Chris: Oops.

Tyler: Oops? What's this? What are these people doing at the office?

Chris: A mistake. Hold on. (*snaps his fingers and the Policemen stop*

moving) An accident. Next stop, your office, Tyler.

Tyler: But this is my office. (pointing) That is my desk. What are these men

doing here?

Chris: Come on, Tyler. Time to go.

Tyler: No! Hold on. Something has happened here.

Chris: It's nothing. I messed up. I accidentally brought us back an hour too

late in time. I'll just zip us back to when we left. You'll wake up in a while and you can pretend that this was just a really weird dream.

Tyler: Hold on. Tell me what's happening here.

Chris: I can't.

Tyler: Yes you can! Something has happened in my office or is going to

happen in an hour, and I need to know what it is.

Chris: I really can't.

Tyler: I don't believe you.

Chris: Are you sure you want to know?

Tyler: Yes!

Chris: (snaps his fingers) Ok. Here goes.

Police One: Have they notified his next of kin?

Police Two: They tried the home of his children but there was no answer.

Police One: How long do you think it will take the coroner to clean up here?

Jim comes in the door, he is in a hurry.

Jim: What's going on here?

Police Two: Sir, how did you get up here?

Jim: I work here. I have a pass key and came up through the back. What

happened?

Police Two: We need you to go back downstairs.

Jim: What happened?

Police One: Sir...

Jim: My friend was here when I left. Is he still here?

Police One: On this floor?

Jim: Yes! Is he okay? I mean, I just left him at five thirty.

Police Two: I can't give you more information until we've notified the family.

Jim: Wait... Tyler's dead?!

Police Two: I've already said more than I should. Now, please, we need you to go

back downstairs and let us do our jobs.

Jim: Have you called Lindsay?

Police Two: It's being handled. Now, If you would not mind checking out with

Janice downstairs, I'm sure the lead is going to want to talk with you. He was found by a member of the janitorial team. If you saw him alive at 5:30 then you were probably the last to see him alive. He was

unresponsive at his desk by quarter till eight.

Jim: Have you called his wife?

Police One: We cannot give you that information at this time.

Jim: How could this happen?

Police Two: This way sir.

They leave and the lights dim.

Chris: It's time to go. You weren't supposed to see this.

Tyler: I need you to answer a question for me.

Chris: I can't.

Tyler: Was that really me that they were talking about?

Chris: We have to go.

Tyler: (desperate) No! I need to know!

Chris: Does it really matter?

Tyler: Of course it does! That means that as soon as you take me back I am

going to die. I think that might be a little important. Was that me?

Chris: What if it was? I mean, I'm sure God knows you're a good guy. Maybe

you'll wake up in heaven.

Tyler: But, maybe I won't! You've got to help me here! I haven't had time to

think this out.

Chris: Yes, you have. How old are you Tyler?

Tyler: How old am I? Ok, I'm old enough to know right? But it's never been as

important as it is right now.

Chris: Because you may die?

Tyler: Yes!

Chris: You could have died in a car accident on the way to work this

morning.

Tyler: Stop messing with me! Is there anything I can do about this?

Chris: Have you tried praying?

Tyler: Are you being sarcastic?

Chris: No.

Tyler: Ok... I need to pray. How do I pray?

Chris: (coldly) You don't. It's too late.

Tyler: How could it be too late?

Chris: Because you aren't one of his. You've never accepted Jesus as your

savior. And it's too late now. I'm sorry Tyler. I honestly didn't know this

was going to happen.

Tyler: But there must be something we can do!

Chris: We have to go now Tyler. I have to take you back.

Blackout.

When the lights come up **Tyler** is back at his desk and starts to wake up. He is coughing, a little at first but then it gets worse. He is choking. He stands and eventually sinks to one knee. **Alex**, a janitor dressed just like Chris runs in.

Alex: Are you ok?

Tyler can't answer.

Alex: Are you choking? (no answer) I'll take that as a "yes". Don't worry,

mister! I got you!

Alex applies the Heimlich maneuver. After a moment, **Tyler's** gum flies out.

Tyler: *(out of breath)* Thank you.

Alex: I thought I was the only person in the building! You scared me to

death.

Tyler: I thought I was the only person here. Thank God, I wasn't.

Alex: Are you ok?

Tyler: I think so.

Alex: What was that you spit out?

Tyler: It was my gum.

Alex: Falling asleep with gum in your mouth is dangerous. Didn't your mom

ever tell you that?

Tyler: Yeah... maybe. (realizing) Wait... are you the only one here?

Alex: What?

Tyler: It's just that... never mind. Of course you are.

Alex: What are you talking about?

Tyler: What time is it?

Alex: (looking at his phone) It's 7:15.

Tyler: They're still at church!

Alex: Who is?

Tyler: I have to go.

Alex: Are you sure you're alright?

Tyler: Never better. (in a hurry) But I have to run. I've still got time.

Tyler runs out then runs back in.

Tyler: Thanks for the uh... you know.

Alex: The Heimlich?

Tyler: Yeah. You saved my life.

Alex: It was nothing. Really.

Tyler: What's your name?

Alex: It's Alex.

Tyler: (taking a moment) Thank you, Alex. Now I... um...

Alex: Have to go?

Tyler: Yeah. I'm not too late!

Tyler exits. A beat passes and **Chris** enters.

Chris: Who was that?

Alex: I have no clue. I came in here and he was choking. I had to do the

Heimlich on him. He didn't tell me his name though.

Chris: Weird.

Alex: Tell me about it. (after a moment) I thought you were on the fifth floor.

Chris: I just finished up there.

Alex: I don't see the cart you said you left here.

Chris: What?

Alex: That's why I came down here. You said you left the cart.

Chris: Did I? Maybe I left it on four?

Alex: Well, this place isn't going to clean itself. I'll see you on four.

Alex exits.

Chris: Go get 'em, Tyler.

Blackout.

When the lights come up, we are once again at the church. **Jessica, Darren,** and **Lindsay** are just leaving as **Tyler** comes in.

Tyler: You're still here!

Darren: Dad! (he runs to him and hugs him)

Jessica: How did you know we were here?

Tyler: Lucky guess! I'm just glad I found you!

Lindsay: Are you alright Tyler?

Tyler: Yes! I mean no! I mean, I will be. First I want to tell you that I love you. I

love all of you. I always have and I always will.

Lindsay: Are you sure you're going to be alright?

Tyler: Yes! I just realized tonight how much I miss you, and you (to Jessica)

and you! (to **Darren**) I don't think I could live another day without

telling you that.

Lindsay: Where did all of this come from? Am I supposed to believe this is

really happening?

Tyler: I sure hope you will. But what I really hope is that you'll forgive me. I've

messed so much up.

Lindsay: I forgave you a long time ago, Tyler. But I don't know what to think of

this. What happened?

Tyler: Take it like it looks. I'm here, right now, wanting to be forgiven. Not

just by you, but by God. I think I learned tonight that I am ready for a change. I want Jesus in my life. I want to know that if I die in a car accident on the way to work tomorrow, or if I choke to death on my chewing gum, that I am going to wake up in heaven. I need you to

show me how to know that for sure.

Lindsay: I... I don't know what to say... Wait. What was that about chewing gum?

Jessica is crying.

Tyler: I just want to be sure.

Jessica: I can't believe it.

I can! It's exactly what we've been praying for. God heard our prayers! Darren:

Tyler: I guess it would be a good time for God to hear my prayers too. I don't

Even know where to start.

Lindsay: That's easy. Have you ever heard of the sinner's prayer?

No, Maybe... I don't know, but I want to. Can you teach it to me? Tyler:

The lights fade as the family kneels in prayer and **Lindsay** recites the sinner's prayer to her husband and **Tyler** repeats what she says.