

A script from



“Gratitude Rewritten: A Faux Reader’s Theater Gone Wrong”

by
Paul Neil

- What** In this skit, a reader’s theater goes awry when two of the readers take it upon themselves to make some edits to God’s Word, in an attempt to be more “real” about gratitude.
Themes: Gratitude, Thanksgiving, Thanks, Complaining
- Who** Reader 1
Reader 2
Reader 3
- When** Present
- Wear (Props)** Your stage
Black folders for each reader
- Why** Habakkuk 3:17
- How** Though it’s staged as a reader’s theater, this piece DOES require memorization, since the readers depart from their scripts for most of the piece.
- Time** Approximately 5 minutes

Reader 1 enters uncertainly, carrying his script folder. He is looking around, as though looking for the other two. Readers 1 and 2 enter hurriedly from a different direction and make their way to the stage.

Reader 1: *(stage whisper)* Where've you been? You missed our entrance?

Reader 2: *(stage whisper)* We were making some script changes. It's ok. Just start.

Reader 1: *(stage whisper)* Changes? What changes? I'm the director. Shouldn't I approve any changes?

Reader 3: *(stage whisper)* Never mind. Just start. We've got it under control.

Reader 1 takes his place between the other two. All three open their scripts.

Reader 1: *(clears throat, then speaks with excitement)* At this time of thanksgiving, let us hear from the word of the Lord.

Reader 2: Enter into His gates with thanksgiving...every now and then, but grumble occasionally.

Reader 3: And if everything is going your way, enter His courts with praise.

Reader 1: *(puzzled, but continuing)* Thanks be to God who leads us,

Reader 2: ...when He leads us where we want to go.

Reader 1's facial expression grows more horrified throughout the next lines, and he looks back and forth between the other two actors.

Reader 3: Evaluate your circumstances, and if it is warranted, be thankful to Him

Reader 2: Or perhaps bless His name, when the Lord has allowed only good things to happen to you.

Reader 3: Thank God when He gives us victory.

Reader 2: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, give thanks sometimes for a few things.

Reader 3: *(grandly)* In some things give thanks.

Readers 2 and 3: May God bless the reading of His word.

Reader 1: No! Stop! *(the other readers look at Reader 1, confused.)*

Reader 1: Those are not the words of the Lord. Let me see those scripts! *(Reader 1 rather forcefully looks at the other readers’ scripts during the next line)* You’ve marked them all up! You’ve crossed out the scriptures I gave you and written your own words in here.

Reader 2: Was that wrong?

Reader 3: Should we not have done that?

Reader 1: No! No, you shouldn’t have done that! You ruined the entire point of this thing! The whole idea was to reflect upon how those of us who follow Christ should be grateful!

Reader 3: *(simply)* Oh.

Reader 1: We talked about this, at rehearsal. We went over it! You read the scriptures just the way the Bible has them.

Reader 2: *(confused)* Right. But then you said...you said you wanted us to sound more real.

Reader 1: Yes...real. As in, not like the movie trailer announcer guy. *(imitating that guy)* “In a world...” You know? That guy? At rehearsal, you both sounded like you were auditioning to be James Earl Jones’ understudy. I wanted your voices to sound natural. Like you were just talking. Get it?

Reader 3: I tell you, I gotta plead ignorance on this thing, because if I had known that’s what you meant, we wouldn’t have spent all day yesterday hanging out with a few dozen different church people to get real interpretations of your phony-baloney script.

Reader 2: Exactly. We did our own research. At like thirteen churches. We went to a prayer breakfast, a rummage sale, a fellowship brunch, a church bowling league tournament, a potluck picnic, a choir practice, a prayer tea with delightfully light cookies and scones, a bingo game, a bake sale, a youth group car wash, a community prayer at city hall, a gospel sing, and an after-service ice cream social.

Reader 1: *(sarcastically)* You two must have gotten into some real deep scriptural analysis with all those folks. Between bites, that is.

Reader 3: Oh, we didn’t talk to them.

Reader 1: What?

Reader 2: Nope. We were stealthy.

Reader 3: Real sneaky like. We blended in.

Reader 1: How did that give you insight?

Reader 2: Easy. We LISTENED.

Reader 3: AND we took notes.

Reader 2: I took notes. HE (*gestures to Reader 3*) kept a running calorie total of what he ate.

Reader 3: Watchin’ my figure, you know. (*pats belly, then sadly*) But I ran out of paper.

Reader 1: (*shaking head*) Let me get this straight. You spent a whole day hanging out with hundreds of church people...

Reader 2: Well (*looking at notepad*), 247, to be precise.

Reader 1: You spent the day eavesdropping on 247 church people and THESE (*pokes at Reader 3’s script*) are the script revisions you came up with?

Reader 2: Yessirree, bob. Let me tell you, our reworked version is WAY closer to reality, from what I can tell.

Reader 3: We heard those people grumbling and complaining about just about everything. It was a real eye-opener.

Reader 2: Wanna hear the topics? (*Rapidly*) Job, wife, kids, husband, mother-in-law, the new puppy, the NEIGHBOR’s new puppy, the president, congress, the IRS, the heat, the humidity, macaroni salad, the fact that somebody drank all the decaf, the fact that decaf isn’t real coffee, the meatloaf is burnt, (*passes the list off to Reader 3*)

Reader 3: ...the youth group, the pastor’s wife, the worship leader, the songs are too new, the hymns are too old, the sermon is too long, the communion bread is stale, the sanctuary is too cold, the snow, the rain, the sleet, the hail, the dark of night, the mailman is early, the cable guy is late, the plumber is too expensive, the car runs rough...

Reader 1: (*gently interrupting*) OK, OK, I get it. Just stop. (*Thinks for a moment, then speaks sympathetically*) I understand your script changes now.

Reader 3: (*surprised*) You do?

Reader 1: (*sincerely*) I do. And I’m grateful that you’re bringing this to our attention.

Reader 2: You are?

Reader 1: I am. I mean, the truth is we do complain a lot. But that doesn’t make it right. I could grumble, and I could complain about how you’ve ruined what I had planned. But then I wouldn’t be practicing gratitude, would I?

Reader 2: *(pauses, looks at Reader 3)* This seems like a trick.

Reader 1: It’s no trick. Look, I picked those scriptures because I really believe that we can find reasons to be thankful in pretty much every situation. There’s no doubt that bad things happen. Awful things happen. Life is annoying, and there are terrible tragedies.

Reader 3: *(nudges Reader 2 with his elbow)* Like that meatloaf at the picnic yesterday.

Reader 1: I can think of a dozen things I wish hadn’t happened this year. But they did. I’m not perfect. Just a couple of months ago I would have had quite a few entries on your list, if you had eavesdropped on me. But one night, I picked up my Bible, and I searched through it. I remembered what God’s word says about gratitude. My joy, my thanks to God—that’s not dependent on my circumstances. No matter what, I’ll rejoice in the Lord. I practiced, and I prayed.

Reader 2: And you wrote down all those scriptures.

Reader 1: Yep.

Reader 3: You know what? I’m thankful that you did.

Reader 2: *(with a smile)* Me, too. *(Beat, then looks at Reader 3)* You thinking what I’m thinking?

Reader 3: Going back to get another piece of meatloaf?

Reader 2: No, goofball. Let’s give our director what he deserves.

They quickly take their scripts, take their places, and begin.

Reader 1: *(clears throat, then speaks with excitement)* At this time of thanksgiving, let us hear from the word of the Lord.

Reader 2: Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.

Reader 3: Thank God that he gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Reader 1: With the prophet Habakkuk I will say, Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines... though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior.

Readers 2 and 3: May God bless the reading of His word.

Reader 1: *(looking at the other two with a smile)* Thanks.

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