

DO WITHOUT

by Randal Stephens

CHARACTERS

Jeff Riley, *the husband*

Katie Riley, *the wife*

SYNOPSIS

This is a short skit about the importance of tithing.

THE ACT

We open in the scene in the Riley home. Katie is in the office at the computer, in deep concentration. Jeff walks by with a bowl of popcorn. Katie calls out to him just as he has passed by.

Katie: Can I talk to you for a minute?

Jeff [*pokes his head inside the office*]: Yeah. What's up?

Katie [*motions with her hand*]: Come here.

Jeff [*coming into the room*]: Honey, the game's about to start.

Katie [*ignoring his urgency*]: I think we should start tithing again.

Jeff: Tithing?

Katie: Yeah. Babe, we haven't paid tithes in over a year.

Jeff: Sure. [*starts to leave*] Just as soon as we strike it rich, we'll start tithing.

Katie: Jeff, wait.

Jeff [*stopping just short of the door; annoyed*]: Babe, what?

Katie: Will you just listen? This is important.

Jeff [*comes back into the office; puts down the popcorn*]: Look, I get what you're saying, but we've talked about this before. Where's it going to come from?

Katie: I'm not sure, but we need to stop thinking that way. If we keep waiting for it to come from somewhere, it never will. We just have to decide we're going to do it and then do it, even if we have to go without something else.

Jeff: Like what? What are we going to go without? Oh, I know. [*sarcastically*] We'll just tell Olga you'll only be by to see her *twice* a month.

[*Katie gasps and feigns hurt feelings, even going so far as to put her hand to her chest.*]

Katie: That's not fair! Those Saturday afternoons are my only times to get together with the girls. And I need that time to relax.

Jeff: Oh, of course. Lord knows what would happen if you couldn't spend six hours at the spa every Saturday afternoon.

Katie: [*no longer hurt*]: Well what about you? You just go play golf while I'm at the spa. Maybe you could give that up.

Jeff: I'm not giving up golf. That's *my* time to relax.

Katie: Relax? You don't relax! You come home frustrated every time you play. You'd be more relaxed if you *didn't* play.

Jeff [*looks her in the eye; emphatically*]: I'm not giving up golf.

Katie [*puts her hands on her hips*]: Well, we have to figure something out.

Jeff: Well, you're the one who wants to do it. *You* give up something.

Katie [*tone changes to genuine concern*]: Honey, if we're going to do this, we both have to do it.

Jeff: I know, I know. [*walks around to the front of the desk to look at the computer*] I'm with you; let's just take a closer look at our bills and see if there's anything else we can cut. Here, let me sit down.

[*Katie moves and Jeff sits down. The two look for a moment at the computer screen, each one trying to find a place to cut expenses.*]

Jeff: What about cable?

Katie: No way.

Jeff: Why not? We can do without television.

Katie [*indignant*]: Maybe you could do without T.V., but not me. You get to go to work, but I'm here all day, all by myself. I'd go crazy. No way.

Jeff [sincerely]: Well, maybe you can get a job. Or maybe you could read, or listen to music; maybe you could take up a hobby.

Katie: Really Jeff, a hobby? What do you want me to do? Learn latch hook? Besides, what would you do if we didn't have ESPN?

[The two stay silent for a moment as Jeff allows the thought of life without ESPN to sink in and then quickly changes the subject.]

Jeff: What about the car?

Katie: We're not getting rid of one of the cars!

Jeff: No, I don't mean get *rid* of the car. I mean, my car is paid for. Maybe we could downgrade the insurance to liability. That would save us a little money.

Katie [*with genuine concern*]: Are you sure that's wise? What if you get into an accident?

Jeff [*shrugging off her concern*]: Well, I only drive it back and forth to work, right? Besides I'm a great driver.

[The look on Katie's face in response to this is a mixture of disbelief and fear to broach the subject of discussion with regard to the topic of Jeff's driving. Instead, she pats his shoulder in silence as he punches in numbers on the calculator.]

Jeff: That'll help, right?

Katie: Yeah. [*letting the subject go*] But it's not enough. We still need more. [*They continue to look for another moment.*] Well, how about the gym membership?

Jeff: We couldn't get out of that if we tried.

Katie: We'll just cancel it.

Jeff: Do you know how much we'd have to pay to break that contract? Impossible. What else?

Katie [*slaps his shoulder; with a big smile*]: Maybe we could default on your student loan.

Jeff: Yeah, and maybe we could stop eating too. Will you be serious, please?

Katie: Alright. [*puts on a mock serious face; gets an idea*] Well, what about the cell phones?

Jeff: They're harder to get out of than the gym membership. Face it, there's nothing we have that we can afford to do without.

Katie: Well, we have to do something.

Jeff: Look Kate, God knows our heart. He knows what we can give. We'll go ahead and cut the insurance and just give that.

Katie [*starting to get frustrated*]: But it's not ten percent.

Jeff: We don't have to give ten percent.

Katie [*growing more emotional*]: Yes, we do. The book of Malachi is very clear. We are supposed to bring a tenth of all we have into the storehouse. If we do, The Lord says He'll pour out a blessing on us that we can't even contain!

Jeff [*showing frustration of his own*]: Maybe when He pours out the blessing, we'll have something to give. Until then, this will have to do.

Katie [*firmly, but a little whiney*]: No. We have to find a way. If we don't, we're robbing God.

[*Katie looks at him pleadingly.*]

Jeff: Well, why does it have to be me? I don't want to do without.

Katie: I don't either.

[*Katie folds her arms together and looks down at the computer screen and then back at Jeff before sighing deeply in resignation.*]

Jeff [*stands up and puts his hands on her shoulders*]: I'll tell you what, [*pauses*] on payday, I won't play golf any more.

Katie [*looks up quickly, a very pleasantly surprised look on her face*]: You would do that?

Jeff: Sure, the guys will just have to do without me.

Katie: Really, you mean it? No golf on paydays?

Jeff: No golf. No green fees. No lunch with the boys. That's gotta help us, right?

Katie: Are you sure?

Jeff [*reaches for the phone in his pocket, as if to prove he would actually do it*]: I'll call Jimmy right now.

[*Katie sits down in the chair and goes to work on the calculator. When she is done, she sits back in the chair.*]

Jeff: So now do we have enough for our tithes?

Katie [*turns around in the chair to look at him*]: I don't know. Are we going to tithe on our net or our gross?

Jeff: Well, we might as well do this right. Besides, if we're going to be blessed, let's be blessed on our gross.

Katie: I agree. Well, then no, we still don't have enough. But...I guess I don't have to go to the spa on paydays.

Jeff [*in mock surprise*]: Really? No massage from Olga? No girls' day out?

Katie: Don't look so surprised. Besides, all we really do is just talk bad about our husbands anyway.

Jeff: Hey!

Katie [*smiling*]: Just kidding. [*She goes back to work on the calculator, and then turns to him.*] Look baby—that does it. And we even have a little left over. What are we going to do with that?

Jeff: I'm sure we'll figure something out. I know the missions department always needs funds. [*He pauses for a moment.*] There's still one more question, though.

Katie [*standing up*]: What's that?

Jeff [*looks her in the eye*]: What are we going to do with two Saturday afternoons every month?

Katie [*thinks for a moment*]: Hmmmmm. Well, there is that gym membership we can't get out of.

Jeff [*with a big smile*]: I'm there.

THE END

NOTES

THE RUNDOWN

Doing without is not about showing how we have to sacrifice to tithe, but rather to show how people often live right up to their means and fail to budget their tithes first. The theme shows how easy it really is to budget in our tithes before luxuries.

CHARACTERS

Jeff and Katie have probably been married about five years. They have a comfortable relationship and not only do they clearly love one another, they also clearly *like* one another. The key to this skit is in the playful way they interact. You should choose a couple who are comfortable with one another and don't have a problem with the occasional touch on the shoulder or warm embrace. You're in great shape if you can find a married couple who can perform this.

Good comic timing is also crucial, so don't rely of their simply memorizing their lines. If you have performers who are not married to one another, before you perform or start shooting, the two should engage in a good amount of rehearsal so the marriage relationship reads believably, and the timing in the dialogue is crisp. Remember, trying to portray a relationship in a play or skit with two people between whom that relationship does not actually exist is often very difficult, so don't overlook the importance of the time spent in rehearsal.

SETUP

Do Without is fairly simple to set up. It basically only requires an office setting of some sort. You'll need a computer, desk calculator, etc. and Jeff will need a bowl of popcorn. Shooting this in an office in a home setting will also be easier than trying to set up the scene in a live setting, especially in church.

PRODUCTION

This skit can be done live or on video. I always prefer video because any differences in setting/scene can be shot in segments and edited together. This particular skit though, is one act and will require a continuous shoot. It would also require a continual act if done live, obviously. Shooting video, if you have the capabilities, is definitely the way to go because even though you have to do it in one continual shot, you can start over and reshoot.

MISCELLANEOUS

There are a couple of places in the skit where you will be able to take creative license and make a couple of changes according to your own sense of humor. The luxuries the two end up cutting back on can be any number of things; take the time to come up with whatever you feel would match these two.

Also, if you end up filming this, you may want to put in a blooper reel at the end of the film cut. I love doing this and it is always a big hit with the audience. Well, if you decided to put in a blooper reel, choose a dozen or so different hobbies Katie could ask Jeff about, instead of just the guitar, like basket-weaving, answering machine maintenance, etc., the more outrageous, the better. Film her saying all of these and you'll have several little cuts that will be really funny. God Bless your efforts!