

“WE’RE ALL GOD’S CHILDREN” ©

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**In collaboration with the ASF African-American
“Living Room Group”**

HIV DISCLAIMER: This production addresses issues surrounding HIV and AIDS. The actors and actresses playing these parts should NOT be considered as having HIV/AIDS.

ACT I

Scene 1

ANARRATOR: Jesus loves all his children equally doesn't He? No matter what we do He's able to forgive us and extend His abundant, generous grace and mercy upon us. His love is indeed unconditional, the very best kind of love ever.

Now Jesus kept company with some very, what could be considered, undesirable types. Sinners, Prostitutes, and tax collectors called Publicans. Now that's Publicans --- NOT to be confused with RE-Publicans! (LAUGH) Why would He want to be bothered? What did he see in those individuals? He was holy – what was He doing hanging out with them?

Two of the most powerful messages we can be taught from a very young age are to **“Love our neighbors as ourselves”** and to **“Do unto others as we would want them to do to us.”** Now we're going to visit a few different people in various circumstances – let's see how they did in their

response to love!

ACT I

Scene 2

THE MAN IS NOW IN A DOCTOR'S OFFICE

WO/MAN: So Doctor, what's wrong with me? Why am I feeling so bad lately? What do the results of all those tests show?

DOCTOR: Unfortunately, I don't have great news for you. You have lung cancer and it has already spread to other parts of your body – including your bones.

WO/MAN: What? You're joking right? That can't be. (Pause) I've taken good care of myself all my life. How could this happen?

DOCTOR: I'd like to get you started on radiation and chemotherapy right away if that's okay with you. I believe we can fight this to ensure your greatest chance at life.

WO/MAN: How long do I have to live?

DOCTOR: Well, I can't say with absolute certainty. It depends on how well you respond to treatments. Only God knows the answer. (BEGINS WRITING IN CHART, SOMEWHAT DISTRACTED)

WO/MAN: You're right, Doctor. I know God has my best interest in mind. My fate is in His capable hands. I trust Him and I love Him with all my heart and with all my soul. I'll go and talk to my pastor about this and get some counsel. Thank you Doctor.

(WALKING OUT) Oh Lord, oh Lord, I turned from you, I lived an earthly life. (pause) I walked away Lord and now I need you so, so much.

ANARRATOR: What an amazing peace can come over us at times in our lives when we face adversity and trouble if we are willing to trust God. It says in the word, **“He will keep in perfect peace, he whose mind is stayed on thee.”** We know God would never give any of us more than we could handle. He asks us to carry one another's burdens thereby carrying the law of Christ. (Spoken prayerfully) Thank you, Jesus.

ACT I

Scene 3

SCENE OPENS WITH PASTOR AND CHURCH MEMBERS

PASTOR: (preaching) Yes, we love you Lord! You know each and every one of us individually by name. You knew us before we were even born. Psalm 139 tells us that we are Fearfully and Wonderfully made! Can I get an AMEN! Lord, you know all of us – from the womb to the tomb – from

before we were born until we come home to You. (pause) You're in control of our destiny. You make everything in our lives possible. We love you, Lord! We love you! (pause) What can Jesus do for any of you today?

WO/MAN: (Standing Up) Pastor, I could surely use some prayer today. I just found out today that I have lung cancer and will be undergoing radiation and chemotherapy – Please pray for me. I have faith that the Lord will carry me through this, I know He will.

CHURCH MEMBERS COME FORWARD TO EMBRACE AND LOVE ON HIM.

PASTOR: Absolutely, my dear brother/sister. May God's love surround and comfort you during this very difficult time. Go to Him for refuge and peace. Trust in Him. He is our Lord and Savior. Let us pray.....Amen. (STARTS PRAYING)

WO/MAN: **I'm so glad the church is here for me during this very difficult time in**

ACT II**Scene 1**

BNARRATOR: A handsome salesman spends a lot of his time traveling around to different parts of the country on business. While on these trips, he occasionally goes out on the town to have a good time. He's even been known to go to certain spots to hookup for sex, sometimes with women – other times with men – secretly, of course! When asked, he blatantly denies being a homosexual. He's all man! His encounters are purely physical – he is definitely NOT GAY! **THIS IS REFERRED TO... AS BEING ON THE “DOWNLOW...WHICH SOME WOMEN ALSO ENGAGE IN.**

He recently applied for some **LIFE** insurance and is now going back for the follow-up visit and blood test results.

SCENE OPENS INSIDE A DOCTORS OFFICE.

DOCTOR: I am sorry to have to tell you this.... but your HIV test came back positive.

MAN: No! (Pause – then very controlled) I guess I have done a few things that could have put me at risk but I never thought that this would actually happen to me. Not me.

DOCTOR: This is unfortunate and I'm very sorry. I won't be able to sign off on your **LIFE** insurance application. Unfortunately, no **LIFE** insurance company will insure anyone who is HIV positive; they consider this a pre-existing condition, which could eventually cost them a lot of out-of-pocket expense.

MAN: This is really messed up. What am I going to tell everyone? How am I going to tell my **WIFE**? What do I say? (pause) Someone must have given the virus to me. I wonder if they knew they had it? Or have I had it awhile and I've been spreading it around without even knowing it?
(while exiting) **Thanks for nothing, Doc!!!**

BNARRATOR: **PEOPLE** on the "downlow" are secretly sleeping with **OTHERS** and taking them **HIV** virus home to their **PARTNERS**. **THEY USUALLY don't know their HIV status BUT are responsible for causing over HALF of ALL the new HIV infections. Is there really any way to tell if someone is infected just by looking at them?**

According to the latest statistics there are about **1.1 to 1.2** MILLION people in the U.S. who are HIV positive and **OVER** 260,000 – 1/5 - don't even know they have it. **Could you be one of them?**

ACT II**Scene 2**

PASTOR: Lying, cheating, and stealing. Adultery, pornography, fornication – all are one in the same. It is said that all of these are considered sins in God’s eyes! He hasn’t turned His back on ANY of us. Does God classify any one of these as worse than any other one?

MAN: Thank you, Pastor. I haven’t been to church in years and I just feel that right now I need to get right with God. I’ve done some things in my life that I’m not proud of. I am a sinner.

PASTOR: (to congregation) I’ve said it time and time again – that “we have all sinned and fell short of the glory of God.” We’ve all got to get right with Jesus or get left behind. Is there any one of us here who is without sin? If so let him or her stand up and cast the first stone. (Pause) Anyone?

MAN: I know the Lord has forgiven me and still loves me, but it’s hard for me to forgive myself. I’ve been so easily tempted for so many years.

PASTOR: Even Jesus was tempted. God always provides us a way out. God loves everyone and He is Love! We are all God’s children. He wants us to grow to become more like Him. The Lord said we are all His children.

We’re all God’s Children.

MAN: **Thank you, Pastor. I know I'm on the right track now.**

ACT II

Scene 3

BNARRATOR: Can't we be in relationships with those that are different from us – including those who are infected with HIV/AIDS? We must be sensitive and offer love and support to those in need of hearing the Good News. We must speak the truth in love. Twenty-**FIVE** years later, HIV/AIDS is no longer just a “**gay**” disease. It's a disease that anyone can get, regardless of his or her age, race, gender or sexual orientation. (Pause) So is HIV/AIDS really a “sin?” Or are they separate subjects that need to be talked about in different arenas, separating our judgment about the disease and about how someone got it? Need we keep debating about this while people are left alone, isolated and dying from this horrible disease?

ACT III

Scene 1

ANARRATOR: A beautiful African-American/**Latina** woman had everything going for her. Her life was full. She had some challenges, but without a doubt had a bright future. She was raising her daughter alone and making ends meet;

working two jobs to have enough money to put her daughter through college. Everything seemed to be great and then she met this incredible man. Enter prince charming!

MAN (FROM SCENE II) AND WOMAN STROLLING TOGETHER, OBVIOUSLY IN LOVE

ANARRATOR: He lavished her with love, gifts and even gave her money every week so she no longer had to work the second job. WOW! This guy seemed too good to be true. Could this be true love? Could it happen this fast? They dated, got engaged and later married.

And then one afternoon, she arrived home to find everything of her prince charming's gone! That's right – all his clothes, pictures and even the fragrance of him had vanished and the only thing left was a letter from him on the nightstand. (Pause) Could she dare open it up and read it? What could possibly have happened? Was he hurt? Was he ok?

HUSBAND: (reading the letter on SIDE OF STAGE)

I'm sorry. I don't know any other way to say it but to tell you our marriage was built on a lie. You know I have not been feeling well lately – well the truth of the matter is – I have full blown AIDS! (**VERY LONG PAUSE**) I had known from the beginning that I felt sick. But I felt that if I told you, that you would leave me. I didn't want to lose you. But now I can't live with the guilt. I'm sorry.

WOMAN: I'm sorry? What do you mean, I'm sorry? (breaking down) Oh God, I had unprotected sex with him for all these years. He never liked using condoms. I know I was faithful to him – I loved him – I trusted him. Oh God – I never thought he would do anything like this to me. How could he do this – I'm a good person – I have a loving heart – How could he do this to me? He knew he was infected! Who would have thought that the price I would pay for loving him, was my life? Oh Lord – what if I am infected? How could this happen to me?

ANARRATOR: What did she do to deserve this? Had she been immoral? Had he been immoral? Is this some kind of punishment from God? What can she do now?) **There is one new HIV infection occurring somewhere in the world every 6 seconds. Can you imagine that?**

ACT III

Scene 2

SCENE OPENS AT THE DOCTORS OFFICE.

DOCTOR: **I hate telling innocent women this**...but you have indeed tested positive for HIV – the virus that causes AIDS.

WOMAN: (breaking down – very emotional – in denial) What? You must have made a mistake and gotten someone else's blood test. That's not right – it's a mistake – you will need to take that test again.

DOCTOR: No, I'm sorry – but it's been double-checked by a second confirmation test.

WOMAN: (Crying and hugging doctor) This can't be happening to me. What am I going to tell my daughter and my family? (Pause) Who will take care of my child? I don't want to die! (Pause) Where do we go from here? What's next? (LONG PAUSE) How long do I have to live?

DOCTOR: I'm so glad you came in and tested early before you got really sick. **Many people don't come in until they get really sick and by then it's always worse.** Now we have to do another test to see if we need to put you on medication or not. Medication can help fight the virus. These pills can keep you alive and strong for many years but they do have unpleasant side effects. They can cause diarrhea, nausea, weight loss, and weakness. (Pause) You can still live your life to the fullest. I'll do my best to take good care of you.

WOMAN: (Hugging doctor) **I KNOW YOU WILL...I COULDN'T ASK FOR A BETTER DOCTOR.**

ACT III

Scene 3

ANARRATOR: **MY GOSH....**So what is she going to do **NOW**? Her family blamed her for getting the disease and they turned their backs on her. They convinced her own daughter to stay away from her to punish her for what she had done. This lonely woman escaped from her pain and misery with the comfort of alcohol. Lots of it! Numbing herself from this very harsh reality.

- **Women are one of the fastest growing populations of newly diagnosed HIV infections.**
- **Young guys and gals between the ages of 13-25 is another large population being newly infected.**
- **How are they getting it? Drug and alcohol abuse? Poverty? Homelessness? Incarceration?**
- **What can we do about these alarming new statistics?**
- **How can we prevent them from getting this?**

Months later her daughter would return home. She got her mom into a treatment center and later into a neighborhood church.

ACT III**Scene 4**

WOMAN: (Crying out to God) God, where are you? I've always believed in you? Trusted You. What about me? Where were you and why didn't you protect me from this? (Ad lib) I need you right now, Lord! I need you.

PASTOR: (preaching) Brothers and Sisters, Jesus loves you! And you are always welcomed here in the house of the Lord. He is the Great Healer. God can do miracles if we just keep our faith and eyes turned towards Him.

WOMAN: (standing up) Pastor, I am HIV infected! (**CONGREGATION REACTS**)

PASTOR: Forget the lies and myths. No one can get HIV/AIDS from kissing someone with the virus or shaking hands with them. It cannot be transmitted by saliva or tears. You can't get it from their fork or spoon or from using the same toilet seat. You and your children, friends and family are safe.

BNARRATOR: What would Jesus do in this situation? How can we be more like He was? We don't always know what to do or what to say to someone who has HIV/AIDS. What we can all do is **accept them, love them and pray for them!** Isn't that what's most important anyway?

YOU ARE AT HIGH RISK IF YOU HAVE unprotected oral, anal or vaginal sex, condom breakage, needlesticks by healthcare workers, sharing dirty needles, HIV+ mothers passing it on to their unborn babies during delivery or while breastfeeding and in certain parts of the world, though not in the U.S., blood transfusions, are the only ways that the virus can be spread. Look at all the ways the virus can be transmitted.

Older Americans, people over 50 years of age, account for 20% of HIV infections...and that “little blue pill” contributes to these statistics.

THE CHURCH MEMBERS EMBRACE WOMAN.

BNARRATOR: Some of you may have put yourself at risk in the past and are HIV+ today – think of the man on the “downlow”. And others of you haven’t knowingly put yourself at risk and are still perhaps HIV+ - think of the married woman. Either way, both individuals ended up testing positive for HIV, **which they possibly could have prevented. Knowing you and your partners HIV status, and testing regularly, just makes good sense. High-risk people between the ages of 13-64 should test AT LEAST annually...OR MORE OFTEN...according to the CDC-Center for Disease Control and Prevention.**

This leads us to the moral of the story: Whether you think you’re at risk

or not...**NOW OR IN THE PAST**....you may want to get tested.

Testing is FREE and takes only about 20 minutes and the results are

ALWAYS CONFIDENTIAL.....Thank you!