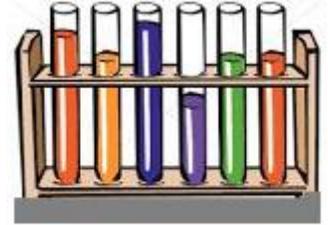


## Going Viral *Can Be a Good Thing*

The coronavirus has elevated our awareness of how easily disease is transmitted from person to person. Merely being within the six feet “social distance” of others puts us at risk. No effort on our part is necessary. Two new terms in our vocabulary are “community spread” and “contact tracing.” These call our attention to overlapping circles of contacts that can spread the coronavirus to and from people you never were actually in contact with, but had a common friend. That is not a good thing. The reality of the statistics is astounding.



We have the potential to have a very positive influence on others. We do this by living our faith 24/7. People will notice your behavior and may change their own while in your presence. If they know you are an ardent Child of God they will often skip the off-color jokes when around you. If they know you don't put up with gossip and derogatory comments about other people they may change their behavior while around you. Those are negative examples but the positive side applies as well. If you are known for showing kindness to others the people in your circle will tend to do the same. It is infectious.

Now for the viral part: If the people around you experience a change in heart and behavior, they may act differently in their own circle of friends and acquaintances. The hope is that kindness and compassion will be passed on to people you never met.

We don't have to preach the gospel to have a positive effect on others for Christ. People may want to know why you are different from others – perhaps more joyful, kind or gentle, in spite of the circumstances. If you display the “fruits of the spirit” in your life you will be a living example of Jesus Christ shining through you. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control...* (Galatians 5:22). You can foster these virtues and be the person who models and encourages these values in others.

Billy Graham said, “One of the best ways to share your faith is to live a godly life... Understand that your own life is a great part of your witness.” It is possible you may be invited to share your faith to those around you. What a great opportunity to witness. “Recognize that people are looking for a cure” to the problems they face. If you get the opportunity to share your faith keep it simple and stress the love of God for all people. *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life* (John 3:16).

Just living a godly life will influence those around you in a positive way, and hopefully this will in turn extend to their circle of friends. That is a viral transmission of God's love and His Word through “community spread.” It may give you an opportunity to share your faith with others, and they do the same in their circle of friends. Wouldn't it be great if you reached heaven and met some of the people who were introduced to the faith through you? I hope more of the world catches this one!

**The Bible Says:** *Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah (Acts 5:42). Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).*

**Prayer:** Dear Lord. We pray that we will be a living example of the fruits of the spirit that Jesus desires for our life, and for us to share with others. Amen.