

**Contagious Christianity**  
**Contagious Heart**  
**September 27, 2009**  
**Pastor Cory Hines**

This morning we are going to continue our series on Contagious Christianity and I want to make sure I get across the theme for today because it is so important and it means so much to what God wants to do in your life because last week we kicked off talking about living a life that's contagious and living your life so that other people hopefully, ultimately will come to know Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. This morning we're going to continue with this theme but we're going to look at a different part of what it means to be a contagious Christian. This morning we're going to talk about the first step in developing a contagious Christian is developing a contagious heart inside of you. It's interesting because the Bible talks a lot about the heart in fact throughout the NIV you'll find 740 passages specifically with the word heart. Because the heart is so important into your life as to how you live your life, the things you think about, the things you do, actions that you partake in. The heart is so important that when we read in Proverbs chapter 4 the writers trying to warn us, it says this, Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the well spring of life. See we have to protect our heart because where our heart is its going to show up. That what he says that we are to guard our hearts because if you find a joyful person I would argue their heart is joyful. If you find a cheerful person, I would argue that their heart is cheerful. If you find a giving person, a person that gives of themselves, gives of their time, you will find a giving heart. If you find someone who is stingy, mean, bitter...guess what? I would think that their heart would be that way. If you find someone who is difficult, angry then guess what? Inside of them is an angry heart. So we want to talk about this idea of developing a contagious heart because it affects so much of what we do. Jesus spoke of it in Matthew 15:19. It says for out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony and slander. Jesus wanted us to do all we could to be careful with our hearts because it influences us in so many ways.

So this morning, how can we develop a contagious heart? First and foremost, we need to talk to God about others before you talk to others about God. Does that make sense? Before you try to strike up conversations with other people about who God is you should have already been praying about talking to that person. See you need to develop a prayerful mind, a prayerful spirit that is every single day praying for your lost friends. It's praying for the people that you know that don't know Christ. It's praying that God would cross your path and someone else's path to where you could have a spiritual conversation. That's what you need to be praying. I can remember when I was a junior in high school. I grew up in a wonderful youth ministry program and we were really challenged on Sunday mornings to write down the name

of one person and committing to talk to that one person about what it means to be a Christian. I remember I wrote down a friend of mine's name, Jeff Abby. I knew that God wanted me to talk to him and I prayed and I committed and I said yes God I will talk to Jeff Abby. Right after that I prayed dear God help Jeff Abby have the Swine Flu and for me to not see him all week. Please God do not cross our paths and just as God would have it, we had an open campus in my high school and just as luck would have it the four, me, Jeff and a couple other guys would always go to lunch together, a couple of those guys couldn't go so it was just Jeff Abby and Cory Hines there in his '92 Ford and we were going to take off and eat at Taco Casa because that's where you ate at in Gainesville, Texas. We were sitting there about to go eat lunch and I remember just like it was yesterday, God talk to my heart, talk to Jeff and I don't remember what I said or how I even started it but slowly but surely on the way to Taco Casa we were able to talk about Christ and what he meant in my life and I tell you that because had I not prayed for Jeff Abby, I would have been thinking about spicy bean burritos and tostados on the way to lunch. Some of ya'll suddenly just got hungry didn't you? That's what I would have been thinking about. But because I had been praying for Jeff Abby, because I had made a commitment guess what? When our paths crossed I was ready to roll. I was scared; I was nervous; I was shaking but I was ready to go. Why, because my heart was prepared for that conversation. Well when you start praying for people it changes the way you view them. It does. I can remember early on when I was on staff here; there was an individual that did not like me. In fact if there was a fan club of we hate Cory Hines, this person would have probably ran for president. It felt like every morning they woke up and put on their I hate Cory Hines underwear because it didn't matter what I said or what I did this person was never happy. Now, they don't go to church here anymore so I can tell this story. I can remember the time that I said I've got to do something about this. So I thought I just need to pray that God will let her see that I really am not the devil. I really don't carry a pitchfork and I'm really not evil. I began to pray that God would change her. God change that woman, change her. Do you know what happened over time? God changed me. He changed my heart, he changed the way I saw that person. It changed the way that I felt towards that individual and the same has happened in many of your lives. You've prayed for a spouse, a child, a coworker, you've prayed for someone that God would change them and as God does, he changes you. So I really want to encourage you this morning to do is the very first thing is to develop this contagious heart is to start slowly but surely to begin asking God to prepare you. So talk to God about other people before you even start talking to them about God.

The second step in developing a contagious heart is to let people know that you are okay with their questions. To live your life in such a way to where they know you're okay with their questions about God, the Bible and spiritual things. So of you read that and you think, you must be out of your mind. There is no way, I am not okay with their questions so therefore I am not going to let them know I'm okay with their questions. I want you to know that you have

nothing to be afraid of. You have nothing to fear. Because here is a great response, someone asks you a question that you don't know, all you have to say is I really don't know. I will go home and get on [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) or [crosswalk.com](http://crosswalk.com) and start reading and studying and try to figure out an answer and your lost friends that don't know Christ will respect that much more than you pulling something out of the air. Much more than you shooting from the hip some answer that you just thought maybe made sense and sounded good at the time. They will respect you much more if you will look them in the eye and be honest and say I don't know, let me go, let me do some homework and I will get back with you. Sometimes even as a pastor people ask me questions and I just don't know. I went to Bible College, I went to seminary, I'm three years into a PHD and I don't even know everything in here and it is okay to not know all the answers. It is okay to welcome people's questions. There's a story in the New Testament that if you remember the story of John the Baptist, David talked about it on Wednesday night, whenever Jesus was walking, he points at Jesus and he says behold the lamb of God who comes to take away the sins of the world. He proclaims to everyone in ear shot that Jesus really is the Messiah. Jesus goes on to talk about John the Baptist and he says there is no one greater born among man or women than John the Baptist. So basically Jesus thought John had it all together. He thought that John was all there. John, early on said that Jesus was the Messiah. But something happened later on in life. John got thrown in prison for a long time, you need to read about it but he's in prison and he begins to question, begins to doubt, begins to wonder is Jesus really the Messiah. So he sends a couple of his buddies to go ask Jesus are you really the Christ or should we expect someone else and this is Jesus' reply...In Luke 7:22 he replied to the messengers go back and report to John what you have seen and heard. The blind received sight, the lame walk and those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the good news is preached to the poor. Jesus did not say, I can't believe John would send you to ask me those questions. He didn't say, I am so disappointed in John. He didn't say why in the world does John not believe. He didn't say any of that stuff did he? He wasn't disappointed, he wasn't upset with John. Jesus wasn't afraid of the questions do you know why? Because Jesus is the truth so therefore he's not afraid of questions, he has nothing to defend; he has nothing to be afraid of. Folks it's okay to have questions. It's okay for your friends to have questions but I want you to live your life in such a way that they ask you the questions. I don't want lost people asking a lost world spiritual questions. I don't want a lost person asking eastern religious people questions about spiritual things. No, you need to live your life to where you welcome questions because you know what...you should know the truth as well. And if they're asking you that's a good thing. Live your life in such a way, prepare your heart in such a way that you are okay with questions. 1 Peter 3:15 says this...always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you. Now that does not mean that you should know the Bible frontwards and backwards that way you can be prepared to give an answer but rather what I think part of this verse means is that mentally you're prepared for a

question. Not prepared to have an answer but that you are really just prepared so that way whenever people ask you, you don't get all flustered and you stumble around and you try to talk like I did earlier this morning when I was doing my intro. But you're prepared to give an answer even if the answer is I don't know, I will get back with you. I want you to know, live your life in such a way that you are okay with questions.

The third step in developing a contagious heart is that we should show people our faith not just be willing to share our faith. You see if you're a Christian that is on fire and loves God with all of your heart and seeks to lead other people to Christ, you're probably really good about sharing your faith. I want to challenge you to see are you really good about showing your faith? Are you really good about showing people you really do trust and have faith in God? Are you really good about exhibiting a lifestyle that says I trust God and everything is going to be okay? See we need to live our lives to where we show people the faith that we have in Christ. That we show them that we're not going to freak out, that we are willing to also even meet their needs. That we're willing to even get out of our comfort zones and to do the things that can help them see a greater good. Look what Jesus said in Matthew 5:16. It says in the same way let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven. He doesn't say let them see your good deeds so that way they can pat you on the back and tell you how great you are. He doesn't say let them see your good deeds so that way you could feel good about yourself but rather it says let them see your good deeds so you can point them to Christ. To serve other people; that is counter culture to us, to meet the needs of other people before our own goes against everything that is engrained in us from day one. To be willing to put our needs secondary to someone else is going to raise questions in someone's hearts. It's going to raise questions and when people begin to ask you why did you do that? It's because I'm a Christian and I love you. Why did you do that? It's because I want to serve you. It's because I want to do something good for you and ultimately you do that why...to point people to Christ. Get to the point to where you are willing to show your faith, not just share your faith.

The fourth step in developing this contagious heart is to be authentic, to be real. You know in this service, the 11 o'clock crowd, we've got the authentic part down for the most part I think, that says that we are all okay just who we are. We as a church, we welcome all people. We want you to come in, baggage included. We want people to be here. For the most part at 11 o'clock we have a really good, this is just who I am baggage and all, I got this addiction, I'm struggling with this, I don't have this all together. We've got that part down at 11 o'clock but what I want to challenge you today is when I talk about be authentic, I'm not talking about being authentic about who you are because I think you've got that part down, I want you to be authentic about having a relationship with Jesus. Because again, you fall into two categories, you fall into the category that you need to be authentic at church, you need to be authentic in

your LIFE Group, and you need to learn to be authentic among your Christian friends. That's the first group and that group for those of us who grew up in church, we struggle with that because I was taught subconsciously, not out loud, that good Christians have it all together and if they don't have it all together they at least act like they have it all together. You never let people into your life really; you never really let them know that you're struggling with things. You never let them know deep prayer requests like you've had in many of the small groups here. You pray for grandparents, for aunts, for loss of job, you pray for things like that. You would never pray for I'm battling this addiction. You would never pray for my husband cheated on me, I need to learn to forgive him, you would never pray for those things back in the day. For those of us who grew up in church, we fight against that. We fight against bearing our souls and bearing our struggles in front of other Christians. I want to encourage that group to be authentic and share your struggles. For the people who are making progress spiritually, you've given your life to Christ, you love him with all of your heart but you don't quite have it all together. At work people really don't know that you're saved. On the weekends people really don't know whether or not you're a believer or not. If you fall in that group, I want you to focus you're being authentic again about being an authentic Christian see because for those in this room who are recent Christians, you still have a lot of lost friends. You still have a lot of friends that don't know Jesus as savior and you know what? This is your chance to impact their eternity for good. Me, I don't have hardly any lost friends. I have to work hard at making lost friends. I have friends that act lost but their really not. But I want you to know that for you people in this room who have just slowly but surely started to make strides spiritually be authentically a Christian please. Be authentic about you know what, I gave my life to Christ and I'm trying and what a testimony it is to your lost friends about that you don't have to have it all together and through your being authentic about being a believer you can save them from eternity separated from God that's real folks. So be an authentic person. Look what he says in Ephesians 5:8 for you were once darkness, but now you're light in the Lord. Live as children of light. If you're surrounded by darkness boy that light stands out. If there's a whole bunch of light together guess what? It's not really that big of a deal. There are some of you in this room, man, the people in your life are crying out to see some light and that is you. You need to be that light for them. Be an authentic person.

You know this morning as we talk about developing this contagious heart, I want you to know it's a process. It's not something that we can give you a shot on the way out and boom, you got it. It's not something that we can give you five steps to do this week to become this contagious Christian that has this contagious heart. But I want you to know it starts first and foremost with the decision that says, God I want a contagious heart. I want a heart that beats for other people. I want a heart that sees people eternally. I want a heart that cares about the eternal destination of people not to just see people as a friend, relative or a coworker, a server but rather sees people as a child of God or not. I want to challenge you to first off make the

decision to say yes God that's the heart I want but then be willing to do the work that it takes to develop that heart. Fortunately we have promises in scripture, Acts chapter 1:8 Jesus says but we will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on us. Anything that you want to do spiritually for your life, you have the power of the Holy Spirit at your disposal to rely on and to rely that he would give you that power that you need. Getting back to that story that I told you about when I was sixteen years old, Cory Hines couldn't have done that. Only when I was able to be prepared to be used by God and rely on the power was I able to anything good for the kingdom. Rely on that power. It is available to you. First and foremost you have to make a decision to say God that's the heart I want and then take these steps to develop that contagious heart so you can be that contagious Christian.