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Series: *Becoming a Contagious Congregation*

## Thinking of Others

Acts 11:19-30

Focal verses: <sup>27</sup>*During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch.* <sup>28</sup>*One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.)* <sup>29</sup>*The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea.* <sup>30</sup>*This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.*

### 1. CONTAGIOUS CONGREGATIONS GIVE OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF THE CHURCH.

- As a result of a year of discipleship training, their focus was on missions.
- They sent the offering knowing that they too would have needs.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 (NIV)

*Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.* <sup>7</sup>*Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.* <sup>8</sup>*And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.*

- Being an authentic follower will always focus us outwardly.

### 2. CONTAGIOUS CONGREGATIONS GIVE ACCORDING TO THEIR ABILITY.

v. 29 *“The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea.”*

- God’s design for giving has always been proportional giving.

Deuteronomy 16:16-17 (NIV)

*Three times a year all your men must appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. No man should appear before the Lord empty-handed: <sup>17</sup>Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you.*

- Giving according to your ability is a matter of obedience not convenience.

2 Corinthians 8:2-4 (NIV)

*Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.* <sup>3</sup>*For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own,* <sup>4</sup>*they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints.*

- We give where the need exists and trust God for the results.

### 3. CONTAGIOUS CONGREGATIONS GIVE RESPONSIBLY.

v. 30b *“...sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.”*

- Contagious congregations practice financial accountability.
- Financial accountability demands trustworthy people taking care of the finances.

2 Corinthians 8:21-22 (NIV)

*For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord, but also in the eyes of men.*

<sup>22</sup>*In addition, we are sending with them our brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you.*

- Contagious congregations demonstrate their care for others with their giving.