

Episode 07. "Is A Deeper Walk Possible Today?"

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Star of radio and TV, Manwell Grady, discusses Spiritual experiences with Owen and John. The three are honest about their successes and failures in today's hostile society – but tell how today's Christians can live the "Early Christian Lifestyle" that the original Christians lived, with the same peace, love, and miracles.

Manwell (00:14):

Hello friends! This is Episode 07 of the "Saving Christianity" Podcast.

Manwell (00:17):

And we're coming to you from the Christian Family Online in America. I'm Manwell Grady, your moderator for this episode. The other two participants in this episode are Owen Allen, and John Shields, the co-hosts of the "Saving Christianity" podcast. Now, what we're going to do today is *summarize* everything that we've said in the six previous episodes. But we're going to do that in a round-table discussion format. That way, all three of us will be free to bounce answers off of one another, and to give three different perspectives on the principles of Spiritual growth. Now, the title of this episode is, "Is A Deeper Walk Possible Today?" (Repeats.)

Manwell (01:00):

Now, we chose that title because in the six previous episodes, we talked about the "Early Christian lifestyle." And we said that Christians today can have the same miracles and Spiritual power that the original Christians had when Christianity was founded – if they learn how to live the Early Christian Lifestyle in today's world. Now ... but before we start that discussion ... let's pause to introduce the other two participants in our panel. They are Owen Allen and John Shields, the co-hosts of the "Saving Christianity" podcast – which is based on the challenging book, *Saving Christianity*. Now, Owen and John! Welcome to the episode! I've been enjoying the last few (episodes) that you guys have done, and I look forward to the ones that we have down the road. How are you guys today?

Owen and John (01:47):

Thank you, thank you, Manwell. It's a pleasure, an honor, and exciting to be here. Yes, thanks, Manwell! This is so fun to be able to talk about our favorite topic.

Manwell (02:01):

Absolutely, absolutely! Well, let's get into it! As we said in previous episodes, Christianity is *declining* rapidly in America, gentlemen. Not only is the worship attendance declining ... not only are "church" buildings being abandoned ... but Christianity's overall influence on American society is slowly declining. Now, the result is that America is quickly becoming a *non-Christian* nation. So look – given these unhappy developments – our discussion topic for the episode is this question: "Is A Deeper Walk Possible Today?" In other words, is it even *possible* for Christians to live a more Spiritual life today? And if it is, how can they do that in the face of the crisis going on in Christianity? So, who would like to get us started?

Owen (02:47):

Well ... I tell you what, Manwell. Let me lead off, and then pass off back to you and John. So, we're asking ourselves: "*How* can it be done? *Can* it even be done?" And of course, all of our listeners – most of them, I hope – are subscribers and have been through the previous episodes. So they know our opinion of that! And they know that we believe that the Spirit of God has not changed in recent centuries. He's the same God, with the same glorious power, right today that He had when Christianity was founded in the First Century.

Owen (03:27):

So ... that tells us that Christians today can have the same supernatural, wonderful, experiences, healings, visions, visitations from angels – those wonderful things that they had in the First Century. So for my money, for my opinion, and the only reason I can say that is because I've experienced it. Remember, we've said in previous episodes that Christianity is not – quotes – a "religion." It's a *supernatural* experience. And the deeper you go with it, the better it gets: What John calls "getting in the deep end of the pool." So, that's my thought about it! What do you think, John?

John (04:14):

Yeah, for sure! It is! And I – not only having experienced it, as Owen mentioned – but I love the fact that in the New Testament, one of my favorite verses is found in Second Peter. And it says that God has given us *everything* we need for life and godliness. It's through His promises, and through His power, that that is accomplished. And so I love that. It's all there. If we will avail ourselves. And it's God's *will*. You know, I talk to people all the time about, "Well, I wonder if this is God's will? And I wonder if this is," *et cetera*. And those are not ... those are fair questions to ask, of course! But there are many, many things that we know that *are* God's will. And so *this* is one of them. And so, I rest in that. I believe, as much as the three of us sitting here talking today, that the "Deeper Life," of walking it out – *experiencing* Christ – is the heart of God. Not for a select few people. But for whosoever will. And there's a lot of "whosoever" out there! And so that's where I kind of ... that's my resting place.

Manwell (05:54):

You know, years ago, there was a speaker that had a book, and I think he traveled. I think he had cerebral palsy (a brain disorder), and he became very well known.

Manwell (05:58):

And he said, "You got to have the *want* to!" It has to emulate from "whosoever" will. It's got to come from the heart. You know, David (King David of ancient Israel) said something that I think is worth extrapolating on – on a more micro-level. He said, "My soul *will* praise the Lord." I always emphasize "will." Because it seemed to be David's Spiritual man speaking to his soul man – speaking to his emotions, speaking to his despair. And you have to have a true heart's desire. But my question to you guys is in the way that perhaps we have been teaching, or *not* teaching: How can there be a true desire for something that the congregation doesn't know *exists*? If we've not properly presented them the option for a "Deeper Life"?

Owen (06:49):

Yeah. No, let me jump on that a second. We've talked about this many times here in the studio. And that's *this* simple fact: Today, we think of so-called "evangelism" – that is, spreading the Good News, spreading "membership" if you want to call it that. I like to say (spreading) "participation" in Christianity ... *how* was the Good News spread? *How* was the Gospel spread? And today, we think of it as just telling people. We give out brochures. We give out little booklets called "tracts." Or we stand on a street corner, and we so-called "preach" to the crowds walking by. And I've done all of those things in my younger years. But what I've come to see is, after studying Early Christianity, they *didn't* do that! They *didn't* do it. We've talked a lot about "behavior" in these episodes together. And what happened is, non-Christians *saw* the behavior of the (Early) Christians!

Owen (07:55):

What did they see? They saw supernatural love, and peace, and joy. They saw supernatural visions and healing power. And what did they say? They said, "Oops, I *want* that! I *want* that! How do I *get* that?" And they entered the Kingdom to get that power. So think about it. You could give me a booklet that says, "You ought to be a Christian." Or, I can watch you experiencing power, and I can say, "I *want* that!"

Owen (08:27):

And so ... my contribution (chuckles) would be that your congregations are going to expand. People are going to come into the Kingdom. It may not even be in a building. And we know from our books and our episodes here, the power's in *small groups* – not in big audiences watching what I call the "stage show." And you can do both! We're not trashing the "stage show." But we're saying the "stage show" should just be a ... an interlude or whatever you want to call it ... or an introduction ... to the power of *small teamwork*. That's where the power is.

John (09:08):

Yeah, and Manwell, I think about it so often. You have to go back to the First Century and remember that they didn't have a leather-bound sixty-six books of the Bible. They didn't have an iPad and new versions.

Manwell (09:24):

And screens!

John (09:26):

And a Christian bookstore. And the worldwide web. And seminars to go to. As Owen said, all they had was ... the evidence that they had was ... whatever the individual was talking about, how was that being *manifested* in that person's life? That's what made it believable or not. And some people thought – if you read the New Testament – some people think that the apostle Paul was arrogant. He wasn't! In the context of what I'm saying, and the context that he wrote in, he said to people, "Okay, if you don't know how this is done," he said, "imitate *me*!" He said, "Watch how *I* live." Now, we're afraid to say that today – to anyone. (Laughter.).

Manwell (10:23):

Because we don't want them look at us! (Laughter.)

John (10:24):

Yeah! You know, *when* do we say to somebody, "Okay, you want to see how this is done? Then watch me!" We're afraid to do that. But that really is the key. The most convincing thing is whether or not it's working in *our* life. So I don't like ... we talk about "spreading the Gospel." But I like to say, "*Be* the Gospel!"

Manwell (10:57):

And it will spread!

John (10:57):

That's correct. Just *be* the Good News! And as someone famous said, "Always be about the Gospel. And use *words* when necessary."

Manwell (11:12):

Ooh, wouldn't that be good! You know, we can all go to go to Golden Corral (a local restaurant) a little bit earlier! (We can get out of traditional worship services a little bit earlier.) You know, because as you look back over antiquity in history, even our names, for instance. My wife's maiden name is Turner. And that's an old Scottish name, I believe, that comes from those that built wagon wheels. And they (the wheels) would "turn." So what am I saying? I'm saying our names derive from our apprenticeship. And

so, we learn by: "Follow me, as *I* follow Christ. *Imitate* me." That's the best form, I think of training. It's not lecturing and tests. I can just memorize that.

Manwell (11:54):

But if I'm an apprentice, I've got to absorb it more. I've got to get into the lifestyle of my mentor ... Elijah, Elijah! (An Old Testament prophet.) You know, Paul ... Timothy ... it's all through the Bible. One of my mentors says, you know, that the Word is so simple you need a theologian to help you "misunderstand" it. (Laughter.)

Owen and John (12:07):

Yeah, yeah! (Laughter.)

Owen (12:09):

There's another old saying, Manwell, that's: That you may be the "only Jesus that people ever *see*." And you know, we have all of these old sayings. But that's really true. And you were talking about, "Do people *want* it or not?" One of the lessons that John and I have learned in this 30-year journey that we're talking about, is a little thing called "Like-Mindedness." You have to be with one or more persons who're Like-Minded about what we're talking about in this episode. And so what *is* it that you have to be Like-Minded about? A bitter lesson I've learned is some (small) groups get together, and they think if they enjoy one another's presence, and they have a covered dish meal, and they laugh and they talk, and they discuss who needs prayer in the hospital (chuckles), and who needs a food basket delivered to them, and so on. And then they break up and they go home. And they say, "Wasn't our small group wonderful last night!" And they never realize (chuckles) that wasn't it at all!

John (13:24):

It didn't move the needle at all!

Owen (13:26):

Yeah, it stays pegged out on zero, you know? And so, what we have learned is: When we define what's called "Like-Mindedness." Which is a term that comes from the book of Acts (in the Bible) in the original Greek. What that really means is that the members of your immediate peer group – we're talking peer group pressure now – back to *behavior* again! We're talking about people who are Like-Minded about *two* things. "I want to express the Fruit of the Spirit in my life." And, "I want to express the Gifts of the Spirit in my life."

Owen (14:05):

And "I want to leave this room having had a *supernatural* experience!" Not just eating spaghetti and talking about who's in the hospital. And, I don't want to be mean or any-

thing, but that's the power of it! And some people maybe are not seeking that or looking for that. But we're hoping that subscribers to this podcast are. And if so, this is the place to hear what's happening and how it's done!

Manwell (14:34):

I believe, I believe, John the landing is going to be that finally I'm finding something that makes just cognitive *sense*. I don't even, I don't even have to have seminary, or schools of theology because it just *witnesses* with my spirit. This is what I've been looking for. Because one of the things that I've often taught is that unity of purpose and unity of Spirit are not the same thing. (Amen!) We've all come together for the same purpose after 9/11. And then after this pandemic. And then it fizzles out. Because we had the same *purpose* ... but we did not have the same *mind*. You know, and quite frankly what makes a "cult" in and of itself at a [**inaudible**] is not a bad word. It's simply short for "culture." But what makes "cults" work that we can understand? Why would you follow that? Crazy! If somebody has gotten into the mind and caused everyone that follows him to have the same mind, even though it was going after an *ungodly* purpose.

John (15:30):

Yeah! I think another piece of this is especially – I mean, you know as a minister, someone who is, you know, "before people" every single week – you know for years now, there is just this re-orientation, as a re-education, of being able to come back and say ... because unfortunately, Christianity has been presented as something that is effectual *when you die*. (Wow! Yeah!) So just think about that. (It's "fire insurance"!) So, I'm sure like you I have a life insurance policy. And I have my beneficiary, my wife. But that ... she can't access that, benefit from it, today. Only when *I* "check out" can *she* "check in." (Laughter.) And so ...

Manwell (16:42):

Can we spread that around the kitchen? (Laughter.)

John (16:43):

... only if something happens to me, can we look into it. But what I'm saying is ... is just think about this: There are people walking around that, in the meantime, between now and then, that *it* (their Christianity) has *no* effect. It makes no difference people's lives whatsoever.

John (17:11):

And there's just this mindset: "I want to make sure that when I *do* leave this earth, that I'm with God." Now I want you to think – someone wrote that I admire – think about this: If I don't want to be with God *now*. Right? If I don't love what He says *now*. If I don't want to be in fellowship with Him *now*. If I don't want to be engaged with His Spirit *now*. Then why would you think that I would want to spend eternity with Him? And all that He

is and He represents? So it's not logical. When you really break it down and start looking at it like that. So it's being able to say to people, and you said the word earlier, "apprentice." That's what Jesus was talking about. He didn't say, "Go and get people ready for *heaven*." He said, "Go and make *apprentices*." And He practiced that. He modeled that three years. Small groups! The original small group!

Manwell (18:23):

(Laughter.) The original small group (was Jesus's 12 disciples)!

John (18:27):

Jesus and the twelve! And so in that – and that was a ragtag bunch, too! You know? And from all different walks of life. And so God took them and taught them. And they *experienced* it. He said, "Okay, you've seen Me do it. Now *you* go do it." And so, that's what we're trying to communicate. I don't just start with people when I'm talking to them about, "Oh, are you ready to die?" To me, the question is, "*Are you ready to live?*"

Manwell (19:01):

Why haven't we *led* with that?

Manwell (19:03):

So you guys have been (laughter) [**inaudible**] and I'm like, that's the worst sales pitch opening!

Owen (19:12):

Well ... see again, I will always want to bring it back to *behavior*: So you've got *un-spiritual* behavior and you've got *Spiritual* behavior. And what's the old joke, there's "a great gap," "a vast chasm" between those two. And so the thing that I like, in one of our previous episodes we talked about the people, non-Christians, seeing Christian *behavior*, and what *effect* does it have upon them? And without just dreaming about this, or talking about it, we know that there's documented history. And there are documents in the museums of where this has happened. And one of the ones that I love the most came from Second Century Rome. And I talk about it many times. Because it's one of the few documented experiences where there was a man in Rome by the name of Natalis. And he was standing with some friends – imagine this now – he could have been on a balcony. We don't know.

Owen (20:16):

But he was watching a small group of Christians in the street. Think about this now. They didn't know he was watching. And he watched them a few minutes and he turned to his friends, and here's what he said: "*Look at them! Look at them! They love one another almost before they know one another.*" (Wow!) Now, how many Christian groups today,

if somebody was spying on them through a window or something. (Laughter.) Or looking at them from a balcony or anything. And I often think to myself, "I wonder what they were *doing*?" What was *it* that Natalis and his friends saw from that balcony? And we know of course ... we catch glimmers of it ... where the Scripture says, "Greet one another with a holy kiss." These types of things. You know, the thing that's made me the most uncomfortable about 2020 (the year) and the Covid-10 (pandemic) is that I am no longer ... people don't want me to hug on them. They're just saying on TV, "We'll never shake hands again." Well, I feel like a cripple when I'm in a Christian group. You know, I don't *want* to wear a mask and stand six feet off. I want to grab them and hug them, praise God! And so I know we're all afraid of (virus pandemics). But the point I'm making is: *Behavior* is the key. What is your behavior? Is it Spiritual or is it unspiritual? And if it's *Spiritual*, to what extent, or to what depth, is it Spiritual?

Manwell (21:58):

You know, my confession is that in the beginning of my ministry, and my wife, we planned our ministry from the ground. So I had no denomination affiliation whatever. Because I just felt that, for me, that was limiting, you know. And I didn't want that to "define" this as a body. And we started like most "churches." A small group (in) my mother-in-law's house. And they wanted it, you know, the "church." And all I knew was the pattern that was set before! You know, that's what you did. And so about six years in – we were in a small town, in Reidsville – just a few people. It's a blue collar town. And you know, the tobacco industry was down there and it had closed. So people didn't have a lot of money. And we had a small ... we actually met in a gas station!

Manwell (22:42):

And I could only afford to lease *half* of that. (Laughter.) One reason you passed by where the assembly was at, was the pumps outside! You could still see where the pumps were taken up. And ... but we just enjoyed that fellowship. And all we wanted was enough offering to take everybody to eat after service. But we were able through a long story – and a miracle of God – to acquire a 40,000 square foot building. The largest building in downtown Reidsville. That's not saying a whole lot, in a town of 14,000 people. But my point is this: Because of the favor of God there ... and because of the camaraderie and the connection as a "church" family of maybe 40 people ... we would *linger* after "church." We would be *outside* the "church." Cars would pass by, and there was a rumor started that we were selling *drugs* out of the "church." (Laughter.) Because listen: (Whispers) "Nobody can be *that* happy!" (Laughter.) They literally said that! So, this was a small town. You know, we were being ostracized because we were *happy*! Like you're saying about the gentlemen on the balcony (in ancient Rome) looking down. And that is a *time* in ministry – I've had bigger budgets – I've had a lot of buildings – I've been on almost every continent. But that's the *time* I miss. I *miss* it. I'm excited to migrate back to it.

John (23:57):

Yeah. And you know, we kind of read over it. But you have to really soberly look at this. Just a few hours ... think about this now. Just a few hours before Jesus was arrested.

So (after) three years of public ministry, and now He's down to the last seven or eight hours. And He pulls in that small group. And He goes over some things with them that they needed to *get*. And the first thing He teaches them and models for them is: Your life is to be characterized by *servicing*. Then the second thing He says is: People are going to know you're connected with Me – this is in John 15 – by your *love*. Paul later wrote, or picked up on that, in First Corinthians 13.

John (25:02):

And he basically said, this is my paraphrase, it doesn't matter what you *do*. If you don't do it with a heart and the Spirit of *love*, it amounts to nothing. And then he gave us a beautiful kind of a description or definition of what "love" is. And the reason we're intimidated by that, I think sometimes, is because we're looking at that through natural eyes. And what we're talking about – the Christian experience – is *supernatural*. And if we're going to love like that, it's got to be coming from Christ *in* us, Who *is* love! It's got to be birthed from His Holy Spirit that lives *within* us. You know, psychologists tell us (that) to love and be loved is the greatest human need. And the world is crying out for that. Not some – I call (it) "cotton candy" kind of love. Right? That just "melts" in your mouth. (Laughter.) But I'm talking about that which you *know*. And you *feel* it. You *sense* it. It's *there*. It's from God. It's from the Spirit.

Manwell (26:18):

Yeah. When we look at this *supernatural* life that we discuss. This *Spiritual* life we discuss, there are so many things. I think you said sometimes we "read over it." And I've taught – and teach – my congregations: Don't try to read so much. Don't read so fast. (Laughter.) You know, because we think *volume*. I've got to *learn*! But you look at certain things like, "Enter His Gates With Thanksgiving." Which presupposes that it is not my "Praise Team" and my "Client's" responsibility to pump you up. There is something you should be bringing to the group when you come in which speaks of a *Spiritual* life. I ask my ministers when I'm training them, I said: "Now I know you guys, you got seminaries, you have theology. And I know you guys – man! – all week long you're working on your messages. And you've got to teach. You're going to teach everything you've learned in three years in five minutes. And you've got 25 pages of notes."

Manwell (27:13):

I said, "But how do you think the *disciples* spent their Saturday evenings or whenever they taught? You think they were pouring over *concordances* (reference books)? Or was it something internal and intrinsic that caused them to be able to shake the world? And they didn't even have Google! Google is a smart guy. (Laughter.) But they didn't even have Google, by the way! What could it *be*?"

Owen (27:22):

Well, you know, here's the thing about it, Manwell. I've had those thoughts hundreds of times. Years ago ... it's interesting ... there was a song that many Christians sang,

"They will know we're Christians by our love, by our love! They'll know we're Christians by our love." (Amen!) And when we did that, everybody held hands, and many people wept as we sang it. However, I've not heard that song in a looong time. (I haven't heard it a looong time, my friend!) Think about that a second. So that tracks with the *decline* that we're seeing. It's an amazing thing. But here's something I want to say. This is not theology (chuckles). This is just cold-blooded facts. When you stop and think about it, people think that *Christmas* is very important because it commemorates the birth of Christ.

Owen (28:26):

And then they think that, you know, *Easter* is very important because it commemorates Him rising from the tomb. And those are probably our two biggest celebrations. Very few people – if any – celebrate another day of the year, which is actually the most important day of the year. And that's May the 30th, 30 AD, at nine o'clock in the morning, when Christianity was founded by the arrival of the *Holy Spirit* on earth. And we don't stop and think that Christianity, the experience that we're talking about in these podcast episodes, was *founded* that morning. Actually not by God. And not by Jesus. But by the power of the *Spirit*. And if you go back and read that part in the book of Acts in the original Greek, here's what it says: When Jesus got to heaven, He went to the Father, and the Father *gave* Him the Holy Spirit. (Wow!)

Owen (29:38):

And He (Jesus) turned around and – the Greek word is like you "pour" water out of a pitcher – and He "poured" the Holy Spirit on the first 120 Christians. And they were instantly ... the *behavior* that we're talking about was so profound ... that 3,000 more people in the street immediately *joined*. That's the power! And so, I know people ... I haven't done it recent years. I would like to start again. We used to *celebrate* that event, which we call in theology the "Morning of Pentecost," or the "Day of Pentecost." We used to *celebrate* that, and have a cake, and sing. (Chuckles.) Think about that a second. And you know, there are congregations around the world – not so much in America. But, I often tell the story that some of the cathedrals in Europe, if you study it, if you look up at the *ceiling*, you'll see *hole* about the size of a manhole.

Owen (30:45):

And what used to happen – they don't do it much anymore. On the morning that they *celebrated* that was closest to the Sunday closest to the 30th of May, they put a child up there with a basket of flower petals. (Chuckles.) And they would drop *red rose petals* down on the congregation in celebration of that, of the power of the *Spirit* coming. (Wow!) So, as much as we love these other celebrations ... Christmas and Easter and whatever the other celebrations are ... let's always remember, what we *should* be celebrating is when we got the *supernatural* power that formed Christianity. And here's my last comment. People often say, "Well, if all that's true, why *aren't* Christians showing that power today?" And that's what we're talking about in these episodes! There's a reason *why* they're not showing it today. And we *know* that reason. And we're trying to *reveal* it over a series of episodes to people.

John (31:56):

Yeah! I think about it, Manuel, like this too. Something that we've talked about for years. If you really, really, get down to the nitty-gritty of this. If you were to put two *people* side-by-side. And two human *beings* standing side-by-side. And just for sake of the story, you asked them are they *Christians*? And they both said, "Yes." And you say, "Well, then tell me about that! Why would you say that?" And one person says, "Well, you know, I'm a member First So-And-So ("church"). I tithe regularly. I serve as a deacon," *et cetera, et cetera*.

John (32:49):

(Laughter.) But then the other person says, you asked him the same question, and he (or she) says, "Well, I've been *indwelt* by the Holy Spirit." You know the Scripture says *that* is actually the benchmark. (That's the benchmark!) *That's* the benchmark. It's not whether or not I do ... or believe ... the right things. Now, those things of course are important. But they are in *response* to the Holy Spirit. And so, the real issue is whether or not – which is the Day of Pentecost. Which is ... the Day of Pentecost was the *response* to the birth of Jesus, and the death, and resurrection of Jesus. Okay, this is what that *meant*. This is what that *means*. And so it comes back to *that*. You know, people say, and I won't go on and on, but I can say this honestly. And this is true for me. When I was a teenager ... to the degree that I could ...

John (33:59):

... I believed in God. Actually, I believed in Jesus. I didn't know, little to nothing, about the *Holy Spirit*. But I believed it. And so people say all the time, well, so-and-so "believes" in God. And I don't – it sounds ugly to say it – but in this context, you want to say, "Okay, well, what difference does *that* make?" Because the Bible says that our *enemy* (Satan) believes in God and trembles. So, if we don't ever move it off of the page of, I "believe" the right things, then what does it matter?

Manwell (34:38):

And it seems that those are the litmus tests that we want to apply. Because if I can – Americans – or people in general, we love to measure things. When I was a kid, I would read the *Guinness Book of World Records* like it was a novel! Who's the *best*? The *fastest*? And we try to apply that to our Christian life. Where if, you know, you're saved and proven how many people have you won to the Lord ... and all of this. And I'm reminded of so many different points. One, the Bible says, and you just alluded to this, the Bible says to *be* Holy. And we're teaching people to "do" Holy. No. You have to *be* Holy. When I look at Pentecost now [**inaudible**], brothers said, you know, "Bless God, Pentecost is coming!"

Manwell (35:21):

You know, they're generally (only) talking about *charisma* (the Greek word for Spiritual gifts); and "gifts" and "laying on of hands" (praying by resting your hands people) and I believe in "tongue-talking" (using prayer languages) and all of that. When you just displayed and explained the *power* of Pentecost was that people looked at them and when they said, "How is it we hear every man in our own language?" What I take from that is, how is it that every man can relate to me? Can speak what I speak? All of a sudden, I become culturized with you through this thing that you guys call this *Holy-Spirit* guide thing, "whatever that is." (People don't understand how the *Spirit* guides.) I mean, there's a powerful, real, demonstration of witness in the world!

Owen (35:55):

You know, we often talk about this, Manwell. A lot of people in our day and time don't realize it. In the First Century, when the *Holy Spirit* came on the Morning of Pentecost, which gets its name from the *festival*. They had a one-day wheat *festival* called the "Festival of Pentecost." And it was Hebrew law that all males had to attend it. So when that happened on that particular day, the city of Jerusalem – which was a walled city (and) was only about a mile square – it was so full of people: From a population of less than a hundred thousand, it would often be half a million. So they slept in fields and things around because there was nowhere to go. And that's why people were sleeping in the streets that morning and saw the miracle happen. (Wow!) So but, without rambling, here's what I was trying to say.

Owen (36:54):

A lot of people don't realize, I mentioned earlier, that many people were *illiterate* in those days. They couldn't read or write. But more than that – hold on to your seats again! – there *was* no Bible! (Chuckles.) There *was* no Bible! We don't realize that the New Testament that we all love and revere did not exist. Okay so, and then the second thing is the Old Testament, which Jesus, and Paul, and Peter and those quoted ... it was under lock and key, usually in the synagogues, or in the temple. It was not available to the general person. So what I'm trying to say is this: The "Deeper Walk" of Christianity is *not* – repeat, *not* – an intellectual experience. Whether you understand what's happening ... and I didn't. The deepest experiences in my life, that changed my life, one of which happened in a hotel room in New York City.

Owen (37:57):

I didn't even know what it was. I didn't know what was happening. But when I walked out of that room, I was so different (that) when I got home, friends didn't *recognize* me. That's the *power* of what we're talking about – of what the Holy Spirit *does*. I'll close with one last story. Some years ago, I won't name the time and the place, I was walking down the hall in a certain denominational building. And I passed the room where the youth group met. And as I walked by, I heard a sound. It sounded like chanting. And I thought, *What in the world is that?* And I stopped and looked in. And the youth pastor was in there with about 15 to 20 young people, and they were chanting. So I called him

out of the room, and I said, "Excuse me. What's going on in there?" He said, "Oh, I'm teaching them to be Spiritual."

Owen (38:52):

I said, "Well, what *is* that? What are you *doing*?" (Laughter.) He said, "Well," he said, "I'm having them memorize the books of the New Testament. So they can quote them forwards and backwards." And I said, "Why?" He said, "So they can be Spiritual." (Laughter) See, he thought memorizing the books of the Bible – "Matthew, Mark," you know. And being able to say them backwards, was a mark of Spirituality. Well, wait a minute. You get back to the First Century. There *weren't* any books! (Laughter.) So *now* what do you do? (Not to mention a youth group!) (Or a youth building!) (Or a youth ministry!) See, we're starting to get the picture! It's *Spiritual behavior*! It doesn't matter what you've learned ... and what, no offense to John (laughter) with his seminary degree. Or was it the *cemetery* degree? Whichever it was. (Laughter.) Okay, I'll pass on.

John (39:50):

Well ... you know ... one of our favorite verses is in the second chapter in the New Testament book of First Corinthians, where Paul talks about that he was a man – if there was any one of that day who had the credentials and the ability to do this, it would have been Paul. But he said to the people there, "Listen, it's not [**inaudible**]. This is not going to make sense to you because of any sense of eloquence or man's human wisdom. What I'm trying to communicate to you today, I want to be a demonstration of the *Spirit's power*. So that your faith will rest in God. Because, see, God had done it. There's an intervention that God had done this. And people would not be talking about, when Paul left town, they wouldn't be talking about *him*. But they'd say, "Hey, did you see what *God* did! Can you believe so-and-so? We thought they were a lost cause, but *God* did that. God changed their life!"

John (40:56):

This is just a quick, a quick story: Many years ago, over 20 years ago, I was talking to my uncle who's now in heaven. And he was a very successful, affluent businessman. And so he thought in those terms. We were having a discussion one evening, just the two of us. I was a college student preparing ministry. I think at the time he was just trying to act interested. And he was asking me questions. It finally came down to this question. "What is your product?" That's what he asked me. He said, "Well, John, tell me, at the end of the day – he was not a Christian – he said, "John, what is your product?" And thankfully God had given me the answer to that. And I said to my uncle Jim, I said, "Well, Uncle Jim, *it's changed lives*." I said, "God is in the business of *changing lives*." (Wow.) Weeks ... weeks later ... he lived in another city ... one day, it was back when letters were written, I got a ...

Manwell (42:28):

(Laughter.) What? What was that? (Laughter.) In 1850?

John (42:33):

... he sent me a letter. And he said, "I wish ... I would like to be able to have the faith that you have. That you were talking about the other night. And I don't have it. And I would like to." He knew that I was a poor college student, or just after it, and so he said, "Here's a hundred dollars. Would you purchase and send me some books that you think might help me?" That began a correspondence with this (man), my uncle, who eventually came to faith. But ... "*What's your product?*"

Manwell (43:30):

Yeah, is there a *product*? You know, a very well-known Bible teacher tells a story. And he runs a Bible college today. But he was younger then, and he was teaching a small group. And a gentleman walked in, and this gentleman began to just fire off questions at him. [**Inaudible.**] He said it was like I was just talking to the smartest guy in the world. And he humiliated me. Eviscerated me. He asked me questions about the Bible I couldn't answer. He asked me theological questions I couldn't answer. He said, I was just totally devastated. And everyone got up and sort of, you know, went out, and didn't want to look me in the eye when they walked out. (Laughter.) And he said, I felt like such a failure. And he said, and I'm sitting there, you know, feeling sorry for myself. And I'm packing my bag up, getting ready to leave the room. And this guy comes *back* in. And he says, "What you're teaching – I want to know this Christ."

Manwell (44:26):

And he (the Bible teacher) said, "You just embarrassed me in front of the whole class. Why would you come *back* in here?" He (the man) said, "Because I know I embarrassed you. And I know I bullied you. And I know I eviscerated your argument. But you stood on what you believe. And if you could stand on the Christ and believe that – *that's* the kind of Christ I want to serve."

Owen (44:44):

You know, Manwell, let me add this to that. It's funny how the Holy Spirit speaks through people sometimes. Usually just a comment. And it completely changes your life. One of those experiences is somewhat like your story that I had. I know from the big clock on the wall we're getting close to the end. But I want to tell this story. I was having lunch with a man one time. And he was a former priest and had been – gotten out of the ministry – he had been so disillusioned. And so we're having lunch together. And we're talking about why are people so confused. *Christians* now ... I should correct myself. Not "people," Christians. Why are so many *Christians* confused and bewildered and so on? And so his name was John, by the way. And so – a good Bible name! – so I looked at him and I said, "But John," I said, "how can people be so *deceived*?" And he looked at me kind of funny. And he laid his fork down. And he said, "Owen, don't you understand?" He said, "The hallmark of a person being deceived is that he or she doesn't *know* it!"

Owen (46:12):

And I just ... boy, I almost fell out of my chair! I thought ...

Manwell (46:19):

... it was a "V8 moment." (Laughter.) A *revelation* is always like V8. (Referring to a 1980s TV commercial about people having new insights.)

Owen (46:22):

... no ... I never thought of it that way! And so from that point, I've never felt – what would you call it? Animosity, or impatience, or any of those things with Christians who are not growing Spiritually. You know, I think to myself, how can I *reach* them? What can I do to burrow *under* that deception that they've got? They don't even know that they're Spiritually blind.

Manwell (46:52):

[Inaudible] Forgive them, for they know not what they do.

Owen (46:56):

Exactly. And so again, we repeat ourselves. But you know, I've always said ... I used to tell management classes in John Deere, and when I was a professor, that management is built upon 20 principles. All of management ... accounting ... sales ... anything you want to talk about ... production of a product ... is built on 20 principles. And I used to give them a card that had those 20 principles on it. What I'm trying to say is: Christianity is built upon a very small handful of principles. And one of which is the principle of *Spirit-filling*. Which people – John mentioned *indwelling* earlier. So, what makes a Christian different from a non-Christian? Think about that a second. A Christian is *indwelt* by the Spirit. A non-Christian is *not*. But now let's talk about the "Deeper Walk" again. What's the difference between a Christian who is Spiritual, and a Christian who is not?

Owen (48:09):

And the difference is, the Christian who is *Spiritual* is expressing more of the inner power of the Spirit in his or her mind, and that's becoming *visible* to people in supernatural *behavior* in everyday life. And what is supernatural behavior? (It's) supernatural love, and joy, and peace, and patience, and kindness, gentleness, and goodness, that the average *Christian* – and the average *non-Christian* – does not have. And finally, (it's) the Gifts of the Spirit, which you mentioned earlier. Christians are supposed to have supernatural experiences. (Absolutely!) They're supposed to have visions, Spiritual dreams, all of these healings, Spiritual healings, angelic visitations. And not just once a lifetime. Frequently! That's the mark of a *Spiritual* Christian. And if we could just get through this deception that we all have and see the simple truth. Why would God make Spir ... uh ... Christianity and Spirituality hard? Why would He make something you've got to go to

the bookstore, buy a book, and study it? And why do you even have to study the Bible? They didn't have them in the First Century! Just *experience* the "Deeper Walk"!

Manwell (49:38):

You know, from a theological standpoint, you know the Scripture and revelation are like an onion. You know, that's why that you keep peeling layers. That's why that book never gets old. And I was looking at the Scripture, and Jesus says, "I go to prepare a place for you." And we think that – you know that means that He's just going to give us a "mansion." But when He goes, He prepares a *place* where He has left for *me* to step into. So a "Deeper Life" is always possible.

Manwell (50:09):

Well, men, it's time to close this episode. And this has been an incredible episode! I really enjoyed it. I loved being in here with you guys, discussing things like, "Is A Deeper Life Possible?" And there's so much more we have to go in the future on these podcasts.

Manwell (50:22):

Also, we want our friends to know that this is Episode 07 in the podcast, and a script and recording of it are available on the *Christian Family Online* website. Now to access that script and recording, simply go to www.C-F-O-P-O-D-S.com. That's C-F-O ... for Christian Family Online ... P-O-DS.com. And don't forget to subscribe to the podcast, and you'll get notifications for Episode 08 and all of our featured episodes. But now, this is Manwell Grady, your moderator ...

Owen (50:57):

... and this is Owen Allen ...

John (50:59):

... and John Shields ...

Manwell (51:00):

... and our producer, Shannon Wolf! Now: May the God of our Fathers bless you, and keep you, and guide you, and protect you, until we meet again.

Manwell, Owen, and John (51:17):

Manwell, Owen, and John end the episode.