

Episode 15. "The Growing Christian."

Tuesday, June 22, 2021. 53 Minutes Long.

A hard-hitting, truth-telling episode on Spiritual growth. Includes First Century principles that few (if any) other books, radio and TV shows, or podcasts offer. The episode opens the door to rapid Spiritual growth for Christians with specific instructions for how to be Spirit-filled, and for how Christians know they're Spirit-filled.

John (00:12):

John Shields opens the episode by saying:

John (00:12):

Well, hello again, friends! And welcome back to our podcast, "Saving Christianity." This is Episode 15 in our bi-weekly series, coming to you every-other-Tuesday from Christian Family Online. And I'm your host, John Shields. In the two previous episodes – you may recall Episodes 13 and 14 – we talked about "Infant Christians," and the "Infant Christian Problem." We talked about how a person becomes a Christian. And we talked about the problem that all new Christians start out as "*infant*" Christians. And we said that infant Christians are real Christians and will go to heaven. But here on earth, infant Christians are *not* Spiritual. They're *not* living "a little bit of heaven while they're still here on earth."

John (01:16):

And that's why – that's the explanation – that there's so much *trouble* in today's Christianity. Too many Christians today are infants. And that's why attendance is dropping in the denominations. That's why many denominational programs are irrelevant, and boring, and hypocritical, as all of the research reveals. And so now we've arrived at Episode 15. And the title of this episode is "The Growing Christian." That's right, "The Growing Christian." And it's in this episode that we're going to talk about how Christians can start living what we refer to as the "Early Christian Lifestyle" of peace, and healing, and hope. And this is a lifestyle that the first Christians lived when Christianity was first founded. But let's pause before we start. Before we go any further, let's introduce our co-host. You know him well by now, Owen Allen. Welcome to Episode 15, Owen!

Owen (02:31):

Well, thank you, John! Great to be back for good old Episode 15. "Hello" to all of our friends out there in Podcast Land. And let me tell you something, John – and our trusty producer, Shannon, sitting here with us. I'm really glad to be here because Spiritual growth is a *serious* subject that needs to be *seriously* talked about. Now something I want to stress: We've said consistently throughout these episodes that becoming a *Christian* ... as they say in the sign boards and church

marquees, "Getting Saved" ... is the most important thing that any person can do. And so we stand on that and could stop there, as many people do. But at the same time, *Spiritual growth* is what gives Christians the most benefits here on earth. *Spiritual growth* is what gives Christians the most supernatural peace, healing, hope, miracles, and guidance, here on earth. So the problem we have, John – you've already referred to it – becoming a Christian only creates an *infant* Christian. (Repeats.) It doesn't create a *growing* Christian. And yet, it's growing Christians who have the most supernatural peace, healing, and hope, John, as you just said.

John (04:11):

And influence! That's exactly right. You know, the most important thing a person can ever do, certainly, is to "get right with God," and in a right relationship with Him. And as the Bible refers to it – and a common way to understand it – we talk about "being saved." And that gets us ready, or we're able, to go to heaven. And certainly there's not anything more important than that. But maybe there ... maybe not *more* important, but *very* important ... is there's more to life on earth than just "waiting to die and go to heaven." And Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God on earth means we should have *some* of heaven's joys while we're still here on earth.

Owen (05:05):

And that's right. That's true, John. So that's really the problem that we're trying to *solve* with these podcast episodes. Because, as we've said in previous meetings, today's Christians are *not* being taught how to live what we're calling the "Early Christian Lifestyle." Or at least, they're not being taught it *clearly* enough, and *long* enough, and *often* enough. You know, John, Christians were taught how to live that lifestyle in the First Century. We're going to talk about that in a minute. But they're *not* taught how to live it today. At least, as I said, not completely enough. And so here's the weird result. Many Christians today remain *infants* all of their lives. Think about it. Many Christians live their lives here on earth, and die, and go to heaven, all as *infant* Christians. (Repeats.) And the sad news is: That includes a lot of pastors, priests, elders, deacons, choir leaders, praise team leaders, musicians, and all of the other denominational employees that we have today.

John (06:23):

Yeah, Owen, I'll just throw in ... and that is just a very light reading of the New Testament ... that is totally, and I emphasize, *contrary* to what the New Testament in its entirety teaches. But, Owen, you know, we're still in shock from the story you told in the previous episode. The tragedy about the pastor who took a rope and committed suicide in his own sanctuary. And I've actually ... Owen, I didn't say it in the last episode, but I have ... I know of other situations that are just as tragic that I won't take the time to tell. So let's talk about the *solution*. Remember, from the very beginning we said we were going to be *solution-based*. And so the solution to Spiritual growth is for Christians to know *what* – and *how*, really – that creates that behavior, that First Century *behavior*.

Owen (07:29):

Exactly. The key is *behavior*. And I pray that all of our friends in Podcast Land, right this minute, get this particular point, John. And here's the point: Understanding what creates our *behavior* as you just said, is – listen to this – the *answer* to all of our questions about Christianity. I could never get my questions *answered* growing up until I studied behavior. Listen, because when you read between the lines, what the Early Christians were really teaching was the principles of behavior. They were teaching why Christians do the *good* – and the *bad* – things that they do. (Repeats.)

John (08:22):

Right. And Owen, today we tend to worry ... and we've really gotten off balance here. Certainly right *teaching* matters. But, not at the exclusion of right *behavior*. And the Early Christians worried about how Christians *behaved*, and speak about it all the time in all of the letters. They worried more about the good and bad *behavior*, than they did about good and bad *doctrine*. And Owen, you can have a (chuckles) great doctrine, and behave like the devil.

Owen (09:02):

Absolutely. And I *know* "some what did"! (Joke meaning, "I know some who did.")

John (09:04):

Yeah. (Laughter.) Yeah.

Owen (09:07):

Well, that's totally true, John. I mean, "You have to laugh to keep from crying." So let's obey now the Three Ground rules that we established for this podcast way back in Episode 08, when we said that we were going to *define* all of the key words that we were using. So let's define now this word "*behavior*" for our friends. And here's our definition. Let's slow down and get this:

"Behavior" is a response to a situation. It's a physical reaction to a personal situation that's triggered by an internal motivator within a person.

Now that's a mouthful. But still, in any high school or college class of psychology, this is what you'll be taught. *A behavior is a response to a situation*. But we're filling it out by saying that the response is internally motivated, (it's) triggered by an internal motivator.

John (10:17):

Yeah, Owen, and I love this ... the example before us here today. It's something that most everyone can identify with. Behavior, especially these days, is what often happens when people drive a *car*. And you may say, "Well, what does that mean?" Well, the *response to the situation* is often what we call "Road Rage."

Owen (10:43):

(Chuckles.) Absolutely. That's funny, John. But actually – actually – driving a car *is* a good example of Christian behavior. Let's imagine two Christians are driving to work one morning, and suddenly a rude driver cuts them off in traffic. Now watch this. The first Christian driver *smiles and waves* at the rude driver. But the second Christian driver *frowns and shakes a fist* at the rude driver. Now what has happened? What happened there? Notice carefully: *Two* different Christian drivers had *two* different responses – but to the same situation. Why would that be? After all, both drivers were Christians. So, why didn't they *both* have the *same* response to the same situation?

John (11:38):

Yeah, it's a great question, Owen. And we know the answer to it from previous episodes. The two Christians had two *different* responses because each of them obeyed a different inner motivator.

Owen (11:52):

Ahhh, now we come to some issues that a lot of people have never thought about.

John (11:56):

Only a different inner *motivator* can create a different outer *response*!

Owen (12:05):

Hmmm. So here's what our friends need to think about, and hopefully remember: The most important thing about any Christian, in this life, is his or her *motivation*. That's the difference between an infant Christian and a growing Christian. Infant Christians are obeying an inner motivator that creates *negative* outer responses. That's what happened to the person that shook (his or her) fist at the driver. Growing Christians are obeying an inner motivator that creates *positive* outer responses. And that's why the other driver smiled and waved at the rude driver.

John (12:50):

Yeah, I want to repeat that principle: The two Christian drivers had two *different* responses to being cut off in traffic because they each obeyed a *different* inner motivator.

Owen (13:06):

Well, that's right.

John (13:08):

The first driver, you're saying, he obeyed – or she – a *positive* inner motivator. And the second (driver) obeyed a *negative* inner motivator.

Owen (13:23):

And we see that in real life in the fact that the *positive* driver smiled and waved. And the *negative* driver frowned and shook a fist. And yet, and this is the scary part, they were *both* Christians.

John (13:39):

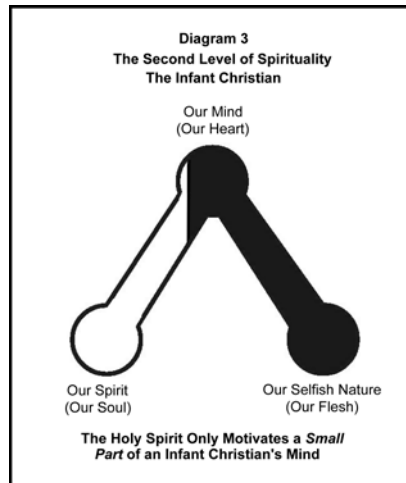
Yeah. And they both had bumper stickers that said, "Follow Me To Church."

Owen (13:44):

(Laughter.) Yeah, "See You In Church On Sunday," and that kind of stuff. Well, so John our friends will remember that in a previous episode we had, we were showing the *Spiritual Growth Charts*. And remember those Spiritual Growth Charts showed that Christians have *two* inner motivators, not just *one*. That first motivator, and in most Christians that's their *main* motivator, is their Selfish Human Nature. And in our charts, it's colored black because it creates *negative* behavior, not only in non-Christians, but also in Christians. The second motivator – and only Christians have this one – is the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is colored white in our charts because He creates *positive* behavior in Christians.

John (14:42):

Yeah, that's true. And that's really ... it's a simple, but it is a profound concept. And by the way, we have that same chart right here in the script at about, let's see, at about 16 minutes into it. And it's also on page 107 of the book, *Saving Christianity*.



Owen (15:06):

Exactly, John. And when we look at that chart, here's the big difference from previous charts. We see that the left side of it now – the left leg of it – is colored *white*. Now remember, in Christianity the color white always symbolizes the Holy Spirit. So, the left side of this chart is

revealing and showing the fact that all Christians *are indwelled by the Holy Spirit*. And He's their second motivator, and He has the power to resist the negative motivations of our Selfish Nature.

John (15:46):

Yeah, which is obviously the primary point, or one of the primary points. *He's* given to us. But, when you look at the chart, Owen, most of it's still black. And so that means that this Christian's Selfish Human Nature is still his or her *biggest* motivator. And that means that his or her behavior is still mostly *selfish*. So this is the chart of an infant Christian.

Owen (16:17):

This is what the Early Christians called Christian "*infants*." All new Christians – no matter their actual age – were considered infants. *Nepios* was the Greek word. (Pronounced "NAY'-peahss.") So that's right. But look, now let's apply this chart as we just discussed it to the story of the two Christian drivers we talked about a moment ago. The Christian driver ... *Christian* driver ... who frowned and shook a fist at the other driver would have had this kind of chart. It would have been mostly black. But here's the key point: The left side of that chart would still be *white*, showing that this person is indwelled by the Holy Spirit, is a Christian, and is bound for heaven. John, let me say something here. Many denominations say that if a Christian makes a bad mistake and does something wrong and evil, that they (*sic*) were *never saved* in the first place.

Owen (17:22):

See, a lot of denominations don't recognize and don't admit that Christians can do *negative* things. And that's an over-simplification and, really, an injustice being done to Christians. So the fact we need to see ... very important ... is that only a *small* portion of the Christian's mind in this chart we're looking at is colored *white*. That indicates the Holy Spirit is only motivating a very small part of this Christian's mind. Said another way, the Holy Spirit is *not* the biggest motivator ... I call it the "majority" motivator ... of this Christian's outer behavior. So, what does that prove? Here's our proof. Here's our rule. *All* Christians have *some* positive behavior. They just don't have *enough*! And that's why the average Christian today, according to Gallup polls, is no more Spiritual than a non-Christian. Why? Because the average Christian today is not letting the Holy Spirit motivate *enough* of his or her mind.

John (18:44):

Yeah, and Owen, that statement alone answers so many questions. So for our listeners, let's summarize: This chart proves that infant Christians have *two* motivators in them. One is black, and it's their *majority* motivator. And the other is white, but it's only their *minority* motivator. And that's a big deal.

Owen (19:14):

It is. I mean the stuff we're covering right now John, is stuff that in my experience, in my life, you don't hear anywhere else. Nobody else is teaching this. So, and this proves a fact that many people don't understand. I said it a minute ago: *All* Christians can, and do, behave two different

ways. *All* Christians can, and do, have a daily "mixture" – let's call it – of positive and negative behavior. Tragically though, the point we're making today is that "mixture" is mostly *negative* in infant Christians.

John (19:58):

Yeah. And again, that's why Gallup polls ... and let's bring it a little closer to home: If you have any interaction with people who are – quote – "professing Christians" – end quote – it (the Gallup poll) shows that the average Christian today is no more Spiritual than a non-Christian. And that should *shock* us. And it's because ... there is a *reason* for that ... that today's average Christian is an *infant* Christian. And that means that the biggest motivator, internal motivator, is their Selfish Human Nature.

Owen (20:38):

You know, John, I'm going to say something off-script a second. I'm involved in a situation right now in a major Christian denomination where there's great unrest, and gossiping, and all kinds of trouble among the *choir* members. You know, I'd never heard this 'til I met my wife. You know, Joanna has been a professional *choir* leader all of her life. And one of the first things she ever told me was that the *Music Department* in any congregation is the "War Department." (Repeats.) And I always thought that was cute. But sadly, it's true. Because that's where your jealousy, your pride, who's going to solo, who's going to sing what part, *yada yada*, comes up. And what is that? *Selfish Human Nature*. So John, right here facing this crisis, this is a good time to introduce the poetic language that I love so much of the "Two Ways."

John (21:44):

Yeah. I love this one. This is great. This part of Christian history is wonderful.

Owen (21:49):

Well, you know, many Christians probably have never heard the words I'm about to read because they're not in the Bible as such. They're in a First Century training manual that the Early Christians used to train new Christians. But John, I've always thought these opening words to that manual are some of the most *poetic* words ever written by Early Christians. Let me read them to our friends now. Here they are, and I quote:

"Two ways there are. One of Life. And one of Death. And there's a great difference between those Two Ways." (Repeats.)

Then of course, following that poetic opening, that training manual – that was written in the First Century – goes on to teach *exactly* what we're teaching, John, here in Episode 15. That *all* Christians have a mixture of "Two Ways" of behavior. And let's summarize them again. First, *all* Christian behavior is motivated to some extent by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Early Christians called that "Following The Way of Life." Because to them, the word "Life" meant *Spiritually Alive* behavior. Second, *all* Christian behavior is motivated to some extent by the

Selfish Nature. The Early Christians called that "Following The Way of Death." Because to them, the word "Death" meant *Spiritually Dead* behavior.

John (23:37):

Let's repeat those "Two Ways," Owen. Christians are *infants* when their behavior is being motivated in the *majority* by their Selfish Human Nature. And Christians are *growing Spiritually* when their behavior is being motivated in the *majority* by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Owen (24:02):

Right. We all need to look in the mirror and know that we have a mixture of *positive* and *negative* responses to life, as we go through each day. And you know ... and I think our friends need to know this ... the same teaching, the "Two Ways" teaching we're mentioning, is actually taught in *nine* different books of the Bible. It's just taught there in different words. Those poetic sentences that I read are not *per se* in the Bible. On top of that, it's also taught in Christian letters that were not included in the Bible. That's also why the first Christians were *originally* called "Followers of The Way." They were called that because their behavior was Spiritually Alive, like the "Two Ways" manual is teaching. And listen, when you analyze Jesus's teachings, He was teaching Spiritually Alive behavior the same way the "Two Ways" manual taught. Finally, of course, the apostle Paul was teaching the very same thing.

John (25:12):

Yes, we've also talked from the beginning about the importance of *synonyms* in Christianity. And the Early Christians used a lot of synonyms in their writing. And they had several synonyms for behavior that ... for behavior that's motivated by the *Holy Spirit*. And they called it the behavior of "Life," of "Light," of "Holiness," and of the "Fruit of the Spirit."

Owen (25:42):

Yeah, and looking at the flip side, the *negative* side, some of the synonyms they used in the Bible and in their letters were that the *Selfish Human Nature* is the behavior of "Death," and "Darkness" – Jesus used that a lot! – and "Infancy," and the "Works of the Flesh."

John (26:01):

Yeah. So now let's go back, and to obey the Three Ground Rules we agreed on back in Episode 08, let's define the fuzzy term "Spiritual behavior." And we define it the way the *Early Christians* defined it. And that is important. What is "Spiritual behavior"?

Owen (26:26):

Totally. A lot of Christians couldn't define that right at the moment. Well first of all, a little earlier in this episode, we said that *normal behavior*, including non-Christians, infant Christians and all kinds of Christians, normal behavior is a physical reaction to a personal situation that was triggered by an inner motivator within the person. But now we're trying to define "Spiritual be-

havior." That's the behavior that the indwelling Holy Spirit creates in Christians when – and I might say and *if* – they let Him motivate them. And I think the easiest way to define that, John, is to read a few more sentences from our book, *Saving Christianity*. And I quote:

"What the indwelling Holy Spirit produces in Christians is an outer behavior of Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control."

John (27:36):

Yeah. So Christians who are growing Spiritually are going to respond to daily situations with *that* kind of supernatural behavior. And *that* kind of supernatural motivation only comes from the indwelling Holy Spirit within Christians.

Owen (28:00):

That is *so* important. But now let's look at the flip side, the negative side. Let's define "un-spiritual behavior" in Christians. Remember, we're talking about behavior coming from real Christians – it's just that it's coming from the Christian's *Selfish Human Nature*. So let's quote again from the book. Quote:

"The outer behavior produced by the flesh, the Selfish Human Nature, is obvious." *It's obvious, says Paul.* "It's adultery, fornication, lust, shamelessness, idolatry, drug abuse, hatred, strife, excessive excitement, rage." *We talked about road rage.* "Excessive ambition, division, envy, murder, intoxication, carousing, and all other such conduct."

Now John, we're not saying that Christians run around murdering people. We're just saying *that* is what the *Selfish Human Nature* produces in all humans, and to some extent, it produces it in real, true Christians.

John (29:16):

Yeah. So Christians who are not ... if we are *not* growing spiritually, then we're going to respond to daily situations "in the natural," with anger, and envy, and partying – you name it. And these emotions are coming from where? *Our Selfish Human Nature*. As difficult maybe (as) that is to swallow, it's the truth.

Owen (29:46):

Well now, John. You know there're some denominations that teach if you answer an "altar call" and get "saved," you no longer *have* a Selfish Human Nature. But that just is *not* true. Clearly, your practical life experience tells you that is *not* true. Well, so this comparison of the "Two Ways" of living that Christians can behave, and can live, shows how *different* Christians can be. It shows the big, big *difference* between a Christian who's growing Spiritually and an infant Christian who's still being motivated by his or her carnal nature.

Owen (30:30):

Well, so here are the two things that (have) led us to this now – two things that all Christians should be measuring: What percentage of each of these "Two Powers" is *motivating* us during the day? What percentage of our daily behavior is motivated by the *indwelling Spirit*? But then what percentage of our behavior is being motivated by our *Human Nature*? Because – *because* – if our Human Nature ... we decide by looking in the mirror ... is our majority motivator – hang on – we're not growing Spiritually.

John (31:17):

Right, yeah. So Owen, let's give our friends the *solution*. Let's tell how Christians can start to grow Spiritually. And that solution is the supernatural experience that the Early Christians called "*Spirit-filling*."

Owen (31:36):

Glory, glory, glory. Well, and John we're going to slow down again and be very careful for the next few minutes because the supernatural – I emphasize that word, the *supernatural* – process of Spirit-filling is one of the most important experiences in Christianity. And yet sadly, I might point out, it's also one of the most misunderstood experiences in Christianity.

John (32:09):

Yeah, that's right. "*Spirit-filling*" is another of the amazing promises that Jesus made before He returned to heaven. And He made it to the crowd in the temple in Jerusalem during one of the feasts that they held annually.

Owen (32:26):

Hmm, He *did*. And I think we should quote it exactly the way Jesus said it, standing in that temple surrounded by that crowd. Let's read it from the book. Here's what He said. And I quote:

"He or she who believes in Me, as the Scriptures have said, will have *Rivers of Living Water* flowing up from within him or her." (Repeats.)

And you know, John, our friends can read that promise in their own Bibles. It's in the book of John, chapter 7, verse 38. It's one of my favorite Scriptures. But to fully understand it, we need to remember that water – *water* – is one of the symbols of the Holy Spirit in Early Christian writing. So Jesus was promising the people in the temple that soon they would be *motivated* by the internal Holy Spirit. And He was saying that after Christianity was founded ... because He made this promise before there was any Christianity – that came later ... He was saying that after Christianity was founded, the Holy Spirit would be a "River" of supernatural *motivation* flowing up from within Christians and filling their minds. In other words, He was prophesying the process of *Spirit-filling*. Meaning the Holy Spirit could fill our minds and produce *Spiritual growth* in our lives.

John (34:11):

Yeah. That's one of the most incredible promises ever made in history. And it came true on the "Day of Pentecost," as we saw in Episode 13. So Christians are only different from non-Christians in *one way*. And that is a Christian can be *Spirit-filled* and can grow Spiritually. Non-Christians can't – *can't* – be Spirit-filled and *can't* grow Spiritually. And that's the dividing line there.

Owen (34:49):

And that's a *big* line. That's a watershed. A continental divide. That's right. And now we have another chart John, showing this. And as a matter of fact, it's right here in this script at somewhere around 36 minutes in. And it's also on page 127 of our book, *Saving Christianity*. I'm looking at it now. And it's half *black*, and it's half *white*. And the chart shows that there's a "Tug-of-War" going on in Christians who're growing Spiritually. Think about that a second. It shows the Holy Spirit on the *left*, colored white. And the Selfish Nature on the *right*, colored black. And it shows that both are trying to be the *dominant* motivator in this Christian's mind. You know John, Peter (the apostle) wrote about this. But a lot of growing Christians are "double-minded." They're Spiritual one day, and carnal the next (chuckles), depending on which motivator is *winning* the race on that given day.



John (35:56):

Yeah. So there're two issues facing growing Christians: First – what can we *do* to be Spirit-filled? And second – how can we *know* that we are Spirit-filled?

Owen (36:09):

That's two *biggies*. And let's remind our friends before we get to that, that it is God's will – it is God's *will* – for all Christians to be Spirit-filled. Why? The answer's simple. God doesn't want

the Kingdom of God on earth made up of only *infant* Christians. (Chuckles.) He wants the Kingdom of God on earth made up at least of *some* Spiritually growing Christians and hopefully all of them.

John (36:38):

Yeah, and that's a fact that many people have never thought about, unfortunately.

Owen (36:43):

Yeah. And so how do we *know* that? How do we know that Spirit-filling is God's *will*? We know it because the Early Christians taught it. One quick example is a letter from the apostle Paul. He was writing to the Christian small groups in the city of Ephesus, Turkey. And he told them to do something very interesting. Here's what he told them, and I quote:

"Be filled with the Spirit!" (Repeats.)

Now, our friends can see that in their own Bibles in Ephesus, chapter 5, verse 8. (A slip of the tongue. It's verse 18.) But here's something very surprising. Paul wrote these words in the Greek *command* tense. We don't have that tense in English. But in the First Century, that was the tense that army officers used to issue orders to their troops. So (chuckles) Paul wasn't giving the Christians in Ephesus a *suggestion* ... or a *recommendation* ... or a *hint*. He was giving them a military style order. He was saying that it's God's *will* for all Christians to grow Spiritually by trying to be filled with the Spirit. And that tells us two things: One – all Christians *can* be Spirit-filled. Two – all Christians *should* be Spirit-filled.

John (38:11):

Yeah, I just want to add, it's Ephesians 5. Okay, in the new Testament. Ephesians 5, and verse 18. Now, I think our friends should know that in the original Greek word ... the one that Paul used for "*filled*" in this verse ... means to fill to the brim, to possess in full measure, or to be complete in every respect.

Owen (38:38):

Man! (Chuckles.) "*Filled*" is a powerful word in the original Greek. Our friends ought to stop and think a minute: What would it mean to be "filled to the brim with the Spirit"? To have Him "in full measure"? To have His power "completely in every respect"? My goodness. But I know that we should even be a little *more* specific with our friends. We're still talking about how ... H-O-W ... *how* Christians can be Spirit-filled? What's the process? And to help explain that, let's now introduce the "51 Percent Rule."

John (39:17):

Yeah. We should for sure. Because the "51 Percent Rule" is an important part of the process. And Christians immediately see the principle involved as soon as someone tells them.

Owen (39:31):

Yeah. I've never mentioned this, John, to another Christian that their eyes didn't light up and they say, "Wow, I never thought of that." A Christian sees the *51 Percent Rule* immediately because we all use it in everyday life. That's just the rule that says: "51percent of anything is the *majority* of that thing." (Repeats.) For example, if you own 51percent of the stock in General Motors, you're the *majority* stockholder of General Motors. But here's something. The same rule is true in chemistry, insurance, finance, law, medicine, and many other fields.

Owen (40:16):

And so we're also applying it as a measure of Christian Spirit-filling. Well, how does all that work? Here's how it works: When the motivation of the Spirit floods up within us and influences *51 percent* or more of our minds, we're *Spirit-filled*. And if the Holy Spirit is influencing us, but *less* than 51percent of our mind, then we're being *influenced* – and that's a good thing. But we're not *filled*. And that's why Christians today are not Spiritual. They're being influenced by the Spirit to some small percentage, and that's a good thing, but they're not *filled* with the Spirit.

John (41:08):

Yeah. It's a starting point. I think it's important to remember that every Christian is *influenced* by the Holy Spirit to some small extent because all Christians are indwelt. And so you ... (inaudible) ... the Holy Spirit (chuckles) is all part of the salvation, making it possible. So all Christians, by virtue of that, would have *occasional* Spiritual experiences. But all Christians don't have Spiritual experiences every *day* like Spirit-filled Christians do. And you can see that just makes sense.

Owen (41:49):

Yeah. And you know, John. I tell my story earlier in one of these episodes, that I was a Christian from the age of 11. But I was never Spirit-filled. Had never heard the term. Didn't know what it was until I was in my 30s. Looking back on my life, I was in the Marines, and in college, and various things that I did. And I could see that the Spirit had a very small influence on me during those years. But it was only in my 30s when I was Spirit-filled for the *first time* that I realized what Christianity really is. *It's a supernatural walk on this planet*. Well, let's review the two things we want to measure then with Spirit-filling: (Number One) is how *much* of a Christian's mind is filled? And Number Two, how *long* is that Christian's mind filled? And those two measures can tell us whether or not a Christian is growing Spiritually.

John (42:55):

Yeah. In simple words, we're saying that when the Holy Spirit is a Christian's *majority* motivator – the *majority* of the time – he or she is growing Spiritually. And that's how we live the "Early Christian Lifestyle" that we've been talking about from the beginning.

Owen (43:15):

Yes, from the first episode. Yeah. Absolutely. And now, John, as we approach the end of the episode, let's be sure that we *finalize* the two questions about Spiritual growth we're trying to answer in this Episode Number 15. First, *how* are Christians Spirit-filled? And second, how do Christians know – *know* – they're Spirit-filled?

John (43:40):

Yeah, right. We need to answer those two questions completely before we close today.

Owen (43:45):

Yeah, so here's the first one. *How* are Christians Spirit-filled? The good news is: It's simple, easy, and obvious, for all Christians. How do we know that? We know that because in the First Century, shepherds ... camel drivers ... slaves ... bazaar traders ... even older children were *all* Spirit-filled. How'd they *do* it? They did it because they *had* three things. And they *did* one thing.

John (44:16):

That sounds like one of those "Three-In-One" TV advertisements we see for cleaning products, Owen.

Owen (44:23):

(Chuckles.) Yeah – I guess so – you're going again with your *jokes*, John. All right, let's call it the Three-In-One process for being Spirit-filled. Here are the three things that the Early Christians *had*: They had a desire to be Spirit-filled. They expected to be Spirit-filled. And they asked to be Spirit-filled. And then the one thing they *did* is simple. They prayed constantly to be Spirit-filled.

John (44:54):

That's exactly right. But here's one ... here's what's scary. If you ask the average Christian today if he or she is *using* this Three-In-One process, most Christians would answer, "No." And not only that, I think they would also answer, "I don't have any idea what you're talking about." (Chuckles.) And that's a global tragedy.

Owen (45:18):

Wow, "tragedy" doesn't cover it, man. That's a worldwide tsunami of negative stuff. Well, here's something cute. Let's nail down the "prayer" part of the Spirit-filling process. In the book, I tell a story of a man who once asked me what *words* he needed to use in his prayer to be Spirit-filled. And I told him *four* words. He was shocked. He said, "What four words"? Here are the four words Christians need to use. Quotes:

"Fill me, Holy Spirit." (Repeats)

John (45:53):

It's that simple. And that profound. And that amazing. But Jesus promised us in Luke, in the New Testament, in chapter 11, verses 9 through 13, that *everyone* who asks for the Holy Spirit ... guess what? *Gets the Holy Spirit!* So we know those four words work.

Owen (46:21):

Absolutely. And now John, let's close our last question: How do Christians *know*? I hear this a lot. How do Christians *know* that they're Spirit-filled?

John (46:34):

Well, the short answer is, they *feel* it.

Owen (46:36):

Bingo. And that's the answer. Spirit-filled ... that's the point of it all! Spirit-filled Christians *feel* it. That's the mark and the sign of a Spirit-filled Christian. Watch this now. Spirit-filled Christians feel something that nobody else feels. Non-Christians *can't* feel it. And infant Christians *don't* feel it.

John (47:03):

And that's exactly, actually, one of the main reasons for being a Christian while we're still here on earth. It's to *feel* the wonderful feelings that Spirit-filling gives us. And then from that, the *influence* that ... how God uses that in this very, very dark world.

Owen (47:24):

You know, John. We've missed the fact that the whole point of Christianity is: *To be a supernaturally powerful Spiritual movement on the planet.* And we never think about that. And lastly, while we're doing this, let's remind our friends what these unique feelings that we're talking about *are*. As we just said, they're supernatural. What does that mean? They cannot be – they *cannot* be – produced by Human Nature. And by definition, if they're supernatural, they can *only* be produced by the indwelling Holy Spirit inside of Christians.

John (48:03):

Correct. And let's remember that we're explaining how Christians know they're Spirit-filled. They know it when they feel ... actually, I mean ... so think about it. *Love, Joy, Peace, Patience.* Those are things that you experience: The wonderful supernatural feelings that non-Christians *can't* feel, and that infant Christians *don't* feel.

Owen (48:27):

Yeah, and let's talk about the: "*What does it feel like?*" (Chuckles.) In Chapter 11 of the book, *Saving Christianity*, we've got a whole chapter (where) we're going to talk about what the Early Christians called the "Fruit of the Spirit." And we've already mentioned it – the "Fruit of the Spirit" – several times in earlier episodes because that is what Christians *feel* when they're Spirit-filled.

John (48:53):

Yeah, and feeling the Fruit of the Spirit is the acid test. It tells us the degree to which we're Spirit-filled. So just think. The more you feel the *Fruit*, the more you *know* you're Spirit-filled.

Owen (49:06):

And we've already mentioned the Fruit of the Spirit in *five* earlier episodes. That shows we think it's important. We ... in fact we mentioned it in our very *first* episode of this podcast. And we discussed it at length in Episode 11, a couple of weeks back.

John (49:26):

And we already described it once in *this* episode.

Owen (49:31):

(Chuckles.) We did, we did. So to close, let's give our friends another complete description of what the Early Christians called the *Fruit of the Spirit*, what the Spirit *produces* in us. And again, this is from Paul. And let's "flesh" out a little – that's probably an unfortunate word! – let's *round out* a little (chuckles), how he defines "Fruit." And I quote:

"The Fruit of the spirit is supernatural Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-Control. And so, if we live (Spiritually because we're indwelt by the Spirit), then let us *behave* Spiritually (by expressing these feelings in our daily lives)."

John (50:23):

Yeah, and I know we're going to talk about all this more later. But our friends, we want to remember that the word "fruit" in Bible Greek means the *result* of something ... or what something *produces*. So Paul is saying that these wonderful feelings are what the Holy Spirit *produces* in us.

Owen (50:49):

Yeah, if and when *we let Him*. Well, and you know what, John? I just want to say this and we'll ... I'll save my ammo for a later episode. But the point is: These feelings of the Fruit of the Spirit are absolutely wonderful. They do ... you *do* have one foot in heaven when you feel them on earth. You're never the same once you've tasted them. And you never want to give them up. But I see from the big clock on the wall that our time's up, John, in this episode. But I want to tell

all of our friends to remember that the whole point of being a Christian in this life – *before we go to heaven* – is to feel the wonderful, supernatural feelings that we call the Fruit of the Spirit. And all we have to do is to pray constantly to be Spirit-filled. And remember those four words we practiced earlier:

"Fill me, Holy Spirit." (Repeats.)

John (51:58):

That's right, and our friends out in Podcast Land should also remember that in this episode, Episode 15 ... and a script and recording of it are on our website at: www.goSCpod.com. That's G-O-S-C-P-O-D.com.

Owen (52:24):

Indeed they are, John. But for now, this is Owen Allen ...

John (52:28):

... and this is John Shields, with our producer, Shannon Wolfe ...

Owen (52:33):

... saying: May the God of our fathers bless you, and keep you, and guide you, and protect you, until we meet again.

Owen and John (52:57):

Owen and John end the episode.