

"You want to be filled with the Spirit? Then be a person who is involved in the church, and worship with the church, sing with the church, speak to the church, submit to each other in the church. This life in the community of Jesus, worshipping, thanking God, being together, this is how you become a person -- this is how you are a person -- who is filled with the Spirit."

Welcome to the Radically Christian Bible Study Podcast. I'm Travis Pauley, and here we have one goal: Learn to love like Jesus. Each week I visit with Wes McAdams, minister and author, and together we explore biblical passages and topics. I hope you enjoy this study.

WES: Okay. Well, Mr. Travis, it's time for another episode. It's been a while since we've recorded one of these.

TRAVIS: Yeah, it has.

WES: I'm excited. And we had a question that came up on a Facebook group, on the Radically Christian Community Facebook group, and you brought it up to me, and I thought, well, that's a great -- that's a great question that we can talk about. It wasn't submitted to be a question on the podcast, but I think it would be a great -- you're obviously interested in it, and I'm interested in it, so why don't you read it for us and then we can talk about it.

TRAVIS: For sure, yeah. This came from the Radically Christian Community Facebook group. The user says, "Good morning. The

following question is something I'm extremely confused about. Does the Holy Spirit speak to believers? I'm being told by brethren that the Holy Spirit was only for the apostles and only until the Word was complete. I'm having difficulty understanding this. Please help me as I continue to read the word and prayerfully seek to understand."

WES: Okay. I -- that question has been kind of rattling around in my head for the last couple weeks, or ever since you asked me about that, or brought that up to me. I don't really want to get into -- personally; we can if you want to, but I don't really want to get too much into, you know, how does the Spirit work today versus how did the Spirit work in the first century.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: But I like the question about the-- read it again. Do you mind reading it again?

TRAVIS: Sure.

WES: What did he say? Something about --

TRAVIS: "Does the Holy Spirit speak to believers?"

WES: You know, that -- and that's an interesting question just right there. I've really been thinking about that because we do -- or I do hear people use phrases like that, "The Holy Spirit spoke to me," or, "The Spirit speaks to me," or something along those lines, but that's an interesting thought. And I got to thinking about that, and I thought, I don't know that scripture ever -- and if it does use that -- I was trying to look it up and see if -- but I can't think of anything off the top of my head --

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: -- where the Spirit speaks to us. And that -- and that is just kind of interesting in and of itself, that -- that that's not really the way that -- I don't think that's really a biblical way to think about the work of the Spirit in speaking to us.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: When we think about the Spirit, I think that -- you know, if we think about the idea of God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, when we think about the role of the Spirit, anytime that scripture talks about -- and I'm going to say things-- I know I'm going to accidentally say things like "anytime" and "every time," or things like that, and I'm not saying that there isn't a passage that talks about the Spirit speaking. I'm just talking about in general or the passages that come to my mind.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: I'm not saying I have an exhaustive list of passages in my head, but when scripture talks about the work of the Spirit, when scripture talks about the Spirit speaking, it's usually talking about a person speaking that is being -- as Peter puts it -- Peter says, "carried along by the Spirit." And so I really think that the best way to think about the work of the Spirit isn't like the Spirit with an audible voice saying -- or even a voice in our head --

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: -- saying, "Travis, Travis, this is what you should do," or anything like that. Or even -- or even, you know, a thought in your head. It's more

like the Spirit empowers. That's a word I really like.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: I really like the word "empowers." And so I think going back and thinking about what is a -- what is a Spirit -- because the word "Spirit" -- and we may have talked about this on the podcast before, but the word "Spirit" literally, in a literal sense, just means a breath or a wind, and so that's a literal usage of the word "Spirit." So there's the literal. And then if we talk about it as sort of a metaphor, then we're talking about a personality. We're talking about a personal Spirit.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: So you have a personal Spirit, I have a personal Spirit, God has a personal Spirit, and this is the invisible -- or I like to say the personal, invisible empowering presence of God. I know that's a lot. The personal, invisible empowering presence of God. That's who the Holy Spirit is.

TRAVIS: I like that.

WES: He is personal. He's not an it; he's a he, right? So anytime scripture talks about the Holy Spirit, scripture talks about the Spirit as a "he." He's personal. He has a personality. He's not the force. This isn't Star Wars. He's not an impersonal force like wind is. Wind, in a literal sense, is -- it's impersonal. There's no personality to it. It's just an impersonal force, but the Holy Spirit is the personal -- and then I like to say "empowering." The Spirit is known by what he does. So even though the Spirit is invisible -- that's what a Spirit is. A Spirit is invisible like wind is invisible, and you don't know wind except by what it

accomplishes, except by what it empowers.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: So you know that wind is at work when you see a ship sailing across the water. You know wind is at work when the sail is filled with the wind and it's being driven across the water.

You know that the Spirit is present in a person's life, not because the person says, "I hear this voice in my head." It's not about hearing a voice in your head. It's about being empowered and driven in a certain direction. So you can only see the work of the Spirit by the work that's being accomplished and that's visible in a person's life.

And so the way Peter would talk about it is in the work of the prophets. And he would say, in the writings of the prophets, they were being driven or carried along by -- and it's just like a ship. It's like a ship sailing on the water. They're being carried along by the Holy Spirit. He's not saying, I don't think, that the Holy Spirit is, like, whispering in their ear or that they hear this voice in their head, you know? "I hear this voice and it's telling me to write this, and I write this."

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: That's not the way that scripture talks about the work of the Spirit. It's much more -- it's much more like wisdom. And I think that that's something that we don't often think about. We often -- when we talk about scripture being inspired by the Holy Spirit, sometimes we talk about it like the Holy Spirit, like, controlled the authors.

TRAVIS: He told them exactly what to say, what to write down.

WES: Right. Yeah, like he was whispering in their ear or like they were

just dictating. They were just dictating, the Spirit telling them what to write down. I don't think that's how inspiration works. I think that we should think about words like "wisdom." I think we should think about words like "creativity." We don't think about that, do we? I mean, when we talk about the Bible, that scripture is inspired by the Holy Spirit, by God, God -- God's breath is in this.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: Sometimes we just think about accuracy. That's the only thing -- because we're Westerners, you know, and Westerners tend to be-- we like to think about science and facts and figures and numbers, so that's what -- when we focus on inspiration, we talk about inerrancy --

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: -- and accuracy, infallibility. Those are the things that we -- and I'm not saying that that's wrong, but we don't think about creativity. The scriptures are incredibly creative. The way that they would use -- even like the Psalms. A lot of the Psalms used things like acrostics. They'd use every letter of the Hebrew alphabet to say "Alef" this and "Beit" this and "Beit" that, you know, and they would -- every letter they would have a different aspect of the word or a different aspect of God, or whatever.

And so there was an incredible amount of artistic creativity that went into it, and it's interesting that one of the first times that scripture talks about the Holy Spirit working in a person's life, it's in Exodus Chapter 31. There's a guy named Bezalel. And Bezalel, it says -- this is Exodus 31:3: "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and

intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship, to devise artistic designs, to work in gold, silver, and bronze, in cutting stones for setting, and in carving wood, to work in every craft." And so Bezalel would be a craftsman filled with the Holy Spirit. And so his -- his empowering by the Spirit isn't about accuracy and infallibility.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: It's not about a voice whispering in his head. It's about artistic creativity.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: And then as you continue to read scripture, you see wisdom being an evidence. That the evidence that the Spirit of God is working in a person's life isn't that they're -- like become a robot and say, "God told me to say such-and-such, such-and-such."

TRAVIS: You almost think about it more like possession.

WES: Right. That's exactly how we tend to think about it. We think about it like they're being possessed and like --

TRAVIS: Just by something good.

WES: Yes, that's exactly -- and it's nothing like that. It's more like maybe, after the fact, you look at a person's life and you say that was beyond them. God was empowering that. This was a strength. And you even think about the judges, like theirs was -- like Samson. I guess it kind of was like a possession, but possession in the sense that they had a supernatural strength. So it's like a ship. Again, if the wind didn't fill the sails of a ship, it would just sit there doing nothing. Or you could get out the oars and you could kind of, by your own power and strength, try to

paddle it as much as you could, but then this wind fills it and it's able to go places and do things that it couldn't do by its own volition and power.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: And that's the way the Spirit works. And he empowers and has empowered different people at different times in different ways, and that's kind of the whole point. So it is kind of funny -- I said I didn't want to talk about this, but it is kind of funny that we would insist that the Holy Spirit empowers me the same way the Holy Spirit empowered the apostles or the first-century church, and it's like, no, the point of the Spirit has always been that he has empowered God's people at different times in different ways and given different people different gifts for what they needed at the time for the common good and the building up of the body. But the Spirit is something that -- is someone. I shouldn't say "something." See, I always --

TRAVIS: It's hard. It's hard.

WES: It is hard to talk about him as a personal presence. But it's some -- it's an idea, a concept that you have to sort of step out of and look at it and look at the situation and say, this person has a power and a strength and a wisdom and a creativity that is beyond their own power and ability. And that's, I think, how the scriptures would talk about it. So Samson, for instance, had this supernatural strength. Bezalel had this supernatural craftsmanship and artistic ability. Solomon had this supernatural wisdom. And as you go through the scriptures, wisdom seems to be one of the greatest, most common ideas associated with the work of the Spirit, that the Spirit gives wisdom.

And I think that's a powerful word, and it's a word we don't think about a lot, I think, in 21st century America, as Christians. Like we want knowledge; we want facts; we want to know what's true, what's false; we want to know what are the rules, right? Like I want God to give me a list of rules and I want things to be exhaustive and I want lists and checklists, you know, and that's what I -- but scripture is much more concerned, both in the Old but especially in the New Testaments, Covenants, much more concerned with wisdom, in having people be complete and be able to -- and this is one of the words that, especially in like John's gospel account -- one of the words that's most commonly associated with the work of the Spirit is "vision" and "sight," so that's what the Holy Spirit does, more than giving you facts. And I'm not saying that the Spirit didn't give prophets facts.

TRAVIS: Sure.

WES: I think that's true.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: But more than that, much more than that, way beyond that. The Spirit gave the prophets and the apostles and the church today, and in every generation -- gives God's people vision and sight and helps them to see things that they couldn't see before, things that they can only see through the filling of the Spirit -- being filled with the Spirit. That -- that's a huge thing. So we want to know questions like how does the Spirit speak to us? And, again, I'm just kind of uncomfortable with those words, with that idea.

TRAVIS: It's misleading --

WES: Right, yes.

TRAVIS: -- I think, for yourself, to ask that question. It's like, well, if that's what you're looking for, you might be disappointed. But if -- you know, I think -- and this is par for the course for my faith life, and I think a lot of people's, that whatever you think you're looking for -- if you can just come to a moment of, okay, I just want to know the truth.

WES: Yeah.

TRAVIS: Yes, I want to know this and I want it to be this way, but you have a moment of -- you know, and it's usually pretty painful to get to that place of I just want to know the truth. And then you find out it's so much bigger because -- you know, you were saying before about creativity being associated with the Spirit. Man, you're speaking my language because that's, you know, my -- my relationship with the Spirit is definitely built in that. And kind of a junkie for that moment of, like, you know, wow, that was something, and that wasn't me. Like that -- there's nothing more exciting than that because it's like -- it's both kind of like ego-filling because it's like, ooh, I got to be a part of that, but it's different than "I did that." It's different than, "Wow, I came up with that. I wrote that, I did this." You know, it's just --

WES: It's humbling.

TRAVIS: It's like I stumbled across something. It's very humbling.

Can I tell you a weird Spirit moment that --

WES: Yeah. We may have to edit it out, but -- no, I'm just kidding. Go for it.

TRAVIS: In part in jest, but it was kind of amazing to me, that I was

reading -- I was working on some music and I was reading in some Psalms for some inspiration. I read Psalm 19 and I realized the first half -- almost the first half of Psalm 19, in English, rhymed. It was incredible. It was like, wow, he wrote that as a song and it still like -- it still flows and it's still snappy.

WES: Absolutely.

TRAVIS: I was like that's incredible. It kind of just sent chills. It was like, man, this is thousands upon thousands of years old.

WES: Yes. And if we could sing it in Hebrew, we would probably be even more impressed.

TRAVIS: I know, I know, yeah. But it's like -- you know, just that idea of creativity being associated with it, and I think that's -- like I almost look at creativity like it's on the path to wisdom. It's not wisdom itself, but it's on the way.

WES: Yeah, it's one aspect or one type of wisdom. When a person can -- and there's all kinds of great scholarship that's gone into this idea, but when you look back at creation -- so the world was -- in English, it is "formless and void." It isn't necessarily that it's nonexistent, but that it's formless, it's void. I think the -- anyway, we won't get into the Hebrew. It's formless and void. And then God comes in and God brings about -- the Spirit -- the Spirit of God is hovering over the waters and God speaks and he brings order. He brings order to the chaos. He brings order where there's light and darkness, so he's separating things. When you read it, it's all about separation. Everything is being put in its place. The birds are put in the sky, the fish are put in the sea, the animals and the

people are put on the land. Light is separated from the darkness. Everything is separated and sectioned and organized and everything is given its place and it becomes a perfect harmony. And everything's put in harmony; everything's put into motion; everything's put into its flow.

And then God creates a human being and he creates him in his own image, or as his image bearer, and he gives that person the ability, or the vocation, of ruling with him. And he puts man in a garden and he tells man to work, even before the fall. Sometimes we think that work is an aspect of the fall. It's not. Adam was given work to do before the fall. And what was he supposed to do? He was supposed to cultivate the garden. What's he doing? He's doing the same thing that his Heavenly Father is doing. He's creating order. He's cultivating. He's going in where there's chaos and there's weeds and there's, you know, things that are growing up, and he's cultivating, he's pruning, and he's gardening. God makes him a gardener.

And so all throughout the scripture God takes these human beings and he's co-ruling with them, and as his co-rulers, he's allowing them to bring order and harmony where there's chaos. And that's exactly what he wants us to do, but what sin does is exactly the opposite. Sin brings about uncreation. Sin brings about the breaking down of peace and harmony, and there becomes chaos and there becomes dysfunction, and there becomes disharmony and violence and, you know, all of these things. And then when God's rule and reign comes about and he invites people, humans, to co-rule and reign with him, then we participate with him in bringing order out of the chaos.

And that's what a song does. A song takes -- I mean, there's an unlimited number of notes and sounds, and a song takes them and organizes them in a way that's harmonious. There's harmony. That's what a sentence does. There's all kinds of letters, and you can put letters in all kinds of different numerous -- uncountable number of combinations for letters and words, and you take those letters and organize them in a way that makes a word. And then you take those words and organize them in a way that makes a sentence, and then you take the sentence and organize them in such a way as to make a paragraph and communicate an idea with words.

God made us creators, and by "creators," not just taking things that don't exist and bringing them into existence. More than that. Organizing things that exist in such a way that it brings harmony and peace and flourishing to humanity, to the world. And that's what -- that's what we do with ideas, words, with music, but that's also what a builder does. A builder takes bricks that are just disharmony, that are just chaos, and then he organizes them in such a way that it makes a structure. That's what somebody does with numbers that's an accountant. And, to me, I look at the numbers and it's like the Matrix, you know? It's just all the numbers running everywhere. And they take it and they bring order to the chaos.

That's exactly what we do. Whatever a person's job is, it should be bringing order and peace and harmony to something that is chaotic. Even like a schoolteacher. I mean, without the schoolteacher, the kids are chaotic and they don't know what's going on and they're running

every which way, but she or he brings peace and order and harmony to what would otherwise be chaotic, and we are bearing the image of our Father.

And then when you consider the work of the Spirit within the lives of Christians, how much more so is that true for us where we are -- the Spirit of God is bringing peace and harmony to our lives so that we can co-rule and reign with God. And that's exactly what's happening. And you look at what like Paul would say in Galatians Chapter 5. He said this is the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of walking by the flesh is all this disharmony and fighting and arguing and backbiting and jealousy and envy and outbursts of anger, and all of these things. But the fruit of the Spirit is love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness and gentleness and self-control.

The Spirit brings peace and order and harmony to what would otherwise be chaotic. And that's exactly what the church should look like, is you look out at the world and there's all this disharmony and there's chaos, and then in the church there's harmony and peace and unity, and everything is working together for the common good of the body. It's not always the way it is because --

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: -- we don't always walk by the Spirit.

And so that, I think, gets to the heart of the work of the Spirit in our lives. It's not just to give us facts and figures. It's not about predictions about, "Tomorrow watch out for buses. Don't step in front" -- you know, that's --

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: -- that's nonsense.

TRAVIS: That's horoscope.

WES: That's horoscope. That's paganism. That's not Christianity; that wasn't Judaism. That's not the way the Spirit has ever worked. I shouldn't say "ever," but that's not really the idea of the Holy Spirit that we get from scripture.

TRAVIS: Well, it's so limiting. It's -- you know, even just the very idea -- because I know what the -- the person who asked the question, I know what they're talking about. I'm sure you do, too.

WES: Sure, sure.

TRAVIS: That idea of just hearing that, well, the Spirit only speaks in the Word. You know, it only speaks in the Word, and anything beyond that is, you know -- I don't know, Pentecostal.

WES: Sure, sure. Yeah, charismatic.

TRAVIS: Charismatic. Yeah, I like that word. But I know -- I think it's important to note that that's deism. I mean, if you really think God is done, that the Spirit was only for the apostles, and once they died off there's no more -- you think God's done talking -- like I think it's funny because you think about how the Bible came together in the first place. We had the Old Law, and I've heard you talk about, recently, that when Paul references the scriptures, well, he's talking about the Old Law.

WES: Right.

TRAVIS: And the New Testament -- but they didn't have the New Testament, right? It's sometimes easy to forget that as you read, but we

can -- that we can trust so quickly, as Christians, that a group of people who were not apostles got together and put this -- they bound this book together and decided what was going to be in it -- we can trust that they had the Spirit and that God was directing them to put that book together, but we don't trust that he can speak to us today? Like that's --

WES: And the way I would say it is this: I think that the apostles themselves had a special ministry that was directed by the Holy Spirit in a special way, and I think understanding apostolic ministry is incredibly important because -- and that's why, you know, it wasn't arbitrary the way that these books were put together.

TRAVIS: Sure.

WES: It was based on the fact that all of these people were either apostles or they were closely associated with the apostles. So all of these books of the New Testament are apostolic and -- meaning they are associated with the ministry of apostles. And just even understanding what an apostle is -- an apostle is like an ambassador or a delegate. I was recently at a conference and somebody used the word "deputy," like they've been deputized by the king to go out and make a proclamation.

And so, yes, their ministry had a lot to do with information, like raw information, and yes, I don't think that like God is giving me raw information. I just don't think that the Holy Spirit is giving me raw information. So if you mean God speaks to me today with that, no, I don't hear a voice in my head, and I -- I really question, you know, when people say things like that because -- and I think part of it is because I have a voice in my head, and his name is Wes. He says all kinds of

things, you know? I mean, the voice in my head, you know, tells me, you know, "Eat chocolate cake," and it tells me, "Don't eat chocolate cake." And it tells me, "Wes, you want to be in good shape," and it says, "Wes, you want to eat everything that's" --

TRAVIS: He can't be trusted.

WES: Right. The voice in my head is crazy. Somebody is going to turn me in to a psychiatrist or something because I said I was crazy and I had voices in my head. But we all do. We have thoughts; we have a conscience; we have desires, and all of those things have, to a certain degree, a voice, and we can listen to those things or not listen to those things.

But the way the Spirit seems to work is that he gives us wisdom and insight, and if somebody thinks that the Spirit is done giving us wisdom and insight and eyes to see, then I think that you have to just throw out the entire New Testament because Paul and the other apostles -- Jesus himself was very specific, and when they wrote these things down and they preserved them and they held on to them and they handed them down generation to generation, it is -- it is, from beginning to end, saying to Christians, if you really belong to Jesus and you really are part of the family of God, then you have the Spirit of God dwelling in you, and the Spirit is giving you wisdom and insight and vision and eyes to see.

And so part of that -- I mean, when you think about, again, the fruit of the Spirit -- love and joy and peace and patience -- it's like if you look out onto the lake and you can see ships that are sailing and ships that

aren't, or you can see ships that are crashing into each other and ships that are sailing in the right direction, you know which ones are empowered by the right kind of wind, the ones that are going in the right direction. And Paul would say it's not about whether or not you can predict the future or, you know -- that's not it, you know? It's whether or not you have love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness and faithfulness. If you're living in sexual immorality or you're violent or you're hostile or you're angry or you're backbiting or you're a gossip, you are not walking by the Spirit. You are walking by the flesh. That's the wind that's driving you.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: But if your life is filled with love and faithfulness and self-control and these kinds of things, then give credit to God because it's the Spirit of God that's directing you. It's not because you, quote-unquote, read the Bible and you know all the rules and you know how to follow the rules. I feel like that's -- when we say, "Well, God speaks to us through the Bible and just through the Bible," I feel like -- I feel like what people are saying is, "I know the rules and I've read the lists. " And it's like, no, no, it's more than that. Yes, scripture is important because you have to know what story you're a part of in order to embrace Jesus, and when you embrace Jesus and you're buried with him in baptism, clothed with him, then the Spirit comes to fill your life if you're praying for that. Paul prayed for that.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: I don't think we do that enough. I don't think we pray enough that

we would be strengthened in our inner being through the Spirit so Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith. I don't think we pray enough about that or think enough about that and focus on the fact that I cannot live out the story of the gospel without the Spirit of God filling my life.

I mean, let's look at a passage. I mean, this is the Bible study podcast now, so let's look at Ephesians 5, and this is a passage I always grew up hearing because it says to "sing and make music in your heart to the Lord." But that's the only part of this that I focused on when I was growing up.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: But let's start -- it's Ephesians 5:15. So I'm going to -- do you want to read?

TRAVIS: Yeah, I can pull it up.

WES: Oh, I'm sorry, no, you -- that's okay. I sprung that on you. So it says, "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And don't get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit. "

So if you just walk through that passage, you know, he says, "Look carefully how you walk, not as unwise but as wise." Contrast there, "not as unwise but as wise." And then he says, "Don't be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." So, again, the contrast: foolishness versus understanding the will of the Lord. Unwise versus wise. Then he says, "Don't get drunk with wine; that's debauchery, but

be filled with the Spirit."

So being filled with the Spirit is associated, in this passage, with wisdom and with knowing the will of the Lord. Being foolish is being -- is associated with unwise and being drunk with wine. And so we -- I mean, right there there's a contrast. Three things on one side; three things on the other side. Foolishness, being unwise, and being drunk. And that's -- I mean, what a great description. Don't be these things. Don't go through life just not getting it, being foolish and drunk and unwise. On the other side, be wise and understand what the will of the Lord is and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And then he uses -- then he uses these, in English, they're 'ing words. They're participles, but -- adverbial participles, if you want to get real specific. So these adverbial participles that either tell us this is what it looks like to be filled with the Spirit, or this is how you get filled with the Spirit. So it would be like this. It would be like me saying -- giving you a command. So the command here, the imperative -- the imperative is be filled with the Spirit, which, again, we don't talk like that.

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: We don't say, "Okay, Church. Listen up. This week I want all of you -- go out there, don't get drunk, but be filled with the Spirit. Don't be unwise; be wise. Don't be foolish; be wise." So we don't -- we don't -- or "understand what the will of the Lord is." We don't necessarily tell people, "Be filled with the Holy Spirit." And if somebody just sat down and said, "How do I do that? How do I -- I thought I got the Spirit when I was baptized." Yes, in a sense. Yeah, absolutely, but that doesn't mean

that on a daily basis you're filled with him. And so it would be like me saying, "Travis, would you run to the store?" So there's the imperative, "run to the store."

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: And then I gave you some adverbial participles, like saying run to the store; first, going -- going out the door; second, getting in your car; third, driving down the street. So the "going" and "getting" and "driving" are all the adverbial participles, and in that case they describe -- they describe how to -- how to establish the imperative, right? So the instruction is go to the store, and then the adverbial participle is how you accomplish that.

You could also use them in a descriptive way, saying something like, "Go to the store," you know -- I can't think of how you would make those descriptive, but you could give somebody a commandment and then say, "This is what it looks like to do that." And so it's more of a descriptive rather than how to accomplish that.

TRAVIS: Yeah.

WES: So it's hard to know exactly what he means by this. He either means this is how -- like a list of how you get filled with the Spirit, or it's a description of what it looks like to be filled with the Spirit. I'm okay with both. It doesn't have to be either/or, I don't think. So he says, "addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. "

This is what it looks like, or this is how. Either way you put it, it doesn't really matter. This is what it looks like to be a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit: Sing, address one another in songs, give thanks to God for everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. You want to be filled with the Spirit? Then be a person who is involved in the church and worship with the church, sing with the church, speak to the church, submit to each other in the church. This life in the community of Jesus worshipping, thanking God, being together, this is how you become a person, this is how you are a person, who is filled with the Spirit.

And what does it mean to be filled with the Spirit? Well, it means that you know what the will of the Lord is and that you're wise. It's not about the facts and figures. Yes, that comes through studying scripture and it comes through being together and talking through things together, but there's a lot of things that scripture doesn't address specifically, tons of things the scripture doesn't address specifically.

We live in a world where we have abortion and doctors that perform abortions, and that becomes a huge ethical and moral dilemma and question that we're dealing with in our culture and our society. Well, what exactly does scripture say about it? Well, it says some things about life in the womb, absolutely it does, but they didn't have doctors performing abortions in all of these times, and so how do wise people handle this? What do wise people that are being driven along by the Spirit of God -- what do they think about human life and the sanctity of human life? What do they think about mothers and babies and life and

children? What do they think about those things? Well, how are we going to come to determination on how we handle situations like abortion or drug use or cohabitation, or a million things that we could talk about? How are we going to -- well, we're going to do that by studying scripture. What does scripture reveal about life and about God and about humanity? And then we're going to do it by talking with each other, by spending time with each other, by submitting to one another, by worshiping with one another, by speaking and encouraging one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, by embracing the story of Jesus that we're all a part of, by being a part of this community. It's all of these things. It's spiritual disciplines.

Does that mean that God is going to download information in my head about, you know, marijuana? No, it doesn't mean that. But it does mean that if you are actively a part of the community of faith, that you are studying the stories of scripture and you're writing these things in your heart and you're embracing the reign of God through Jesus, you will become a wiser person. And wise people know how to deal with situations that come up in wise ways that is in accordance with the will of God. And the only way to do that is to live in the community of faith, embracing the story of Jesus, and praying and singing that the Spirit of God may fill us, and then, as situations arise, we know how to handle them according to the will of God.

TRAVIS: Yeah. And I think -- a thought I just had as you were saying that, I think a big part of wanting to see the Spirit more is just realizing how much we need him.

WES: Yes, yes.

TRAVIS: And how -- because, I mean, to your point earlier, I know exactly where it will get me -- what it will get me with Travis behind the wheel, you know? I know how that's going to go and I know the kind of decisions he makes. I know what his discernment looks like. I know he doesn't really know anything, you know? But with the Spirit, it's like, man, I've got -- with the measure I have right now, hey, I've got a fighting shot. And if I continue to pray, if I continue to get more of the Spirit, I'm real confident, you know, we're going to put this -- we're going to put this one in the W column.

WES: Absolutely. And I like the word that you used, "discernment." And a preacher friend of mine one time said discernment isn't just knowing right from wrong; it's also knowing good from better.

TRAVIS: I like that, yeah.

WES: So there are times when it's not about -- and what do you do in those situations? I mean, you know, a lot of people will be able to say, oh, yeah, abortion is wrong and not having an abortion is right. Okay. Yep, good. Okay, I agree with you. But what about situations where it's not black and white? What about situations where -- not just about abortion, but I mean, any number of moral and ethical questions where it's not a matter of good and bad or right and wrong; it's a matter of either one -- neither one of these two things is sinful, but which one is the best thing to do?

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: What's the very best in this situation? How are you going to know

how to do that? Well, the only way you know how to do that, the only way you'll make -- and, again, when we use words like "know" -- what do we mean by "know," right? When I say, "How do you know what to do?"

TRAVIS: Right.

WES: Again, we think like Westerners. What we're saying is there is wisdom that we need from God, and he promises to give us that. You read James. James says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, ask. God gives generously. He will give you if you ask him." And it doesn't mean downloading knowledge to your head. It means that over time and through participating in the church and in the spiritual disciplines and studying scripture and fasting and praying and loving and submitting to one another and singing songs of praise and downloading these stories into our heart and mind, we become wiser people who deal with things with love and joy and peace and patience and kindness and goodness.

We want things to be, though -- I think we want things to be extraordinary, right? We want tongues of fire.

TRAVIS: And obvious.

WES: And obvious, right. Yeah, absolutely. We want things to be obvious. We want things to be black and white. We want things to be -- you know, just explode. We want a magic show sort of thing. It's much more ordinary than that, but it is also extraordinary. It's very subtle. Maybe that might be a good word. It's a subtle thing, and it's a subtle change, and it's a gradual change. It's growth, you know, and it's over time that the Spirit begins to open our eyes that we can see.

TRAVIS: Yeah. And to your point, like I was just thinking, why would

we want -- why do we have this need for the extraordinary? Like I just want it to hit me like a lightning bolt. And I think it's -- I think, on one hand, I think it's laziness; we just don't want to put in the work. But I think, at the same time, it's also humility. Sometimes I think I'm just too stupid to see it if God gave it to me in a subtle way. But it's like give yourself more credit than that. God -- you know, God's going to speak to you, and I think, to what you said earlier, it's going to look different for you than me. Our sensibilities, our temperament, our experience, our background, our base of understanding and knowledge is different, and that's -- I mean, that is the beauty of it, that you come to Christ and there is something for everybody and there is a path to Christ for everybody. There's -- you know, it's all through Christ, but there's more than one way to the waterfall.

And I just thought of -- years ago, I remember watching -- I wasn't even watching the movie; I was watching a clip from the movie, but the movie *Evan Almighty*, and there's a part in that movie where Morgan Freeman, playing God, is talking to one of the characters and he -- she's talking about how -- she doesn't know she's talking to God, but she's talking about how she's been praying and just doesn't feel like her prayers are being heard. And he says, Well, when you pray to God for courage, do you think God just gives you a feeling of courage and all of a sudden you feel like a lion, you can go out and do anything? Or do you think he's going to give you opportunities at a -- hopefully, at a rate that is tolerable to you, for you to have courage, you know? Same thing with patience.

I mean, if that doesn't sum up at least the start of what it's like to interact with the Spirit of -- pray for something and then believe you're going to get it. Believe it. And believe that you're going to get it in the best way possible. It's probably not going to be the way you want, because you know that you're a human and you're lacking, and you don't even know -- you don't even know -- God knows that you don't even know what you want. But it's going to be bigger than that, and as long as you're just open to -- you know, as much as you can be to the possibility of how he's going to reveal it to you. Jesus said, "Knock, and the door will be opened. Seek, and you will find." I mean, that's -- I mean, that's a big deal.

WES: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I think that's exactly right. I think that the Spirit of God is working not only in you, or in the individual, but he's also working in the church. And as you said, he equips different parts of the body in different ways. You know, that's Paul's metaphor in Romans 12 and I Corinthians 12, that, you know, there's some people that are a nose and some people that are eyes and some people that are mouth, and God -- if we -- and I think that that's sometimes what -- we're so individualistic that we pull out of the body of Jesus and we just try to, you know, say, well, God, you know, make me who I need to be by myself. It's like that's not how he works. It's when we're a part of the body of Christ and the Spirit is working in you and equipping you and empowering you in ways that he hasn't equipped and empowered me, and you're encouraging me and he's helping me to become who he wants me to be through the Spirit who is working in you and in

somebody else and in somebody else and in somebody else, and all of this -- all of the parts -- Ephesians 4, all of the parts are working together so that the body builds itself up together in love.

And that's what the Spirit is doing; he's working to bring about harmony and peace and unity and love and joy and peace and patience, all of these things. He's working in different people in various ways, and being grateful for that and how he's working, and being okay with the -- like you said, the process -- you know, it's a process and it's gradual and he's opening our eyes to different things and new things and he's growing us and stretching us because we're still in the flesh and we still have all of this tendency to sin and this weakness, and he's -- we're a work in progress.

But the Spirit is working in us and if -- and I think that that's -- that's where, you know, if we don't -- if we don't understand that the Spirit's work is in opening our eyes and giving us wisdom and giving us discernment, if we are looking for a little voice or we're just saying it's just the Bible and we're just looking for lists and rules, then I think that we are, unfortunately, removing ourselves from the process of submitting to God stretching us and growing us through the Spirit in order to become the people that he would have us to be.

And a lot of it is -- again, it is supernatural in the sense that it's not natural. It's not natural. I was teaching in my class last night about meekness and saying, you know, it's not natural to turn the other cheek. That's not natural. It's not natural to go the extra mile. It's not natural to love your enemies or pray for those that persecute you. None of those

things are natural. They only happen when you see with the eyes of faith that I'm a part of a real kingdom with a real and reigning king, and I am inheriting this kingdom, and this is reality. It looks like the terrorists and the tyrants and the dictators and the strong and the mighty and those with the big swords and the big guns -- it looks like they're winning. But, in reality, King Jesus has already won. You can only see that through the work of the Spirit.

Now, does that mean through what the Spirit told the apostles and that they wrote down for us in the scriptures? Of course it does. You couldn't know this story if it wasn't for the work of the apostles, their declaration and proclamation. Absolutely, that's how you embrace that story. But every single day I need my eyes open so that I walk by faith and not by sight.

I want to thank my church family, the church of Christ on McDermott Road, and our editor, Travis Pauley, for making this podcast possible. And thank you for listening. If you haven't already done so, please rate, review, and subscribe to the podcast on Apple Podcast, or wherever you're listening. I also want to invite you to check out Logos Bible Software, who has partnered with us to give our listeners a great discount. Just go to RadicallyChristian.com/logos. I think you'll love the software and you'll get a great discount by using that link.

As always, I love you, God loves you, and I hope you have a wonderful day.

- Wes