

# TITLE: **Core Value #6: EMPOWERMENT**

SERIES: Core Values ( 6 of 7)

Text: Various

Balboa Community Church

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## INTRO

We have been going through the core values of our church... the core values of The Alliance... the core values of every believer. These are the things that we believe that should impact the way we live everyday life.

Let's read them together...

1. Lost people matter to God. He wants them found.
2. Prayer is the primary work of God's people.
3. Everything we have belongs to God. We're His stewards.
4. Knowing & obeying God's Word is fundamental to all true success.
5. Completing the Great Commission will require the mobilization of every fully devoted disciple.

And today, **Core Value #6 is: EMPOWERMENT. Without the Holy Spirit's empowerment, we can accomplish nothing.**

I would like to begin with this illustration about "wisdom."

An angel appears at a faculty meeting and tells the dean that in return for his unselfish and exemplary behavior, the Lord will reward him with his choice of infinite wealth, wisdom or beauty. Without hesitating, the dean selects infinite wisdom.

"Done!" says the angel, and disappears in a cloud of smoke and a bolt of lightning. Now, all heads turn toward the dean, who sits surrounded by a faint halo of light. At length, one of his colleagues whispers, "Say something."

The dean looks at them and says, "I should have taken the money."

That's how wisdom is, isn't it? It seems to come after a hard lesson learned. We tend to grow in wisdom with experience. Young people think they know it all, but wisdom comes with age.

## WISDOM OR WEAKNESS?

The Apostle Paul was a man of great wisdom. Let's look at what he says about wisdom in 1 Corinthians Chapter 2...

**1 Corinthians 2:1-5** - <sup>1</sup> When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. <sup>2</sup> For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. <sup>3</sup> I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. <sup>4</sup> My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, <sup>5</sup> so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. NIV

"So that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power."

Paul wrote this letter to the church in Corinth. You see, the

Corinthians were confusing the gospel by creating artificial standards of faith, and they were using wisdom primarily as the gauge.

In other words, the more wisdom someone claimed to have, the more spiritual that person became.

That can happen today. If someone sounds wise or profound or eloquent, we elevate them to a higher level of faith. We consider them to be more mature Christians.

Elsewhere in scripture, Paul shared his credentials. And they were solid. Paul was a Jew - from the tribe of Benjamin, but he was also born a Roman citizen. He was well-educated, having studied under the most illustrious rabbi of his day. He had a good pedigree... an excellent education... and was a great debater. (Orator)

Paul knew the Corinthians would be impressed by his credentials. They would compare him with other teachers - rate them, grade them - to see who was the best or the wisest. That would often determine who they would follow.

But Paul makes it clear (here) that he wasn't trying to impress the Corinthians with his eloquence or superior wisdom. Paul came to Corinth not as a powerful preacher and debater ready to take on the city, but he came in weakness - timid and trembling.

He was utterly dependent on God for the important task of bringing the gospel to this wicked and idolatrous city. Before coming to Corinth, Paul had faced many discouraging ministry events. At Philippi, his ministry started strong, but was nearly ruined by Jewish opposition. The same thing happened in Thessalonica, in Berea, and in Athens. He would have been very discouraged.

So Paul's confidence was NOT in his keen intellect or debating ability, but in his knowledge that the Holy Spirit was helping him... guiding him... empowering him.

Paul had a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures, but he did not depend on using wise and persuasive speeches to change people's hearts. That would happen only by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Our core value states that, "Without the Spirit's empowerment, we can accomplish nothing."

The Apostle Paul got that. But there are many times when I forget - when I try to accomplish something for God in my own strength.

Maybe you are like that. You know you should be sharing your faith with others, but you convince yourself that you aren't eloquent enough... or you don't have enough knowledge to share Christ... or your personality isn't attractive enough. It's amazing the excuses we can come up with.

Or maybe you're doing something for God right now - a ministry of some sort - but your doing it in your own power and not God's.

Paul understood that it was not man's wisdom, or knowledge, or eloquence that changed people's hearts. It was the Spirit of God.

Paul was a man humbled by God, who allowed the Spirit of God to do greater things in him and through him than he could have done by himself.

Paul's message and preaching were a vivid demonstration of the Spirit's power - not of his own wisdom. That was important so that people's faith would rest on God's power, and not on Paul's wisdom.

If we try to impress people with our own intellect or wisdom, then their faith will not be rooted strongly in God, but in us.

I believe that we must live more by the Spirit's power, and less by our own strength. When we live by our own power, we can only accomplish what is possible by our human limits.

But when we allow the Spirit of God to work his power in us, then there are no limits to what God can do.

How can we live empowered by the Holy Spirit?

## EMPOWERED LIVES

### 1. Christ in Me

**Galatians 2:20** - I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. NIV

When you became a follower of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit took up residence inside you. He is the presence of Christ in you. You have the power of God available to you each and every day you live. Paul says in...

**Colossians 1:29** - To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. NIV

The word translated "powerfully" is the word "dunamis" in Greek - from which we get the word "dynamite." It is the power of the Holy Spirit in us that is like dynamite.

Paul doesn't say life is going to be easy now that you have the Spirit of God in you. He uses words like, "To this end I labor," and "struggling with all His energy."

But with the Holy Spirit unleashed in you, God can accomplish great and amazing things that are far beyond your own human capabilities.

It is important to realize that Christ lives in you. Allow Christ to live his life thru you.

### 2. Fully Surrendered

God uses those who are fully devoted to Him - lives who have dedicated themselves to walking obediently with Jesus.

**Romans 12:1** - I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God this is your spiritual act of worship. NIV

If you desire to see a great work of the Holy Spirit in your life, it will start with a full and complete surrender of your life to God's will. God cannot begin to do amazing, impossible things if you harbor sin... or are spiritually apathetic... or just don't have time for Him.

You don't have to be perfect - just fully surrendered.

### 3. Bold Prayers

**Hebrews 4:16** - Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. NIV

Maybe you are a prayer wimp and you need to pray with confidence. Do not confuse this with "positive thinking." This is a complete trust in God's power to do the impossible. And the Holy Spirit has an important role in our prayers.

**Romans 8:26** - The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. NIV

When you pray, admit you are weak. Boldly ask God to work in you by the power of the Holy Spirit.

### 4. Expect the Impossible

**Ephesians 3:20-21** - <sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. NIV

When lives are fully surrendered to God and are trusting Him completely, then God is free to do the impossible - more than we could ask or imagine. When the Power of the Holy Spirit is unleashed in our lives, we will see God do amazing things for His glory.

## CONCLUSION

I believe most Christians are living powerless lives today. We're trying to get by on our own strength... with our own wisdom.

But God wants to do amazing things IN you and THROUGH you. The question is - "Will you let Him?"

And God wants to do amazing things here are Balboa. My desire is for Balboa to be a Spirit-filled and Spirit-empowered church that God can use. I would love to see great things happen here - not because of who we are, but because of who He is. But it starts with each one of you individually living in the power of God's Spirit.

"Without the Holy Spirit's empowerment, we can accomplish nothing.

But WITH the Holy Spirit's empowerment, we can accomplish everything God wants us to.