

EMBRACE POWER and IMAGINATION

Week #3 of a 6-Week Series, "Embrace Your Power"

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So, we are in the third of our six-week series entitled "Embrace Your Power." And what we're doing is having a closer look at co-founder of Unity – Charles Fillmore's -- concept of the 12 powers of man. Fillmore believed that we are all endowed with 12 spiritual attributes that are the 12 spiritual qualities that Jesus fully expressed and demonstrated, and resides in potential in each and every one of us.

He created this framework to help us give a better understanding of when we say things like, "The Spirit of God is in you" and, "The Christ is in you": what that means and can look like in fully expressing it, demonstrating it, and letting that light shine.

How many people have heard of Dr. Norman Vincent Peale who wrote *The Power of Positive Thinking*? Dr. Norman Vincent Peale said of Charles Fillmore, that his concept of the 12 powers -- the Christ qualities -- was the greatest contribution to 21st Christianity, because it really helped us understand and clarify what it means to be more Christ-like; to express our Christ potential; and live up to our Christ standard.

And as amazing as it is -- a concept that has given us clarification and greater understanding -- it is amazing how we are still sometimes afraid to own our own spiritual power. How we sometimes choose to play small: to shy away or run away from our greatness, our genius, our brilliance, our divine nature, and our spiritual power. We hold back from letting our light shine as brightly, you know, because we are afraid. And so, the way to express the way to embody the Christ presence is that we really need to own it.

Everybody remember -- I am sure -- the movie, *The Lion King*? I just love that movie so much! And, you know, remember, Simba, he thought he killed his dad. He thought he killed Mufasa. And he was so upset. He felt so ashamed; so embarrassed. He felt like he'd messed up so badly. He didn't think he had it in him to be the leader of the pride. He did not think that he was good enough. And so he ran away, abdicating his responsibility, his power and his calling.

And it was only until Mufasa came to him as a spirit that he saw in the sky and said those four famous words that transformed him and awakened him to go back and be a leader and do what he was here to do. And the four words are: "*Remember who you are.*"

And they're powerful words of truth that we could feel that impacted Simba, but they're powerful words for all of us: "*Remember who you are.*" Because sometimes it's like we have spiritual amnesia, and we forget our spiritual greatness and our magnificence, even though we are told how prominent it is.

Swami Vivekananda, a Hindu mystic who is credited with helping bring Hinduism to the West, said this. He said, "*The greatest sin, the greatest error we make, is when we say we are weak; when we say that we are sinners; when we say that we are miserable creatures and that we have no power to change or improve our lives.*" Because it is not true! We are not weak; we are not miserable; we are not incapable; we are not powerless or helpless. We are powerful beyond measure.

Jesus expressed his potential so effectively because he remembered who he was. He knew who he was. As Peter said, he was the son of the living God. Jesus said of himself, "I am the light of the world." And every one of us needs to remember who we are.

"I am a child of God."

Together: [with congregants] "*I am a child of God.*" Take a deep breath and own that truth of who you are.

"I embrace my spiritual power."

Together: [with congregants] *"I embrace my spiritual power."* Take a deep breath. Own that!

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Together: [with congregants] *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."* Take a deep breath.

So we are looking at these 12 spiritual powers, these Christ qualities.

Week #1 we looked at faith and strength. Last week we looked at wisdom and love. And today we're going to look at **POWER and IMAGINATION**.

Let's start with **POWER**. Power is the ability and the capacity to get things done and to make things happen. Power is the ability to develop mastery in our skills and in all that we do. And at a deeper level, it is really about developing mastery over ourselves: mastery over our own thoughts; mastery over our feelings, our actions, and our beliefs.

2 Timothy, Chapter 1, Verse 7 says, *"God has not given you a spirit of fear and timidity, but a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline."*

"I have a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline."

Together: [with congregants] *"I have a spirit of power, love, and self-discipline."*

Genesis 1:26 says, *"God has given us dominion and authority over all things!"*

Yay; that's right! And we have dominion and authority, which means we can take command of our lives, our circumstances, and help lead ourselves to make decisions to lead us to the highest and best.

Over and over again, the Bible mentions how powerful we are. And the question is: Are we willing to own that so we can begin to embody and express it?

Now this spiritual faculty of power or mastery lives in us in potential. And when it's not expressed or developed fully, it shows up in our lives as procrastination and laziness; a lack of discipline; and a lack of mental focus. It can also express itself as not being able to control our emotions; you know, a tendency for drama, overreacting, making a mountain out of a molehill. And then, in the extreme, it can show up as constant chaos or an inability to get our stuff together. [Congregants laugh]

When it is overdeveloped – so, when this power of mastery and dominion is overdeveloped -- it shows up as being domineering, controlling, and demanding. And being able to do a certain thing at certain levels, and expecting everyone else to do it at that level, as well. It can express itself as being so disciplined that we're rigid. And in the extreme, being calculating and even manipulative.

So, the dominion and authority and level of mastery is not over people. It's not about dominating and controlling people. It is about embodying and controlling ourselves: embodying that Christ potential, and mastering the spiritual practices; mastering the spiritual concepts; mastering the spiritual principles.

Charles Fillmore said, *"The power of dominion is the authority to rule your own mind and your own circumstance."*

Anybody have an area in your life you felt it was out of control and you couldn't make it any better? You were powerless to make it better? So, we all have that. And yet, we all have this capacity for dominion and mastery, and taking charge of those areas.

So, in whatever area you might be struggling, and for all areas, here are the three ways that we express and embody this power of mastery or dominion and authority.

And the first way is through the **POWER OF INTENTION**: an intention for better and an intention to be better.

So I ask you, what would you like to be better in your life? What area of your life would you like to improve? And where would you like to be more masterful? Is it in your relationship? Is it with your finances? Is it with your spiritual practices? Is it in being more friendly or more positive? Is it in being kinder and gentler? Being a better listener? Is it getting better parking spots? [Congregants laugh] You laugh, but it works for everything. [Congregants laugh] Mastery!

So, intention, to me, is working for the greater and the better by tapping into our spiritual power -- our spiritual belief -- and opening a send a level of possibilities for ourselves and our lives. The power of intention is a place to start if we want to master, improve, or make any area of our lives better.

Anthony de Mello, the Jesuit priest, said, *"You can achieve anything you want, but you must first give up the belief that you can't have it or you can't do it."* And intention is the way to help us move to life mastery by helping us move to self-mastery first.

You know, no matter what the area, no matter what the issue is, it begins with an intention and the belief that it's possible to overcome. That I have dominion and authority in this area of my life. No matter how much I've struggled in the past, I have the ability to overcome. I can do all things through Christ who strengthen to me.

So Step #1 for expressing more dominion and authority in our lives is intention.

And then the second one is to **FOCUS OUR POWER**. And it is about directing our spiritual energies, and being in alignment with all of them, towards our desired and highest good. And not working against ourselves as we can.

Let me give you an example. There's is this guy; he's looking for Mount Olympus. Nobody knows where Mount Olympus is. *"How did I get to Mount Olympus?"*

"I don't know."

"How did I get to Mount Olympus? What's the best way to get to Mount Olympus?"

Nobody knows. He comes up to Socrates and Socrates says, *"The best way to get to Mount Olympus is to make sure that every step you take is in that direction."*

And so, if your Mount Olympus is health, the best way to get to Mount Olympus is make sure every step you take is in that direction. You ever have a goal like health, but you still eat fried foods? Or you don't exercise or get to the gym? Or you smoke, or you do all these things? They're not in the direction of where we really want to go. We keep saying we want it, but sometimes our actions aren't in alignment with what our say.

So our words aren't in alignment with what our actions are. And we need to make sure all of our spiritual energies -- our creative powers -- are moving in the same direction to create what we want.

You say, *"I want a deeper spiritual life. Yeah, but I'm just too busy to pray today."* [Congregants laugh] *"You know, I don't have time to go to church on Sunday."* I mean, we have all of these things that, you know, we say we want this, but we take steps that move us further away.

So I ask you: Is there any area in your life where you're taking steps or actions or speaking in ways that are counter to what you actually want to achieve? A part of mastery is identifying those and beginning to let go of those words and those thoughts and those habits to allow all of our energies to focus on attracting and creating the thing that we actually want.

So, in some areas we might need to choose some new words in the way we speak to ourselves or about that situation, and new positive thoughts, actions and habits.

Marcus Aurelius said, *"Our lives are what our thoughts make it."* And we could easily put in there: our lives are what our words make it, or our actions make it. But there's no question: we are the ones who have dominion and authority to make it.

And another aspect of focusing our power is to **harness our spiritual power through our spiritual practices**. That, if we want to be more effective in our actions, we have to be more effective in allowing the flow of Spirit to move through us. Like being more consistent in our meditation: quieting our mind and being still, and listening to the still, small voice of God. Of immersing our minds in the mind of God. Of surrendering ourselves spiritually, so we can become a greater channel for the flow of God's light and inspiration and wisdom and creativity.

You know, I think it is an important thing to align our spirit with the activities and the words and the things that we want to attract and create, To me, action with intention -- and particularly action with spiritual power behind it -- becomes far more effective and far more efficient.

Everybody heard the 10,000-hour rule? You know, they say that it takes about 10,000 hours of doing something to become at the genius level or the masterful level. And so, to me, at first that sounds daunting, doesn't it? Ten thousand hours! But the principle underlying it is -- what it's saying is -- that effort with intention over time will move you towards mastery and greatness.

The question is: Are you willing to put the effort with intention over time to improve and move your life to some greater area? Whether it's your finances; whether it is your spiritual practice and your spiritual growth ... whatever it might be. Are you willing to invest that time to develop mastery and have dominion and authority over all the areas of your life?

And the third aspect of it is to **infuse your spirit in whatever you do**. To infuse your love, your joy, your passion, your enthusiasm, your energy.

How many people ever had a waiter or a sales person serve you half-heartedly? Anybody? [Congregants laugh] Anybody ever did something half-heartedly? And, of course, the difference between someone serving you whole-heartedly, and you doing something whole-heartedly, it's a world of difference! Something magical happens in us and through us into the activity that we're doing when we invest and infuse our spirits. You know, when we infuse our joy or our love.

You know, I've mentioned this many times: one of my favorite interviews with Don Henley -- because I love the Eagles. And one of the things he said that just stuck; he said, *"We are playing our songs better 30 years later than when they were actually hits."* And so, notice that, for the 30 years, they weren't getting bored. They weren't just going through it mechanically. They were infusing their spirits and their joys even deeper into what they were doing. And it created mastery. It created even more beautiful music. And it created even a greater experience for them playing their music, still with joy after 30 years. There is something magical when we infuse our spirits and energy into whatever it is we do.

Here's what Khalil Gibran in *The Prophet* says about infusing love into what you do: *"And what is it to work with love? It is to weave the cloth with threads drawn from the heart, even as if your beloved were to wear that cloth. It is to build a house with affection even, as if your beloved were to dwell in that house. It is to sow the seeds with tenderness and reap the harvest with joy, even as if your beloved would eat the fruit. It is to charge all things you fashion with a breath of your own spirit."*

Mother Teresa said, *"Not everyone can do great things. But everyone can do small things with great love."* It absolutely makes a difference how much we invest ourselves, and not just do things

mechanically -- do things out of obligation -- but to do things with a joyful and willing spirit and infuse our energy. Powerful things happen.

And that is how we move ourselves from having dominion and authority in all areas; to handle all things; and to be more masterful in our lives. That is through intention and through focus and infusing our spirits.

So, the next power we're going to look at is the power of our **IMAGINATION**.

You know we are created the image and likeness of the Creator. That means we are creators! We are here to create. And you know the greatest power God has given us? The greatest creative power? The power of our imagination.

George Bernard Shaw said, *"Imagination is the beginning of creation."*

Charles Fillmore said, *"It is through the imagination that the formless becomes form."*

Einstein said, *"Imagination is more powerful than knowledge."* You know why? Because knowledge represents "what is," and there's a limited amount of that. Imagination represents everything that "could be," and there is an unlimited amount of that.

In the Book of Proverbs, when it says, *"Where there is no vision, the people perish,"* it's saying how important it is for us to have a vision. Well, what is underlying foundation of a vision? It is our imagination.

Imagination is the ability to create a mental image of a thing that is not here now that you hold in your mind -- that the universe will attract and help manifest it and have it unfold. It is the ability to visualize -- see with our invisible eye, our mind's eye -- greater possibilities beyond what is currently being experienced in our lives.

When it is underdeveloped, our imagination, we cannot see beyond the appearances. We can't see anything better than what's going on in our lives.

Ever had somebody say, *"Hey, you should do this."*

"Oh, I just can't see myself doing that." Even when it's good! *"I can't see myself owning my own plane. I can't see myself making a million dollars."* There are a lot of things we can't see ourselves. And that's what happens with our imagination when it's underdeveloped.

When it's overdeveloped, we daydream all day! [Congregants laugh] Fantasies, wild freaky things that are not productive or lead us to ... We're using our imagination, but not well enough to actually create a real vision.

Another way it manifests is just seeing the negative: the worst-case scenario. You know, worrying about it. And in the extreme, it's like the behavior of a hypochondriac: thinking, *"Everything's wrong; something's wrong; this isn't right; this isn't good."*

Seneca, the Roman philosopher, said, *"We suffer more in our imagination than we do in reality."* Like, you ever make up a story about something? And, in it, you're arguing with somebody and you're giving them a piece of your mind? You're telling them off; we're like driving ourselves nuts. Getting angry; working ourselves up. Nothing happens. [Congregants laugh] We create ourselves a lot of suffering unnecessarily in our lives, which is a misuse and a poor use of our imagination.

Let's have a little fun. Everybody close your eyes. And so, you are standing in the middle of a terrace that is a concrete terrace about 10 feet wide by six feet, and it is on the 15th floor of a high rise. And that terrace has no railing. You're in the center ... You are up so high that you cannot hear the traffic; so high

that all you hear is the air conditioning units and the sound of the wind blowing a bit. So now I want you to look down at your feet and notice what shoes you're wearing. Notice the concrete; is it smooth? Is it rough? What color is it? And so now I want you to raise your head up and look straight ahead. You're looking into the sky; there's some buildings way in the distance. Now I want you to slowly walk to the edge of the terrace. Slowly. And now stop until your toes are right at the edge. And now I just want you to look straight down. And you see the downtown: all the buildings, all the people far. And now I want you to turn around or walk backwards or crawl backwards to the terrace.

Okay, open your eyes for a second. How many people felt it was a little scary? It was a little intense; a little anxiety-causing? Okay; cool. Let's do it again. [Congregants laugh]

You're back at the ... [Laughs] Wait; there's more! Let's go back to ... except this time you have wings. You have wings. So, see yourself. You're standing there in the middle of that terrace: no railing, 15th floor. And you have wings. So, you're standing there in the middle. Now I want you to walk slowly to the edge again, toes right at the edge. Now I want you to bend your knees. And now I want you to jump. And I want you to fly. I want you to soar. I want you to glide. I want you to feel free as a bird. I want you to be in awe of how beautiful the landscape of the city is. I want you to be inspired that other birds -- other flying creatures -- are near you. Feel how good it feels! How exhilarating, how exciting, how fun! And now fly back to the center of the terrace and land and open your eyes.

How many people were not scared this time? But ... in fact, you not only felt safe, you felt exhilarated and excited about it? Interestingly, in our lives we can do that. In our own minds, we can create scary and we can create safe. We can create something negative or we can create something exhilarating and magnificent. The power of your imagination is incredible!

You know, famous athletes -- LeBron James, Jack Nicklaus, Michael Phelps, Tom Brady -- I can just go on and on. Jim Carrey. All kinds of people use the power of visualization to see themselves succeeding and doing well, achieving the things that they want to achieve in their lives.

And so my question is: How well you're using your imagination? Are you using it to be as effective and positive and helpful to create the things you want and move beyond what is before you to something even greater? Or are you allowing it to just scare you and freak you out and create negative images in your mind?

Genesis 13, Verses 14 and 15: *"The Lord said to Abram after Lot had separated from him, 'Lift up your eyes and look from the place where you stand, and as far as you can see to the north and the south and the east and the west. All the land you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.'"*

So, here's what it's saying: Lift up your eyes from where you are right now. Lift up your consciousness from where you are right now. And how far can you see in all directions of your life: your health, your finances, your career, your spiritual life? How far can you see of possibilities for a vision for your life with your imagination? In your career: how far can you see from where you are now? How far can you see in terms of the highest possibilities? In your relationship: how far can you see in terms of level of joy and love and happiness and fulfillment from your health? How far can you see in terms of your sense of well-being? Your energy and vitality? Or can you see in your spiritual life; in your spiritual connection?

Because it says, *"as far as you can see from where you stand ... that is what I will give you."*

And so, our affirmation for today is: *"I am a co-creator with God. I see great possibilities for my life."*

"I am a co-creator with God. I see great possibilities for my life."

Together: [with congregants] *"I am a co-creator with God. I see great possibilities for my life."*

Your imagination allows us to see possibilities.

And here's the other part of using your imagination. The first part is seeing, but the second part is feeling. So, it's one thing to say, okay, see what your career is like beyond this ... but what would it feel like for your career to be that good? See as far as you can see for your health, but what would it feel like for your health to be that good? Feel that about your finances. See it about your finances, but how good would that feel like to have that?

You know, when it says, "*As a man thinketh, so is he,*" that's what we think it says. It actually says, "*As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.*" We just do the thinking part: "*As a man thinketh, so is he.*" But it says, "*As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.*" It means the thought plus the feeling equals the outcome.

And sometimes we forget to infuse things with the power of feeling, but that is a hugely active part of creation: is thought and the feeling. So how would you feel if you had what you wanted? How would you feel with financial success? A spiritual relationship success? Because it makes a difference.

An old man was walking down the road and he saw a frog sitting by the grass. And the frog said to him, "*Kiss me, and I will turn into a beautiful woman and be yours for life.*"

The old man looks around, picks up the frog, puts it in his pocket, walks through a couple of blocks with silence. Then the frog says, "*Did you hear me?*"

And the old man says, "*Yeah, I heard you.*"

He said, "*Aren't you going to 'Kiss me?'*"

"*No, I don't think so.*"

"*Hey, don't you want a beautiful woman?*"

The old man says, "*At this stage of my life, I'd rather have a talking frog!*" [Congregants laugh]

[Simulates 'rim shot' drum roll] Come on! [Congregants laugh] See, he could not imagine something greater for himself! All right.

So, the 12 powers are powerful spiritual attributes that we are all endowed with. They're all within us. The question is: Are we willing to use them and to express them to fulfill our Christ potential? To truly demonstrate and live at that Christ standard and level?

Dominion and authority: we've all been given. Dominion and authority: every area of our lives. And if you want to have more mastery in it, we need to start with intention. And then we need to focus our power and all our creative energies towards it and infuse our spirit.

And then using the creative gift of imagination: use it to see the possibilities as far as you can. And also just feel what it would be like to have the things that we want.

Let's make a commitment to ourselves to live up to the Christ standard; to live our Christ potential. And the way to do that is to embrace our power and mastery and imagination.

God bless you all!