

Finding Courage by Tapping the Mind of God

In 1949, China's ruling party wanted to restructure how every man, woman and child in the entire country was thinking.

The government conducted research and realized that if they could control the stories that were told to one another, as well as the stories that average citizens told themselves, they could actually get the whole nation to think the same way about various subjects, including God and people in the Western Hemisphere.

China implemented "idea training":

Tell them what you want them to hear. Force them into small groups to repeat the words verbatim. Grade them on accuracy of repetition, not whether they believe the words. If they fail the accuracy test, they have to start idea training all over again.

Everyone is on the lookout for those who are opposed to the story. Then, the people are told to listen to words of others at work and in everyday life to see if the stories or everyday speech contradict what is learned in the idea training.

This true story of how small ideas and thoughts can be used to shape our realities, even the futures of nations, gives a glimpse into what your enemy wants to do to you. The smallest thought can lead to your worst defeat or your greatest victory.

Recently I was in Israel and asked an archaeologist to share behind-the-scenes stories about discoveries made since the time of Jesus. She had incredible insight because she had actually worked on certain digs and uncovered artifacts that had been buried for hundreds of years.

Unearthing Your Wrong Ideas

An archaeologist looks for clues about ancient cultures by uncovering material objects and then analyzes the data collected. Your most hidden thoughts can help explain the origin of the beliefs that keep you from facing the giants in your life.

Your thoughts have an archaeological background. Sometimes you just have to dig a bit into why you are thinking a certain way.

Perhaps you've been dwelling on the wrong ideas that were ingrained in the stories of your early childhood. Maybe pop culture and American greed have shaped your thought life more than it should. All of that can change. Allow God to help you rewrite your own story according to His Word. Reading the Bible is a great way to begin intentionally shaping your own thoughts toward the things taking place in your life.

Thoughts just happen. Somewhat like protons and neutrons that can be split, pre-thoughts and notions can be discovered before they turn into words and actions. It just takes a little work on your part. Your action and movement forward always emerge from thoughts and speech.

You are shaped in your thinking for good or bad through several main streams of influence that contribute to your everyday thought life: family, education, social relationships, arts and culture, governments and religion.

God Uses the Underestimated

David was surrounded by negative thoughts, and given his youth and inferior role within his family, he didn't seem like a likely giant killer.

Jesse, his own father, saw him simply as a delivery boy. This is noted not only in the story of David and Goliath, but also

in the prior story about when the prophet Samuel came to anoint one of David's brothers as king—David wasn't even invited to the announcement!

The narrator uses David's life to teach the nation that God selects and uses the underestimated. David's own brothers belittled him as unimportant and called him arrogant, even evil. What are the thoughts your family has put into your head over the years?

The embedded lies of Goliath went deep into the psyche of the Israelite army. David witnessed it firsthand. Goliath, just like the Chinese, used the method of getting the intended audience to repeat thought-shaping phrases.

David had not gone to school to learn the art of killing giants. David also had a major deficiency in his network of friends. At that point in his life, he didn't have any. We see no mentors handing down wisdom to David, and only Jonathan, the son of King Saul, emerged later in his life.

How did David live encouraged and so confident in his God with an unsupportive family life, no education and no social network to shape or mentor him? It's a part of the story few people think about but may be the most significant fact of all. God was David's source of strength.

An army had been put back on their heels and retreated day after day muttering to themselves Goliath's threats against them and their God. David, for reasons only God might know, was the one who saw this pressure on their identity as a people and a nation as an opportunity for God to do something.

David said to Saul, as it's recorded later in 1 Samuel 17:32-37: "Let no man's heart fail because of him. Your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

At the time, David wasn't officially anything to anyone. No one in his family, the spiritual authority in his life, or the

entire army believed he could defeat Goliath. Yet David believed God could do anything.

Tapping the Mind of God

Perhaps you are always underestimated and no one believes you'll be able to defeat any giant.

You must aggressively untangle yourself from bad thinking. Continually feed your mind God thoughts.

If you are frozen from taking action and believe nothing is going to change, it's a sign you are too passive about the situation and believe the threats of the enemy more than the promises of God.

Have you allowed your own intellect, a professor at college or the mainstream news to infiltrate your thought life and indoctrinate you?

Some well-trained religious leaders with sophisticated vocabularies may have convinced you that God is too holy to be bothered with your life.

They've convinced a generation of young and old believers that they are to struggle and muddle through the Christian life! Is that the power of Christ at work in our world today? Defy that giant and hellish thinking!

Defeat the Mental Giants

Jesus came to defeat the giants of death, hell and the grave. When your giant is defeated, you know in your heart you're going to give God credit. You know you won't praise your willpower, creativity or even your education.

Think about your thought archaeology and start eliminating the stories and bad theology that lead you away from an effective Christian life and walk with God.

Move boldly to the frontlines and start living every day to the glory of God. He hasn't given you a spirit of fear, but of love, power and a sound mind (see 2 Tim. 1:7). A mind war is the collision of anti-God thoughts against God thoughts. If you are constantly thinking and living differently than you desire to be, then dig deeper into why you are thinking the way you are. Confront the embedded lies deep within your personal view of God, the world, yourself and the giants around you. Your mind war starts by confronting thoughts that push you into a powerless attitude of retreat and negativity.

Don't let your giant implement idea training into your life. Giants will work overtime to barrage you with threats that are specific to your own situation. His first big milestone in your defeat is to get you repeating the threats that he's planted in your head.

Reject those threats and live like young David, seeing a different reality from what the giant is suggesting and attempting to do.

Stop allowing the mysteries of how and why God would love us to keep you from thinking and walking in that love every day, all to the glory of God.

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Francis Chan shares what true discipleship is and how to deal with thoughts that contradict the Bible at .

If you liked the article, you'll love the book:

In his latest book, *Slings and Stones: How God Works in the Mind to Inspire Courage in the Heart* (Charisma House), Pastor Mike Rakes uses the story of David and Goliath to show how even the underdog can rise to the top by tapping into “God thoughts.” You can find this book wherever Christian books are sold or at .