

# AFTER GOD'S HEART

## (PART 2) A BOLD HEART

Opening Prayer

Group sharing

1. Share some ways Pastor Monte's message last week may have impacted your life this week concerning developing a heart of wild abandon, deep reflection, and stubborn love.
2. In what ways are you creating space for God to build you into a greathearted person?
3. How can we as a group support you?

### Four Stages to Develop a Bold Heart

Build a bold heart in everyday challenges.

*"Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."* -1 Samuel 17:34-37

4. Can you share an experience where you decided to face a life challenge with God's strength, and you saw your heart grow?

It's very interesting what David says in verse 37. David doesn't say, "I learned that I could defeat lions and bears" or, "I learned my own sufficiency." He says, "I learned that God, who delivered me from lions and bears, can deliver me from this challenge too. God can deliver me from any challenge that comes before me," David says, "I've learned that."

Maybe you have a difficult project at work, and you could procrastinate, bail, and get away with it. Maybe you face a parenting challenge. Maybe there's a behavioral trend in one of your children, and it's going the wrong direction, but it will take energy and time to confront it, and there's a part of you that's tempted not to. Maybe you have a grumpy spouse and you could continue to pretend not to notice. You can take the easy route if you want to, and ignore it, a lot of people do. Or you could say, "God, with your help, I'm going after that bear" - knowing your heart will get a little bolder?

5. Is there a current challenge in your life you need to face, and trust that He is faithful and will provide you with what you need that you can say, "God, with your help I'm going after that bear."

# (PART 2) A BOLD HEART

## **Build a bold heart in the face of criticism and opposition.**

*“What will be done for the one who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?’ They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, ‘This is what will be done for the man who kills him.’ When Eliab, David’s oldest brother, heard him speaking with the men, he burned with anger at him, and asked, ‘Why have you come down here? And with whom did you leave those few sheep in the desert? I know how conceited you are and how wicked your heart is; you came down only to watch the battle.’” -1 Samuel 17:26-28*

Can you see why Eliab mistreats David so badly? I’ll tell you what I think. I’ll tell you where I think a lot of misguided criticism comes from. I think for Eliab and the other brothers, Goliath dominated their world. They suffered from a kind of Goliath sickness of the spirit.

And every day that Goliath came out and issued that challenge (it had been happening for 40 days now) Eliab heard it, and shrank back and didn’t respond, and every day he felt a little more like a coward than he did the day before. Every day he died a little bit, for 40 days.

In the face of David’s defiant courage, he felt ashamed. Fear made him unable to love his brother, to receive his brother’s gifts. Fear does that to you. If you cower before a Goliath (whatever your Goliath is) long enough, it eats away at your self-respect.

It might be okay when you’re around other people who are also living in fear, but when you’re with somebody who dares to challenge Goliath, you feel your own cowardice by comparison, and it doesn’t feel good. And to bolster your sense of esteem, you become angry or resentful, or put on an image of false bravado. But it eats away at your soul.

Goliath was killing Eliab one day at a time, so David faces totally his unfair criticism and opposition.

**6. What is your go to response to criticism? How many of you have ever been criticized at least once?**

**7. In what ways have you learned to handle criticism?**

Look at 1 Samuel 17:29. This is all David says, *“Now what have I done?’ said David. ‘Can’t I even speak?’”* He turned away to someone else. He states his position. He doesn’t give in to Eliab, but he doesn’t go get the slingshot either. He just does not allow unfair criticism to have much power in his life. He gets on with his mission.

He says, “God has something for me to do, and I’m not going to get sidetracked.” And his heart got a little bolder.

# (PART 2) A BOLD HEART

Criticism falls into one of two categories: either it's accurate or it's inaccurate, or it's a mixture. And it's just such a simple thing. If it's inaccurate, just dismiss it and move on, turn away. If it's accurate, then fix what needs to get fixed and move on. But don't let it cause you to lose heart. Criticism is a great opportunity for developing boldness, and it will reveal something to you. You're going to face some opposition and criticism when you try to do what's right and honor God; sometimes from your brother; sometimes from someone you know and love. So, you can give up and lose heart, get defensive and spend the rest of your life trying to straighten them out. Or you can say, "This is what I think God is calling me to do as best I can discern it." And then get on with what God has called you to do. You can build a bold heart in the face of criticisms and obstacles.

**You build a bold heart when you resist pressure to conform.**

Saul hears about what's going on, and he has David brought before him. Take a look now at verse 32 and 33. David is brought before Saul. *"David said to Saul, 'Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him.' Saul replied, 'You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him, you are only a young man, and he has been a warrior from his youth.'"*

David has the courage and presence of mind to persuade the king of Israel, that the king is wrong and David is right, and he ought to fight Goliath. And David does precisely that. Saul says in 1 Samuel 17:37 *"Go, and may the Lord be with you."*

*"Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. 'I cannot go in these,' he said to Saul, 'because I am not used to them.' So he took them off. Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine." -1 Samuel 17:38-40*

Saul puts all of his best stuff on David, his championship armor, and David can't even walk. So, David has to do a real bold thing. Remember, Saul is the king, and David is the subject. Saul is an impressive man, head and shoulders above everybody else in Israel. David is a kid; Saul is a warrior; David is a shepherd boy, never been to a battle in his life. And I think it would have been very easy for David to say, "You know, Saul knows more than me. He has been at this longer. I'll do it his way."

## **8. Can you name a time when you conformed but later regretted it?**

David knew something real important. He knew himself, and he knew his enemy, and he knew God, and he knew that when he went to face Goliath, he would have to stand alone. Saul was not going to be there then. His brothers were not going to be there then. Jesse was not going to be there then. David was going to be alone. Often times, when you face your Goliath, you stand alone.

As you face the battles of your life, this is your life. Nobody else can choose your weapon for you — not a teacher, not a boss, not a friend, not a parent. These are your gifts, your children, your time, your possessions, your mind, your calling from God — yours.



# (PART 2) A BOLD HEART

Your battle is immensely important to God. And we live in a world that puts the pressure on, like Saul put it on David. And God just longs for people to have a bold enough heart, to not be squeezed by the world.

**You build a bold heart at the great crisis moments of your life.**

**9. When facing a crisis in your life, where does your mind go first? What are your immediate thoughts?**

*“Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer kept coming closer to David. He looked David over and saw he was little more than a boy, with health and handsome, and he despised him. He said to David, ‘Am I a dog that you come at me with sticks?’ And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. ‘Come here,’ he said, ‘and I’ll give your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!’” -1 Samuel 17:41-44*

*“David said to the Philistine, ‘You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole army will know that there is a God in Israel.’” -1 Samuel 17:45-46*

The summary of the whole story is in verse 45. David says, “You come at me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.”

Whatever your Goliaths are in your life, they are in the category of sword, javelin and spear. And it’s nothing that the Lord God of Israel can’t handle.

**10. In what ways will you be pro-active to build a bold heart for God?**

**11. In what ways can we pray for a Goliath in your life?**