

**Off the Top of My Head. Emailing Update
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By Dave Gibson.

Ideas Rule!

“You Rule!” is a common exclamation of adoration or affirmation among people who are a great deal younger than me. I think it means “You are great.” Or “You are outstanding.” Or “I really appreciate you.” Or “I really admire you.” (And I must admit that “You Rule!” is very good for power, clarity, and economy of words.) The declaration of “ruling” can also be applied to X-Boxes, Extreme Sports, baseball teams, skateboards, software, movies, certain clothing, cars, and any other person, place, or thing that truly rules in the world of people much younger than me. By the way, I find these young people to be wonderful people but I have a little trouble with their language since I am not immersed in their culture and since language learning has always been hard for me.

Let me try one of the “ruling” declarations on you: “Ideas Rule!”

Napoleon once said, “Armies don’t rule people, ideas rule people.”

This is quite a statement from a man who tried to rule with armies.

The essence of this idea is simply that ideas, once accepted by us, then begin to control our actions, emotions, attitudes, and outcomes in our lives.

The Bible supports this idea in statements like “As a man thinks within himself, so he is.” (Proverbs 23:7) and “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:2) What is conforming to the world if not embracing worldly ideas? What is the renewing of our minds if not the work of embracing better, more Biblical, ideas?

Someone has stated this idea another way: “Ideas have consequences.” The major consequence is that ideas rule our lives. From that consequence grow all manner of other consequences.

Bottom line: When we come to believe something that idea begins to rule our life. Imagine how your life might change if you believed one or more of the following things:

- God no longer loves me.
- I am a victim.
- I should have more control around here.
- It is OK to cheat to get ahead.
- It is good to kill non-Muslims because this pleases Allah.
- If I had a lot of money my life would be truly happy.

- I don't love my wife anymore.
- I could be honoring God a lot more than I am.
- I could live a much more fulfilled life if I would stop self-medicating and start serving.
- I am sick.
- I am blessed incredibly.
- This is a terrible job.
- If I had some more training I could make a great impact for good.
- A friend worth keeping would never do that to me.
- If Joe would take this job we could really move this project forward.
- If Jane would marry me my life would be great.

If ideas rule then we have a problem and an application.

The problem is that we seldom examine our ideas critically. We just think our ideas and accept our ideas and live out our ideas. This is remarkable because we examine the contents of food items before we purchase them and we examine socks before we buy them and we examine plates before we eat off them. But we let our ideas just flow right into our minds and live there. One of the wonderful skills of mankind is the ability to think about our thoughts. Unfortunately, this wonderful skill is probably one of our least used skills.

The application is this idea: We need to think critically about our ideas, judge them against God's Word, bounce them off others, and be intentional about where we get our ideas. It really does benefit us to be "idea skeptics." By that I do not mean that we never accept new ideas. All of us are in desperate need of some new ideas. By being an "idea skeptic" I mean that we take a critical look at each idea to be sure it is true before we stuff it in our brain and allow it to rule our entire life.