

# War, Thoughts, and God



By Erwin Braker

I love my country and honor all brave citizens who have offered their lives in the line of duty. For all its many faults, the United States has been, and remains, the greatest country in the world. Our religious passions and diversity have helped us maintain a balance between good capitalism and bad capitalism, while the rest of the world tried every other “ism” and fell behind.

The pursuit of happiness, which started as a lofty principle in our country’s founding documents, has grown into a mass pursuit of happiness made possible by an age of abundance inconceivable to my grandparents’ generation. (See *The Age of Abundance*, by Brink Lindsey.) Yet, in the midst of all this good news, we find our nation polarized around another unpopular war.

The potential for a world calamity is real if weapons of mass destruction reach the hands of religious zealots; but what are *we* telling the world about our national values and zeal if we remain in a fiasco that has already resulted in the maiming and killing of more than two million Iraqi civilians?

As a serious student of *A Course in Miracles*, I naturally turn to it during such troubled times. Recently, I also looked back on articles in *Voyages* that address how each of us view the question, “What is God?” In one recent article, Brad Miller said he was convinced he would never know what God is. He was not unhappy about this because it allowed him to stay open to see God in new ways. This was insightful, and with his permission, I added his article to my ACIM web site ([www.acimabstract.org](http://www.acimabstract.org)). I felt Brad was describing the God of the *Course*, an impersonal God who some of our founding fathers like Benjamin Franklin could have easily believed in because they were deists.

At this point in the first draft of this article, I started building a case that if those Islamic “fanatics” could only have *the* God of the *Course*, all would be better. I came up with more words to show how my God was better than every one else’s God, and asked a friend to read my first draft. She didn’t

like it. We began to argue. Abruptly, I quietly asked, as the *Course* recommends, to see things differently. We returned then to joy.

The first thoughts that entered my mind as I awoke the next morning were these: “Forgive them for they know not what they do.” This shocked me back into right-mindedness, and I began thinking of other ACIM quotes like: “Seek not to change the world...” The suicide bombers are not for me to change. The only kingdom I must rule is *my* mind, not theirs. Another quote that came to mind was, “Forget this... course and come with empty hands unto your God,” and finally, “A universal theology is impossible, but a universal experience is not only possible but necessary.”

I try each day to give a prayer of gratitude for all the relationships in my life. I am especially grateful for those close enough to “push my buttons,” helping me to see parts of the kingdom I must rule that would otherwise remain unconscious. I’m going to ask my friend the next time I get carried away with “holier than thou” thoughts about the *Course* to simply say, “Forget the *Course!*”

This is not to say we should all stop examining our beliefs from time to time to see if they still serve us. An unexamined belief can be a dangerous thing. Consider this quote from *Your Owner’s Manual* by Burt Hotchkiss; the words in parentheses are my own: “Your life is governed by what is true...(whether you believe it or not) but your experience of life is governed by what you believe (whether it is true or not).”

The first part of the sentence explains why the *Course* says you need not believe its ideas; you are merely asked to apply them. Truth can only be experienced. The second part of the quote explains why your beliefs and thoughts are important. This is why so many books like the *Course*, *The Secret* and Wayne Dyer’s latest book, *Change Your Thoughts - Change Your Life* all emphasize the importance of controlling our thoughts.

When your inner peace is threatened, either ask Holy Spirit’s help to see things differently; or for my more numerous Christian friends, ask, “What would Jesus do?” ■

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