

The soldier looked at his friend, and said, "So all this fighting of wars is for nothing then?"

"War may at times seem like it is an answer to a problem, but in fact is a problem in itself," answered the friend.

"I wonder what the mother of the last person I killed is feeling with her son dead?" said the soldier, with his head hung low.

"Think of all the mothers who have lost children in wars and think, is their suffering a price worth paying?" said the friend.

"What to do then?" said the soldier, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"The answer is to live to the Commandments of God, not of men. When people do this, there will be less suffering in the world and more love," suggested the friend.

"People will never do that; it's too hard," stated the soldier.

"Which is better; to try to love, or to live in hate and sin? If you try to love, life will become joy-filled. Surely it is worth making the effort, even though it may be harder to love, so that your life can be happy rather than sad," said the friend.

"But it would take everyone in the world to try to do that, to stop the problems we have," said a now despairing soldier.

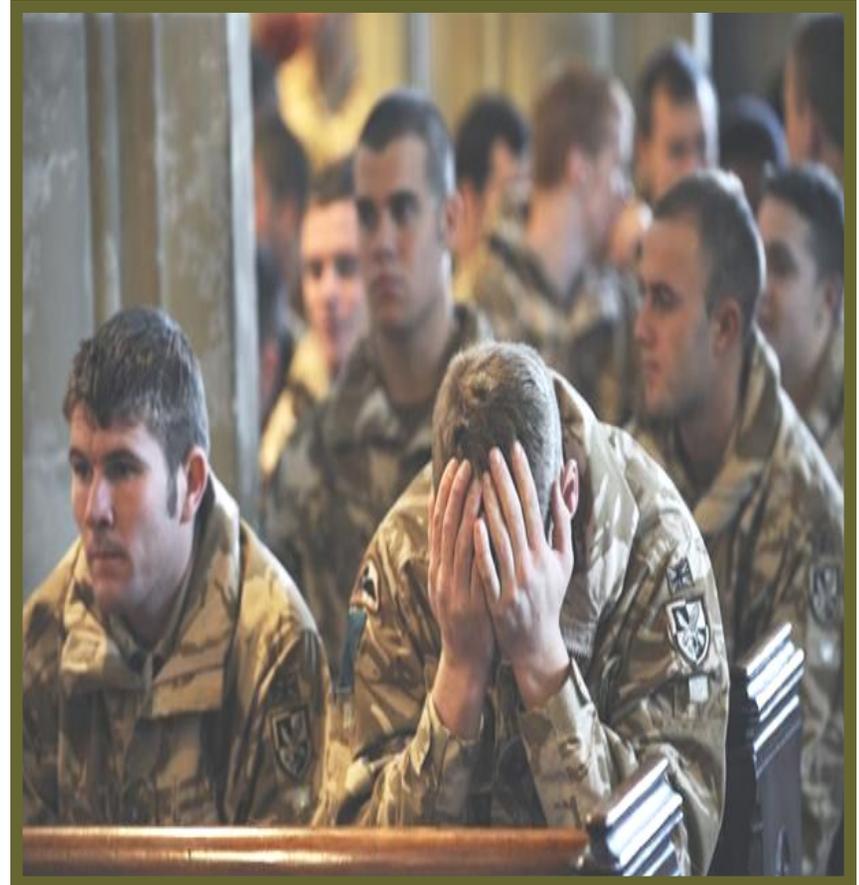
"Yes, but it begins with you, and then, the influence the change in your life has on others, will help them change. First though, you must change and then that is when others will," answered the friend.

"I think I might not kill anymore," said the soldier. "And I think that war is not for me anymore, but I wonder what I will do?"

"Try to start loving, and then leave it in God's hands," said the friend.

"In God's hands. I never thought of that, but now maybe it is time I did and maybe it is time the world did," said the soldier with a peaceful smile on his face, as he began to feel the truth of life touching his heart... the truth he had forgotten: **to love God and to love each other.** + + +

THE SOLDIER



*"In God's hands.
I never thought of that,
but now maybe it is time I did and
maybe it is time the world did,"
said the soldier with a peaceful smile on his face,
as he began to feel the truth of life touching his heart...
the truth he had forgotten:
TO LOVE GOD AND TO LOVE EACH OTHER.*

THE SOLDIER

from Stories of Love
Jesus to Alan Ames

A soldier was discussing with his friends the number of people he had killed. He spoke as if the people were objects, not human beings. He spoke with no emotion in his voice and discussed the subject matter-of-factly, as if it was only a job he was doing.

One of his friends smiled at him as he spoke; it was not a smile of humor or of support, it was a smile of pity. "Don't you feel anything for the people you have killed?" asked the friend.

"No, they are nothing to me but the enemy," replied the soldier.

"Do you ever think about their families? They have mothers, wives, husbands, children. Like you, they have friends who love them. Doesn't it ever bother you that you are taking someone away from their loved ones?" asked the friend, with concern in his voice.

"No, not at all. It's kill or be killed. They are the enemy, and they mean little to me!" said the soldier in a firm voice.

"I suppose the enemy thinks the same about you then, and they would not care if you are taken from your loved ones," said the friend.

"That's war," stated the soldier.

"Well, surely that must say to you that war is wrong, for it takes away your respect for life?" asked the friend.

"I only respect my superiors and my fellow soldiers," said the soldier, with a steely look in his eye.

"How did you ever get like this? You used to be so gentle when you were younger," wondered the friend.

"There is no room for gentleness in this world. It gets you nowhere," said the soldier, with a tone that was filled with a suggested knowledge of life.

"And killing does?" asked the friend.

"Killing is necessary to defeat evil, so the good countries can triumph in this world," replied the soldier.

"But who decides which are the good or the bad? Surely that is subject to whatever influence a person has put upon them. I am sure your enemies think they are the good, just as you think you are. So who is it who decides which is good or bad? Sometimes it may be a government with an agenda of its own that conflicts with another government, and when an agreement cannot be reached between the two they often send their men to die. So it seems, in many cases, it is governments that decide what is right or what is wrong, and it is the people who pay the price for their governments' decisions," suggested the friend.

The soldier stared at his friend, saying, "Well who else could we trust to tell us what is right or wrong?"

"If you rely on governments, you rely on people, and people can make mistakes, and governments mistakes can often cost lives," said the friend.

"Well, who then should we listen to? Without governments there would be no order, no security, and no peace in the world," stated the soldier.

"Where is order, security, and peace? Look around the world and see so many conflicts, so much suffering, and so many in need. What security is that?"

The friend remained silent as the soldier sat thinking for a while, then he carried on.

"And it seems you have allowed yourself to be blinded to the true values of life, which are to respect each other, to love one another, and to treat each other as you would expect to be treated. When you lose these values, it is then you get drawn into accepting and believing so many of the wrongs that abound in the world, wrongs that cause the world to suffer."