



# Faith Under Fire: An Army Chaplain's Memoir

*Roger Benimoff, Eve Conant*

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“Running away from God doesn’t work. I had tried.”

—Roger Benimoff

As he left for his second tour of duty as an Army chaplain in Iraq, Roger Benimoff noted in his journal: I am excited and I am scared. I am on fire for God...He is my hope, strength, and focus.

But not long after returning to Iraq, the burdens of his job—the memorial services for soldiers killed in action, the therapy sessions after contact with the enemy, the perilous excursions “outside the wire” while under enemy fire—re-began to overwhelm him. Amid the dust, heat, and blood of Iraq, Benimoff felt the pillar of strength he’d always relied on to hold him up—his faith in God—begin to crumble.

Unable to make sense of the senseless, Benimoff turned to his journal. What did it mean to believe in a God who would allow the utter horror and injustice of war? Did He want these brave young men and women to die? In his darkest moment, Benimoff wrote: Why am I so angry? I do not want anything to do with God. I am sick of religion. It is a crutch for the weak.

Benimoff’s spiritual crisis heightened upon his return home to Fort Carson, Colorado. He withdrew emotionally from wife and sons, creating tensions that threatened to shatter the family. He was assigned to work at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where he counseled returning soldiers suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder—until he was diagnosed himself with PTSD.

Finding himself in the role of patient rather than caregiver, connecting as an equal with his fellow sufferers, and revisiting scriptural readings that once again rang with meaning and truth, he began his most decisive battle: for the love of his family and for the chance to once again open his heart to the healing grace of God.

Intimate and powerful, drawing on Benimoff’s and his wife’s journals, *Faith Under Fire* chronicles a spiritual struggle through war, loss, and the hard process of learning to believe again.

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