

we must all fight within ourselves. In this way we seek to be more like our Master, Jesus Christ.

“We do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal”. “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood”.

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:12-17

6. WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF EVERYONE IN A COUNTRY REFUSED TO FIGHT?

People sometimes ask what would happen if everyone took this attitude and refused to fight. Then wicked nations would be able to destroy others and take over the world. This is not a sensible question. If every single person in one nation really did fully accept the word of God and put their trust in Him, then He would defend that nation so that they would not be destroyed. Until Jesus comes back to the earth, however, there will not be a nation where everyone truly believes in God and refuses to fight for that reason.

7. WHAT SHOULD THE BELIEVER DO IF CALLED ON TO FIGHT?

Make sure that you understand and believe the principles involved. Pray for God's help and guidance.

In some countries it is possible when called up to fight to register with the authorities as a “conscientious objector”, a person who, on grounds of conscience, refuses to fight or to come under military orders. If you do this you may then be allowed to help your country by working in a hospital or in agriculture. In other countries this privilege is not recognised

and believers may be sent to prison or even beaten and killed.

It is best to try and register and, if possible, to explain the reasons why you cannot take part in any violent activity or work under military command. It is important to ensure that your life is consistent with the principles you believe. You should therefore be committed to the service of God and to your nearest ecclesia and should not have an occupation which involves violence.

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BASIC BIBLE TRUTHS

Should a Christian Fight?

BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT WAR AND AGGRESSION

When you have read this leaflet you will know the answers to these questions:

1. Should a Christian ever disobey authority?
2. What did Jesus teach about aggression and fighting wars?
3. What should a believer do if called on to fight?

1. WHAT IS A BELIEVER'S DUTY TO THE STATE?

The Bible teaches that, as far as possible, it is the duty of every believer to obey magistrates, governments and men and women in authority. Those who follow Jesus Christ must try to follow his example by obeying the laws of the country in which they live. This means behaving within the law, paying taxes even if we do not agree with them, and being good conscientious citizens.

“Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s”. “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities”. “Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey”.

Read Matthew 22:16-21 (this means Matthew chapter 22, verses 16 to 21); Romans 13:1-9; Titus 3:1,2

2. SHOULD A CHRISTIAN EVER DISOBEY AUTHORITY?

There is only one exception to the rule of obedience and that is when the laws of men contradict the laws of God. In that case the believer must put God first. This is because when people are baptized into Jesus Christ, they give their allegiance to him. Believers have promised to serve God and therefore they cannot give unreserved service to someone else.

The Bible describes believers as “strangers” and “pilgrims”. That is to say, they do not belong to any country in this world, but to the Lord Jesus Christ. If, therefore, the authority says that a person must fight, the believer will be bound by his allegiance to Jesus Christ to refuse.

“You are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world”. “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers”. “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord”. “For our citizenship is in heaven from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour”. “They were strangers and pilgrims on the earth ... they seek a homeland”.

Read John 15:19 & 17:14-16; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 & 7:1; Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 11:13,14 & 13:14

3. WHY DID GOD’S PEOPLE FIGHT IN OLD TESTAMENT DAYS?

In the Old Testament the people of Israel often went to war against other nations. They did this because God told them to do it. God commanded Israel to fight on certain occasions for a special reason which does not apply today.

All the earth belongs to God. The nations do not worship God in the way that they should and do not respect His laws. The reason that Israel of the Bible were to fight was that God was using them to reclaim some of the earth for Him. He commanded Israel to destroy nations who were very wicked and He helped them in this work. They were to establish a kingdom in which God would be glorified.

Israel failed in this work. They too became disobedient to God and wicked. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes back to the earth, he will fight against the nations to remove all wickedness. He may then ask believers to help him. Then it will be right for them to do so. Jesus will not fail in his work. In the meantime, however, it is wrong for his followers to be involved in fighting of any kind.

“All who take the sword will perish by the sword”. “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight”.

Read Matthew 26:52; John 18:36

4. WHAT DID JESUS TEACH ABOUT AGGRESSION?

Jesus taught that it is wrong to resist evil with violence. His law in the Sermon on the Mount says that we should not stand up for our rights nor fight back when

someone wrongs us. He said that rather we should pray for such people and always try to do good.

In this, Jesus was the perfect example. He allowed himself to be arrested, scornfully treated and mocked, beaten and crucified, even though he was sinless and did not deserve any such treatment.

“Blessed are the meek”. “I tell you not to resist an evil person”. “Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you”. “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps ... who when he was reviled, did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but committed himself to him who judges righteously”.

Read Matthew 5:6,7,38-48; 1 Peter 2:19-24

5. IS IT RIGHT TO FIGHT A HOLY WAR?

No. All countries who go to war believe that they are right to do so. Some feel that they have God on their side. Others believe that they have a just cause for fighting. Because men and women are human they are not able to see things from God’s point of view. They may feel that they are right, but in God’s eyes they may be wrong. There is no such thing as a “just” cause for war in our day and no war today is holy in God’s view.

The only warfare in which it is right for the believer to be involved at the present time is the war against his own sinful desires. This is a spiritual warfare which we must all fight within ourselves. In this