



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Find time to explore these questions as a family after each session.

Session 1

- Do you believe that war is a violation of the Sixth Commandment (You shall not murder)?
- What is the difference between killing and murder?
- Is killing ever OK?
- What kinds of things do we do that can cause “murder in our hearts” instead of physical murder?
- Are these a violation of the Sixth Commandment?

Session 2

- What is a holy war?
- How has the idea of a holy war been used to justify wars throughout history?
- How is it being used now?
- Do you think that any specific war is or was sanctioned by God? Why or why not?

Session 3

- Are there ever good reasons for war?
- What might they be?
- What are the wrong reasons to go to war?
- How are these different from the “good reasons”?

Session 4

- Why do we hate?
- What causes us to hate?
- Can we choose to act out of love instead of hate? Even when dealing with those who frighten us?
- What would acts of love toward our enemies look like?



DECLARATIONS

¹ Resolved, that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved.

² In your hands, my fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend" it.

³ As war exists, and, notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself, we are called upon by every consideration of duty and patriotism to vindicate with decision the honor, the rights, and the interests of our country . . .

⁴ It is a war against all nations. American ships have been sunk, American lives taken, in ways which it has stirred us very deeply to learn of, but the ships and people of other neutral and friendly nations have been sunk and overwhelmed in the waters in the same way. There has been no discrimination. The challenge is to all mankind. Each nation must decide for itself how it will meet it.

⁵ The long-known and the long-expected has thus taken place. The forces endeavoring to enslave the entire world now are moving toward this hemisphere. Never before has there been a greater challenge to life, liberty, and civilization.

⁶ The attack upon Korea makes it plain beyond all doubt that Communism has passed beyond the use of subversion to conquer independent nations and will now use armed invasion and war. It has defied the order of the Security Council of the United Nations issued to preserve international peace and security.

⁷ This air action has now been carried out with substantial damage to the boats and facilities. Two U.S. aircraft were lost in the action. After consultation with the leaders of both parties in the Congress, I further announced a resolution expressing the unity and determination of the United States in supporting freedom and in protecting peace in southeast Asia.

⁸ At this moment, our brave servicemen and women stand watch in that distant desert and on distant seas, side by side with the forces of more than 20 other nations. They are some of the finest men and women of the United States of America. And they're doing one terrific job.

⁹ Our nation enters this conflict reluctantly, yet our purpose is sure. The people of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder.



SITUATIONS

A new energy supply is found in an area held in trust by several countries including yours. One country is claiming the area as its own and threatening to invade the area. What do you do?

An ally country suffers from a natural disaster. You want to send aid, but a neighboring country is threatening to attack any aid groups. Do you still send aid?

A new dictator assumes power in a country developing nuclear weapons. The dictator has threatened to attack neighboring countries unless they hand over control to him. What do you do?

A new trade agreement is being discussed between your nation and another country. Protests against the treaty have turned violent and riots are happening. The country's government asks for your help subduing the protests. Do you help or not?

Two countries are involved in a war. One navy attacks and sinks a ship carrying humanitarian aid. Citizens of your country were aboard the ship. What do you do?

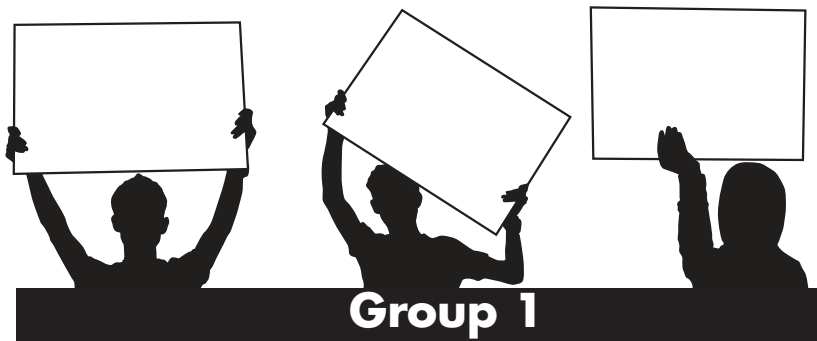
A region of a country wants to be an independent nation. The ideology of the leading group in that region is very similar to yours. It asks for military training and weapons. Doing so would further strain a bad relationship between your nation and the existing government in the other country. What do you do?

A peace treaty prohibits a certain country from having its own military. It is discovered that this country is rebuilding its military. What do you do?

You discover that a country is secretly trying to ally with another country. Part of the alliance includes providing the means for the second country to reconquer lands that belong to you. What do you do?



A FULLER ACCOUNT



Group 1

Exodus 7:1–7

Exodus 14:1–9, 15–29

Deuteronomy 2:26–35

Numbers 22



Group 2

Exodus 23:20–23

Joshua 6:1–5, 15–21

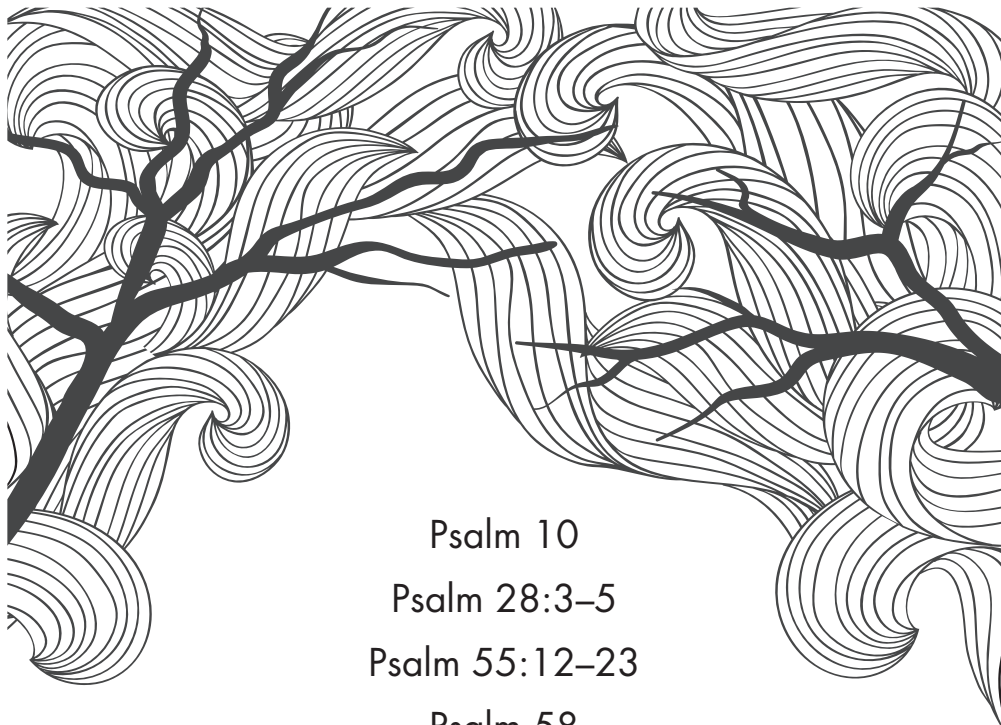
Joshua 9:1–2; 10:16–21

Exodus 23:38–33



IMPRECATORY PSALMS

Imprecate means to invoke curses or evil. Imprecatory psalms are psalms or the sections of psalms in which the psalmist calls for God to punish those who have caused harm to the person or to Israel. Listed below are some examples of imprecatory psalms.



Psalm 10

Psalm 28:3–5

Psalm 55:12–23

Psalm 58

Psalm 69:19–28

Psalm 140:9–11



TODAY'S FAITH STATEMENT

And if it is necessary to preserve the safety of the people by war, let him wage war in the name of God; provided he has first sought peace by all means possible, and cannot save his people in any other way except war. And when the magistrate does these things in faith, he serves God by those very works which are truly good, and receives a blessing from the Lord.

—The Second Helvetic Confession (5.256)



Questions for Ecclesiastes 3:1–8

If God created every “time,” then are all times of war preordained by God?

How do we normally determine if a time of war was right or wrong?

According to the faith statement, how would we determine when a time of war is appropriate?

Who makes the determination that war is right?

After reading both the Scripture passage and the faith statement, do you believe there is ever a good reason for war?

Is this a change in your opinion?

Questions for Romans 13:1–7

According to Paul, who has the right to determine whether a country goes to war?

Why do those persons have that right?

According to Paul, what should the response of the citizens be?

How does that coincide with the faith statement?

If a “magistrate” has not done everything to avoid war and calls for war, what do you think our response as Christians should be?

After reading both the Scripture passages and the faith statement, do you believe there is ever a good reason for war?

Is this a change in your opinion?



JUST WAR

-  A just war can be waged only as a last resort. All non-violent options must be exhausted before the use of force can be justified.
-  A war is just only if it is waged by a legitimate authority (those government officials given authority to declare war and deploy troops). Even if a cause is just, action cannot be taken by those without the proper authority.
-  A just war can be fought only to put right a wrong suffered (for example, self-defense against an armed attack). A just war can be fought only with “right” intentions: the only permissible objective of a just war is to remedy the injury.
-  A just war must have a reasonable chance of success. Deaths and injury incurred in a hopeless cause are not morally justifiable.
-  The ultimate goal of a just war is to re-establish peace. More specifically, the peace established after the war must be preferable to the peace that would have prevailed if the war had not been fought.
-  The violence used in the war must be proportional to the injury suffered. Excessive violence for the sake of revenge is prohibited.
-  The weapons used in war must distinguish between combatants and non-combatants. Civilians are never permissible targets of war, and every effort must be taken to avoid killing civilians.



TODAY ON BIBLE TALK



Host: Good morning and welcome to Bible Talk! My name is _____. Today is a very special day for our show. We are starting a new series about the family conflicts found in the Bible. We are honored to have with us the brothers who started it all. Let's hope they don't start a fight here! Please join me in welcoming Cain and Abel!

Cain and Abel, welcome to our show. Let's start with a few questions.

Abel, will you tell us in your own words, what happened that fateful day?

Why do you think your brother would do such a horrible thing?

Cain, do you have anything to say about your actions?

Who is really to blame here?

Let's see if any of our audience has some questions for you. Audience?



MY WILL OR THY WILL?

Answer the questions and use your answers to form your prayer request.

1. Who is someone you are in conflict with right now?
2. What is the conflict about?
3. Is there something you did or didn't do that added to the conflict?
4. What do you think God would want you to do?
5. What do you want to ask God's help for in this conflict?

Write out a prayer request from your answers that you feel comfortable sharing with the whole group.

PRAYER

○ Lord Jesus Christ, you came to the world that we may know God's love and forgiveness. We pray today that you will help us to take seriously the pain we feel because of divisions.

We pray to God as you prayed. Thy will be done.

We ask that you take away all hatred and prejudice.

Not my will, by thy will be done.

We ask that you take away the arrogance that infects our hearts.

Not my will, by thy will be done.

Break down the walls of pride that separate us from one another.

Not my will, by thy will be done.

Unite us in the bonds of your love, and help us through our struggles.

(Students can now share their prayer requests.)

○ God, we know that in your realm no sword is drawn. Anger does not hold sway. Hatred has no place. Help us to lay aside all our angers, fears, and envies that we may see your will for us instead of our own.

Not my will, by thy will be done. Amen.

