

Military Christian Fellowship of Australia

The Hard Questions Series

Topic One: Can you be a Christian in the military?

Week 1:

Introduction

At some stage military Christians consider the moral dilemma of being part of a profession that intentionally, efficiently, and effectively, orchestrates violence. And sometimes military Christians are viewed with some suspicion by non-military Christians who are sold a doctrine of pacifism by uneducated sectors of the body of believers. This study examines what God says about whether Christians can serve in the military.

Is “murder” and “killing” the same? Do any circumstances justify killing?

- † God detests violence when it is for corrupt purposes, see Gen 6:11 – 13.
- † God’s law precludes murder - Ex 20:13.
- † Is there a difference between Cain vs Able and David vs Goliath?

Should we be peacemakers or pacifists?

- † God blesses *workers* for peace - Matt 5:9.
- † Be prepared to *fight* for what is right - Luke 22:36.
- † We should always turn the other cheek (Matt 5:39) but what about turning a blind eye to others being wronged? The bible teaches that when the wrong is done to us then we should forgive, but when the wrong is done to others we should act (John 8:1 – 11).

Week Two:

Does the New Testament preclude military service?

- † The Capernaum Centurion from Matt 8 and Luke 7 – faith like no other.
- † Centurion from Luke 23:47 - Catholic Church history knows him as “Saint Longinus” and asserts he was an early leader in Rome. Is immortalized by a statue in the Basilica in Rome.
- † Cornelius from Acts 10 – the doorway to world ministry.
- † The Roman officer at Paul’s scourging in Acts 22 – correcting the wrong.
- † Roman commander protects Paul from a Jewish plot in Acts 23 – doing his duty.
- † Julius stops the murder of Paul and the prisoners during the shipwreck in Act 27 – not on his watch.

Military service used as New Testament examples of good character

- † The “Armour of God” – Eph 6:11-17.
- † Fighting for what is right – 1 Tim 6:12.
- † Enduring hardship – 2 Tim 2:3 – 4.
- † Aren’t our Defence values really eternal Christian values: Sacrifice? Service? Selflessness?

Conclusion

God expects Christians to fight for what is righteous and just. The Bible is replete with military examples and imagery, in both Old and New Testaments. Whilst every Christian must make their own ethical decisions about whether they wish to be involved in the intentional use of violence, there is clearly no barrier in God’s eyes to service in the military.