

# FOR THE LOVE OF GOD + -

## CURBING VIOLENCE: JUST WAR AND THE PEACE OF GOD

This segment comes from **EPISODE 1: WAR + PEACE**.

From Jesus' command to "love your enemies" to the idea of "Holy War" is a giant leap. Yet from the Old Testament through to the Crusades and the inquisitions, Christian history is full of violence. Has Christianity been a major contributor to war? How have the followers of a crucified leader managed to get things so wrong? This segment looks at the progression from the early Christians shunning all violence, to the idea of a "Just War", and ultimately the "Holy War" of the Crusades.



### THEME QUESTION

Jesus taught his followers to *love their enemies*. In light of this, do you think someone trying to follow Jesus should ever be involved in a war? Why or why not?



### ENGAGE

1. Look at the diagram of Touch Football rules [here](http://cpx.video/touchfootball) ([cpx.video/touchfootball](http://cpx.video/touchfootball)).
  - a. What is the purpose of having clear rules for sport?
  - b. Why is having clear rules in sport a good thing?
2. List three other examples in society where having clear rules is important.
3. Find or draw an image that represents something about the phrase "Just War".
4. What do you think the term "Just War" means? Can you think of any circumstances where violence or war might be justified and/or necessary?

## UNDERSTAND AND EVALUATE



**WATCH** the segment: “Curbing Violence: Just War and the Peace of God”  
([cpx.video/peace](https://cpx.video/peace))

1. Are these statements TRUE or FALSE?
  - a. Christians have always been part of wars.
  - b. Just war theory assumes that going to war is a good option.
  - c. Many early Christians died for their beliefs.
  - d. Most of the Roman emperors were Christians.
  - e. Augustine was very pro-war.
2. Summarise Augustine’s teachings about Christians and warfare. How was this different to the actions of the first Christians?



3. Rowan Williams describes Augustine’s teaching that a war could be just as a “grudging concession”. What about the context in which this theory was developed do you think made Augustine willing to make this concession?

4. Nigel Biggar outlines some of the conditions of a “Just War” as:

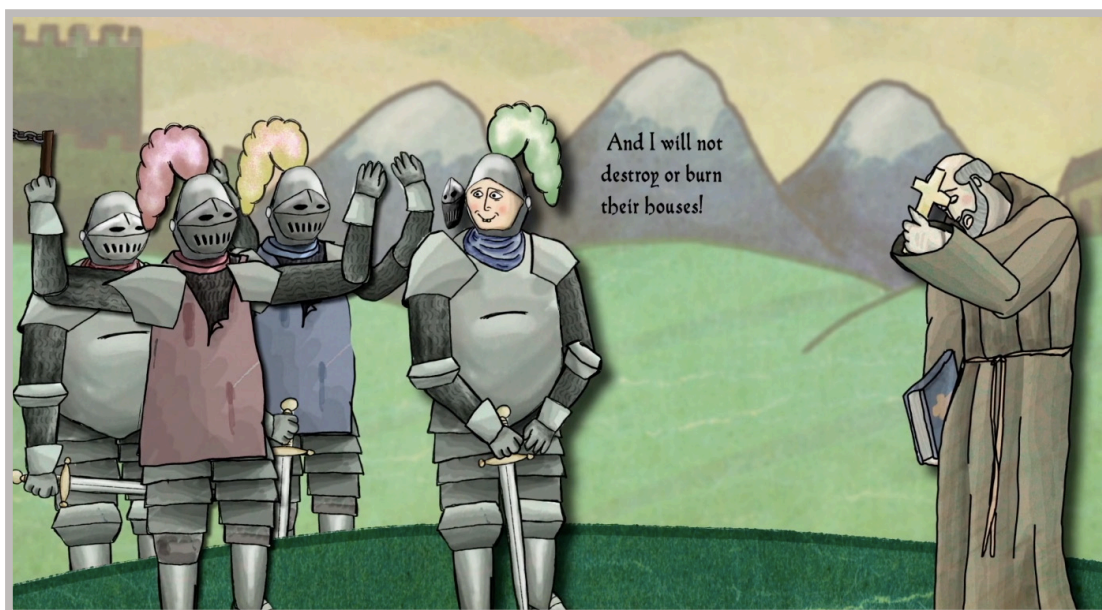
- IT MUST HAVE A JUST CAUSE
- IT MUST BE FOUGHT WITH THE RIGHT INTENTION (E.G. RECTIFYING INJUSTICE)
- IT MUST BE THE LAST RESORT, AFTER ALL OTHER REASONABLE MEANS OF RESOLVING THE CONFLICT HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED

a. What other conditions do you think should be on this list?

b. Look at [this list \(cpx.video/conditions\)](#) of Conditions for a Just War developed by later Christians. Choose one of the conditions listed, and explain why you think it was included

5. List some of the things Christian leaders in medieval Europe did in order to try to curb violence.

6. Using the image below, write in a speech bubble some of the things you remember that the knights swore in the animation.



7. How did “Just War” theory, as well as medieval programs such as the Truce of God and the Peace of God help to limit violence in medieval Europe? How may they later also have served to legitimise the “Holy War” of the Crusades?

## BIBLE FOCUS

### READ Romans 12:17-21.

1. In what manner are God’s people instructed to live?
2. Why are Christians commanded to not take revenge?
3. What is significant about the phrase “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you” in v.18?
4. How could this passage help those in positions of power decide whether to get involved in war or conflict?

### READ Isaiah 2:1-5.

**CONTEXT:** This passage is written by the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, and through poetic, metaphorical language, gives a picture of what God’s future kingdom will look like.

5. Draw a picture to represent this scene.
6. What might this passage show us about how God sees war and peace?

## APPLY

1. “Just War Theory is a positive contribution Christianity has had on the world.” Fill in the table below with supporting and opposing arguments in response to this statement.

For	Against

- How could the principles of “Just War” theory be applied to modern-day conflicts? Do you think they are good principles?
- Read this article from the Catholic Herald in the UK, “[Just war theory should be abandoned, says conference hosted by Vatican](#)” ([cpx.video/vatican](#)). Imagine you have the opportunity to present to Pope Francis your own submission about whether the church should preserve or abandon the “just war” theory. Write the letter you would write to the Pope.

## EXTEND

- Read this article by Dr Greg Clarke, “[Just War and Just Peace: Trying to be Just](#)” ([cpx.video/justwar](#)). Write a ten-point summary of what you learn.
- Consider examples of wars and conflicts in the last 150 years. Choose one to research. Apply the principles of “Just War” theory, and outline whether you think this conflict was justifiable based on the *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bellum* criteria.

Criteria	Example of War
<p>Justness of war, before the fact (<i>jus ad bellum</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the cause just?</li> <li>Is the only intention to restore just peace?</li> <li>Is the war a last resort? Have all other reasonable avenues been explored?</li> <li>Is the decision to go to war made by the highest authority?</li> <li>Is there reasonable hope of success?</li> </ol>	
<p>Justness in war, during conflict (<i>jus in bello</i>):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is the war proportional to the offence?</li> <li>Is non-combatant immunity respected?</li> </ol>	

- Write a 300-word article for an online news site outlining your findings from the research that you have summarised in the table above.