

Dr. James S. Spiegel, Christian Ethics, Session 16, War

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Spiegel, Christian Ethics, Session 16, War, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. James S. Spiegel's Christian Ethics session on war explores the **moral permissibility of warfare**. The lecture begins by defining war and then outlines **three primary perspectives**: just war theory, the necessary evil view, and pacifism, focusing particularly on the latter two. **Different forms of pacifism** are examined, alongside philosophical and biblical arguments supporting this stance. The discussion then shifts to **just war theory**, detailing the conditions for morally justifiable entry into war (**jus ad bellum**) and ethical conduct during warfare (**jus in bello**), concluding with considerations for just conduct after war (**jus post bellum**).

2. 20 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Spiegel, Christian Ethics, Session 16 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Theology → Apologetics → Christian Ethics).



Spiegel_XnEthics_S
ession16.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Spiegel, Christian Ethics, Session 16, War

Briefing Document: The Ethics of War

Overview: This briefing document summarizes the main themes and arguments presented by Dr. James S. Spiegel in Session 16 of his Christian Ethics course, focusing on the ethical considerations surrounding war. The session explores various perspectives on the morality of war, including pacifism and just war theory, and delves into the specific criteria within just war doctrine (jus ad bellum, jus in bello, and jus postbellum).

Key Themes and Ideas:

1. Defining War and Initial Perspectives:

- Dr. Spiegel begins by defining war as generally understood as "an armed conflict between nations," but acknowledges the problematic nature of this definition as it excludes conflicts with revolutionary or terrorist groups. He cites Karl von Clausewitz's definition of war as "an act of violence intended to compel our opponent to fulfill our will."
- Three general perspectives on the morality of war are introduced:
- **Just War Theory:** Under certain conditions, war is morally justified.
- **Necessary Evil View:** War is sometimes necessary to prevent a greater evil but is always evil in itself. Dr. Spiegel notes the lack of proponents for this view due to the inherent difficulty in defending evil.
- **Pacifism:** War is never morally justified.
- The session primarily focuses on just war theory and pacifism.

2. Pacifism:

- Dr. Spiegel distinguishes between different kinds of pacifism:
- **Anti-war pacifism:** Condemns national use of violence but preserves personal self-defense.
- **Private pacifism:** Renounces violence personally but not by political authorities (with subtypes of anti-killing and anti-violence).

- **Universal pacifism:** Opposes all violence and killing by both individuals and political authorities.
- Philosophical arguments for pacifism are explored:
- **Moral Exemplar Argument (Kantian):** Argues that a world without violence would be ideal, and since violence cannot be universalized, it is never morally right. Spiegel states, "We can universalize pacifism, but we can't universalize violence. For that reason, we should never act violently. It's not the kind of conduct that you could will to be universally practiced."
- **Gandhian Argument:** Emphasizes the transformative power of suffering for justice and the purification of the soul (both one's own and the opponent's). Spiegel quotes Gandhi: "The spiritual weapon of self-purification, intangible as it seems, is the most potent means of revolutionizing one's environment and loosening external shackles."
- **Utilitarian Argument:** Claims that wars ultimately produce more harm than good, resulting in a net loss even in cases of self-defense. Dr. Spiegel acknowledges the difficulty of this argument, particularly in scenarios like World War II.
- Biblical arguments for pacifism are also presented:
- **Sanctity of Life:** All humans are made in God's image and have a right to life, even aggressors.
- **Biblical Prohibitions of Violence:** Emphasis on Jesus's teachings on non-resistance in Matthew 5 ("you've heard it said, eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, but I tell you, do not resist an evil person..."), Paul's instruction against revenge in Romans 12 ("Do not take revenge, but leave room for God's wrath... overcome evil with good"), and Peter's doctrine of non-resistance in 1 Peter 2 ("if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God").
- Dr. Spiegel notes that these biblical passages often apply to personal violence and do not necessarily preclude national military force.

3. Just War Theory:

- Just war theory provides conditions under which war is considered morally justified. It is divided into:
- **Jus ad bellum:** Justice in going to war.
- **Jus in bello:** Justice in the conduct of war.

- **Jus postbellum:** Justice after war.
- General arguments supporting the possibility of a just war include:
- **Argument for Justice:** A nation attacked unjustly warrants a response.
- **Argument from Peace:** The aim of war, in some cases, is to establish a better peace.
- **Biblical Arguments:** God's endorsement of Israel's military action in the Old Testament and Paul's approval of government use of force in Romans 13.

4. Jus ad Bellum (Justice in Going to War) - Conditions and Problems:

- **Proper Authority:** War must be declared by legitimate government bodies, ruling out vigilante groups.
- **Problem:** This criterion challenges the legitimacy of revolutionary wars and raises questions about undeclared wars, citing examples in US history.
- **Just Cause:** Traditionally includes self-defense, punishment for civil injuries, and protecting the innocent (e.g., the liberation of Kuwait).
- **Problem:** Defining "just cause" is increasingly complex with non-military threats like espionage, digital attacks, and economic warfare. Dr. Spiegel emphasizes this as "one of the most debated subtopics here in this whole issue."
- **Just Intention:** The goal of war should be to secure peace and fairness. This criterion faces less debate.
- **Last Resort:** All peaceful means of conflict resolution must be exhausted before resorting to war.
- **Problem:** Determining when all reasonable peaceful means have been exhausted is subjective and debatable, as illustrated by the lead-up to the 2003 Iraq War.
- **Reasonable Chance of Success:** War should not be initiated if there is little prospect of winning, as it would cause more harm than good.
- **Problem:** Assessing the likelihood of success is often difficult due to unpredictable factors and uncertainties in military capabilities, as highlighted by the contrasting experiences of the 1991 and 2003 Iraq Wars.

5. Jus in Bello (Justice in the Conduct of War) - Principles and Difficulties:

- **Principle of Proportionality:** The force used must be proportionate to the nature of the threat.
- **Problem:** Determining what constitutes a proportionate response, especially with weapons of mass destruction like nuclear weapons, but also with conventional weaponry. Spiegel suggests, "So many would argue that nuclear weapons, for this reason, are always inappropriate because they're always excessive."
- **Principle of Discrimination:** Only military machinery and combatants may be intentionally targeted; targeting civilians is wrong.
- **Problem:** Defining "combatant" is challenging, extending to those involved in the war effort in various capacities. The concept of "collateral damage" (unintentional civilian casualties) also raises ethical concerns.

6. Jus Postbellum (Justice After War) - Conditions for Just Peace Settlements:

- This aspect is less discussed but considered significant. Dr. Spiegel introduces scholar Brian Orand's recommendations:
- **Public, Measured, and Reasonable Terms:** Peace settlement terms should adhere to principles of discrimination and proportionality.
- **Principle of Respect:** The rights and traditions of the defeated nation must be respected, avoiding forced cultural assimilation.
- **Just Discrimination:** Leaders and soldiers responsible for unjust war may be subject to trials, while civilians should be immune unless directly involved in the injustice.
- **Just Compensation:** Claims of the victor should be commensurate with the nature of the war (e.g., Germany's reparations after WWII). The duration of such compensation is a complex question.
- **Due Security:** The vanquished must be protected against future attacks, especially if their military capabilities are restricted (e.g., post-WWII Germany and Japan). Spiegel notes the US role in providing this security.

Conclusion:

Dr. Spiegel's session on the ethics of war provides a comprehensive overview of different philosophical and theological perspectives on the morality of armed conflict. It highlights the complexities and nuances within both pacifist and just war arguments, particularly when applying the criteria of just war theory to real-world situations. The session emphasizes the ongoing debates and challenges in determining when and how war can be ethically justified, and what moral obligations exist during and after conflict.

4. Study Guide: Spiegel, Christian Ethics, Session 16, War

War: A Study Guide

Quiz

1. According to the provided material, how is war generally understood, and what is one problem with this definition?
2. Briefly explain the core tenet of both just war theory and pacifism as presented in the text.
3. Describe the "moral exemplar argument" for pacifism and identify its philosophical roots.
4. What is the central idea behind the Gandhian argument for pacifism, and what concept from his tradition does it emphasize?
5. Explain the utilitarian argument against war as described in the source material, and provide an example of a challenging counter-argument.
6. Identify one biblical argument used to support pacifism and explain a limitation noted in the text regarding its application.
7. Distinguish between *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello* in just war theory.
8. Name three traditional just causes for war under *jus ad bellum*.
9. Describe the principles of proportionality and discrimination as they relate to *jus in bello*.
10. What are two of the conditions for a just peace settlement (*jus post bellum*) according to Brian Orand, as mentioned in the text?

Answer Key

1. War is generally understood as an armed conflict between nations. However, this definition is problematic because it excludes wars against revolutionary or terrorist groups, which are also considered real wars.
2. Just war theory states that under certain conditions, war is morally justified, while pacifism asserts that war is never morally justified.
3. The moral exemplar argument suggests that because a world where everyone is a pacifist would be ideal, pacifism is the correct moral position. It is essentially Kantian, arguing that we cannot will violence to be universally practiced.

4. The Gandhian argument emphasizes the role of suffering, especially for the sake of justice, as a means of purifying the soul and transforming opponents. It emphasizes *ahimsa*, or nonviolence, refraining from causing pain or injury for selfish purposes.
5. The utilitarian argument against war posits that wars ultimately produce more harm than good, resulting in a net loss regardless of the initial goals. A challenging counter-argument is World War II, where many believe intervention was necessary to stop genocide despite the immense suffering it caused.
6. One biblical argument for pacifism appeals to the sanctity of life, asserting that all people, made in God's image, have a right to life without exception. However, the text notes that this argument focuses on killing and doesn't necessarily rule out other forms of violent force.
7. *Jus ad bellum* concerns the conditions that are necessary to justify going to war in the first place, while *jus in bello* concerns the principles that limit acceptable conduct within the war itself.
8. Three traditional just causes for war include self-defense, punishment for civil injuries, and protecting the innocent.
9. The principle of proportionality states that the force used in war must be appropriate to the nature of the threat, avoiding excessive force. The principle of discrimination dictates that only military machinery and combatants should be intentionally targeted, not civilians.
10. Two conditions for a just peace settlement are the principle of respect, which states that the rights and traditions of the vanquished must be respected, and just compensation, which suggests that the claims of victory should be commensurate with the character of the war.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the pacifist arguments presented in the source material. Consider the moral exemplar, Gandhian, utilitarian, and biblical perspectives.
2. Evaluate the criteria for *jus ad bellum* discussed in the text. Which of these criteria do you believe are the most challenging to apply in contemporary conflicts, and why?
3. Discuss the complexities and challenges in applying the principles of proportionality and discrimination (*jus in bello*) in modern warfare, considering technological advancements and the nature of conflict.
4. Critically examine the concept of a "necessary evil" view of war, considering why the author suggests it has few proponents and how its underlying logic might relate to just war theory.
5. Explore the significance of *jus post bellum* and discuss the responsibilities of a victorious nation in establishing a just and lasting peace, drawing on the principles outlined in the text.

Glossary of Key Terms

- **War:** Generally understood as an armed conflict between nations, though this definition can be debated to include conflicts with non-state actors.
- **Pacifism:** The belief that war and violence are never morally justified as a means of resolving conflict.
- **Anti-war Pacifism:** A form of pacifism that condemns the national use of violence but preserves a personal right to self-defense.
- **Private Pacifism:** A form of pacifism that renounces violence in the personal sphere but not necessarily as used by political authorities.
- **Universal Pacifism:** The most extreme form of pacifism, opposing all violence and killing in both the private sphere and by political authorities.
- **Moral Exemplar Argument:** A philosophical argument for pacifism suggesting that the ideal of a world without violence implies that pacifism is the correct moral stance.
- **Gandhian Argument:** An argument for pacifism emphasizing the transformative power of suffering for justice and the principle of *ahimsa* (nonviolence).
- **Utilitarian Argument (against war):** The argument that wars produce more overall harm than good, making them morally wrong based on consequences.
- **Just War Theory:** The ethical framework that outlines conditions under which war is morally justifiable and sets limits on the conduct of war.
- **Necessary Evil View (of war):** The perspective that while war is inherently evil, it is sometimes necessary to prevent a greater evil.
- **Jus ad bellum:** Latin for "right to war," referring to the conditions that justify the initiation of war. These typically include proper authority, just cause, right intention, last resort, and reasonable chance of success.
- **Jus in bello:** Latin for "justice in war," referring to the ethical conduct of warfare once it has begun. Key principles include proportionality and discrimination.
- **Proportionality (in war):** The principle that the force used in war should be proportionate to the military objective and the threat posed, avoiding excessive harm.

- **Discrimination (in war):** The principle that only military targets and combatants should be intentionally attacked, protecting non-combatants and civilians.
- **Jus post bellum:** Latin for "justice after war," concerning the ethical principles that should guide the termination of war and the establishment of peace, including just peace settlements, respect for the vanquished, and compensation.
- **Ahimsa:** A Sanskrit term meaning non-violence, a core tenet in Hinduism and emphasized by Gandhi, involving refraining from causing pain or injury out of selfish purpose.

5. FAQs on Spiegel, Christian Ethics, Session 16, War, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on the Ethics of War

1. How is war generally defined, and what are the three main ethical perspectives on it according to the provided material?

War is generally understood as an armed conflict between nations, although this definition can be problematic as it excludes conflicts like revolutionary wars. The three main ethical perspectives on war are:

- **Just War Theory:** Under certain conditions, war is morally justified.
- **Necessary Evil View:** War is sometimes necessary to prevent a greater evil but is always evil in itself.
- **Pacifism:** War is never morally justified.

2. What are the different types of pacifism discussed, and what are the key philosophical arguments used to support pacifism?

The different types of pacifism discussed are:

- **Anti-war Pacifism:** Condemns national use of violence but preserves a personal right to self-defense.
- **Private Pacifism:** Renounces personal violence but not violence used by political authorities (with two forms: anti-killing and anti-violence).
- **Universal Pacifism:** Opposes all violence and killing in both private and public spheres.

Key philosophical arguments for pacifism include:

- **Moral Exemplar Argument:** A world where everyone is a pacifist would be ideal, suggesting it's the correct moral position (drawing on Kantian universalization).
- **Gandhian Argument:** Suffering for the sake of justice can purify the soul and transform opponents, emphasizing nonviolent resistance (ahimsa).
- **Utilitarian Argument:** Wars produce more harm than good in the long run, always resulting in a net loss.

3. What biblical arguments are used to support pacifism, and what is a counter-argument to their application to national military force?

Biblical arguments for pacifism often appeal to:

- **The Sanctity of Life:** Human beings are made in God's image, granting all people a right to life without exception.
- **Biblical Prohibitions of Violence:** Emphasis on non-resistance in Jesus' teachings (Matthew 5) and Paul's call to overcome evil with good (Romans 12), as well as Peter's doctrine of non-resistance (1 Peter 2).

A counter-argument is that these passages primarily address personal violence and may not necessarily apply to the use of national military force by political authorities. Therefore, a personal duty to non-violence does not automatically equate to the immorality of national defense.

4. What are the two main categories of Just War Theory, and who are some key historical thinkers associated with its development?

The two main categories of Just War Theory are:

- **Jus ad bellum:** Justice in going to war (conditions necessary to justify entering a war).
- **Jus in bello:** Justice in war (principles that limit conduct within a war).

Key historical thinkers associated with the development of Just War Theory include Thomas Aquinas, Francisco de Vitoria, and Hugo Grotius.

5. What are the key criteria for *jus ad bellum* (justice in going to war), and what are some challenges or debates associated with each?

The key criteria for *jus ad bellum* discussed are:

- **Proper Authority:** War must be declared by legitimate government bodies (challenges: revolutionary wars, undeclared wars).
- **Just Cause:** There must be a morally sound reason for war, traditionally self-defense, punishment for civil injuries, and protection of the innocent (challenges: defining "attack," severity, new forms of attack like cyber or economic).
- **Just Intention:** The goal of war must be to achieve peace and fairness (generally less debated).

- **Last Resort:** All peaceful means of resolving the conflict must be exhausted (challenges: determining when this threshold is reached).
- **Reasonable Chance of Success:** There should be a realistic possibility of achieving the just cause without excessive loss (challenges: difficulty in predicting the outcomes of war).

6. What are the key principles of *jus in bello* (justice in war), and what difficulties arise in their application?

The key principles of *jus in bello* discussed are:

- **Proportionality:** The force used must be proportionate to the threat (challenges: determining what constitutes a proportionate response, especially with weapons of mass destruction or conventional weaponry).
- **Discrimination:** Only military machinery and combatants may be intentionally targeted; civilians should not be (challenges: defining "combatant," the permissibility of targeting war-supporting infrastructure, the inevitability of collateral damage).

7. What is *jus post bellum*, and what are some principles for just conduct after a war as proposed by Brian Orand?

Jus post bellum concerns the conditions for just conduct after a war has ended. Brian Orand proposes several principles for just peace settlements:

- **Public, Measured, and Reasonable Terms:** Peace settlement terms should be transparent, appropriate, and fair.
- **Respect:** The rights and traditions of the defeated nation must be respected, avoiding forced cultural changes.
- **Just Discrimination:** Distinguishing between leaders/soldiers (who may be subject to trials) and civilians (who should generally be immune).
- **Just Compensation:** Claims of the victor should be commensurate with the nature of the war (e.g., reparations after devastating wars).
- **Due Security:** The vanquished must be provided security against future attacks, especially if they are demilitarized.

8. How do the perspectives of pacifism and just war theory fundamentally differ in their approach to the morality of war?

Pacifism fundamentally asserts that war is never morally justified, regardless of the circumstances or potential outcomes. It emphasizes non-violence, the sanctity of life, and the belief that peaceful means should always be pursued. Just War Theory, in contrast, posits that war can be morally permissible under specific conditions. It seeks to establish ethical guidelines for when it is right to go to war (*jus ad bellum*) and how war should be conducted (*jus in bello*), aiming to balance the need for justice and security with the imperative to minimize harm and suffering.