

Biblical References Provided for individual, small group, & congregational reflection on the question: How do we reduce violence in society?

Isaiah 9:7 “His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.”

- (For context read Isaiah 9:6-8)
- What kind of society does God desire for his people?

Micah 4:3 “They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks;”

- (For context read Micah 4: 1-4)
- What kind of society does God desire for his people?

Matthew 26:52 “Put your sword back in its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.”

- (For context read Matthew 26: 51-53)
- What was Jesus saying then and how does this affect our choices today?

John 15:12 “This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.”

Matthew 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

Mark 12:31 “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Luke 6:27 & 31 “Love your enemies” “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

- (For context read Luke 6: 27-33)
- What is Jesus saying to us in these passages about how we ought to treat others in our society?

Matthew 25:40 “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”

- Do you think that Jesus is teaching us to how to care for others particularly the weak of vulnerable?
- If you have a different interpretation of this passage can you describe what it means?

Psalms 20:7 “Some boast of chariots, and some of horses; but we boast of the name of the Lord our God.”

- (For context read all of Psalm 20)
- In what or who does society put its trust? In what or whom do you put your trust?

Exodus 20:13 and Mark 10:19 “You shall not kill.”

- Jesus told us to follow the commandments given to us by God, through Moses, and to not commit murder. How are we to understand these commandments when we live in a society saturated with guns?

John 18:36 Jesus said, “My kingdom does not belong to this world; if my kingdom belonged to this world, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish authorities. No, my kingdom does not belong here!”

- How might the words of Jesus before Pilate challenge traditional gun culture convictions?

Note: Some references and questions are adapted from the website of the Mennonite Central Committee <http://www.mcc.org/>