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GOD AND THE MILITARY: STUDY GUIDE

IS IT RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS?

The study guide for a three-part video series.
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GOD

AND THE MILITARY

Study Guide

*Is it right to bear
arms?*

with Tommy Nelson

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *God and the Military* – a three-part video series which answers some of the most pressing questions asked about life and the military service today.

Even though world-wide nuclear war seems a threat of the past, violence and regional conflicts still reign in much of the world. Keeping them in check, with peace-keeping operations and other means, continues to require soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines often serving far from home to protect our national interests around the world.

Times change but many questions remain the same: Is it right to bear arms? Are core values needed today? What about the use of deadly force? How should service men and women respond to the moral and ethical issues they face? What about family and other priorities in life? Is there a God and if so, what does he have to say?

All that and more is what this video series is about.

Tommy Nelson speaks to us right where we are. He believes that there is no higher calling than to serve in the military. But he also knows it is not easy. His messages deal directly with the difficult issues we face every day. Yet, his words also are timeless, because they are based on eternal truths. Tommy shows how God's Word has proven to be a rock-solid foundation for life.

If you sometimes feel like you have more questions than answers, then these videos are for you. Bring your questions. But also bring an open mind and an open heart. Because in the end, it may not be Tommy answering your questions, but God Himself.

God and the Military

Session One

The Central Truth:

Romans 13:1-4

Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore, he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God for it is a minister of God unto you for good.

Hearing the Truth (30 min):

“faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”

If you are in the military, then you are also in the m_____.

Three divine institutions get their a_____ from God:

1) H_____

2) C_____

3) G_____

Three Great Questions:

1) Where does government receive its a_____?

Genesis 9:6

Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.

The most mentioned job in the New Testament is that of a C_____

2) What is the r_____ of government?

Deuteronomy 17:18-19

Now it shall come about when he (the king) sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life.

Psalm 82:5

They do not know nor do they understand; They walk about in darkness; All the foundations of the earth are shaken.

3) What is God's r_____ to government?

Daniel 4:30-33

The king (Nebuchadnezzar) reflected and said, "Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?" A voice came out of heaven saying, "King Nebuchadnezzar ... you will be driven away from mankind.... You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind. (Nebuchadnezzar) was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws."

Daniel 4:34

"But at the end of that period I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever."

Discussing the Truth (20 minutes):

"Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this"

1. Have you ever thought about the military as a divine institution? How should knowing your authority comes from God affect the way that you view your role as a member of the armed forces?
2. In light of what Tommy shared, how would you state the responsibility of government in your own words? What part should the military play in this? How does your particular assignment play a part in fulfilling this responsibility?
3. Do you agree with Tommy regarding God's response to a wicked government? Have you considered what this might mean for our country? What responsibility do you bear as an individual involved in government service?

Applying the Truth (On Your Own):

“Do not merely listen to the word, do what it says.”

Pray and ask God to help you choose one of the following applications to implement during the next week. Place a check mark in the box next to the one you choose. You may want to consider coming back later and working through the rest of the applications in this section.

- ☐ 1. Share any questions you have about the responsibility of government with your chaplain or pastor. Ask them for books or other resources that would be helpful in answering your questions.
- ☐ 2. Read Genesis 9 to discover for yourself how God decreed that human authorities have the responsibility to restrain wicked men.
- ☐ 3. Implement one of the following ideas to help you gain God’s perspective on your work as a member of the military:
 - Memorize one of the verses from this session that was particularly meaningful to you.
 - Say a brief prayer before going on duty each day.
 - Find another person who is willing to meet with you regularly for a short time of prayer and encouragement. Agree on a schedule for when you will meet and stick with it.

God and the Military

Session Two

The Central Truth:

Romans 13:4

For it (government) does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.

Hearing the Truth (30 minutes):

“faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”

If a soldier does not ask the question about when he should use d_____ f_____ then he is a d_____ soldier.

Genesis 4:23

And Lamech said to his wives “Adah and Zillah, Listen to my voice, You wives of Lamech, Give heed to my speech, For I have killed a man for wounding me; And a boy for striking me; If Cain is avenged sevenfold, Then Lamech seventy-seven fold.”

1 Peter 2:13-14

Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

Two Common Rebuttals:

“Doesn’t the Bible say ‘Thou shalt not k_____?’”

“Aren’t Christians supposed to turn the other c_____?”

As a private c_____

Romans 12:18-19

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God”

As a r_____ of the government

Jesus died because

Genesis 2:17

“... but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.”

If you were to die tonight and stand before God do you know for certain that you would go to heaven? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Suppose you were to die and stand before God and He should ask you, “Why should I let you into my heaven?” Now what would your answer be?

John 1:12

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,”

Discussing the Truth (25 minutes):

“Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this”

1. Have you asked yourself when it would be appropriate to use deadly force? What factors do you have to consider?
2. How do you separate your role as a private citizen from your role as a member of the military? Is this easy for you to do, and why?
3. Consider the two rebuttals – “Thou shall not kill” and “Christians should turn the other cheek.” How did Tommy answer these rebuttals? Do you agree or disagree, and why?
4. According to Tommy, why did Jesus die? How does Jesus’ death allow us to have a relationship with God and get to heaven? If God asked you the question, “Why should I let you into my heaven?” what would you say?

Applying the Truth (On Your Own):

“Do not merely listen to the word, do what it says.”

Pray and ask God to help you choose one of the following applications to implement during the next week. Place a check mark in the box next to the one you choose. You may want to consider coming back later and working through the rest of the applications in this section.

- ☐ 1. Read chapters 2 and 3 of Genesis. What is the rule that God establishes with Adam and Eve? What was the consequence of their disobedience? How does this affect you?
- ☐ 2. Write down your answer to the question from God, “Why should I let you into my heaven?”

Is your answer dependent on something that you have done, or on the life and death of Christ alone?

- ☐ 3. Read chapters 12 and 13 of Romans. How do these chapters say a person is to act differently in their role as a private citizen versus their role as a member of the military?

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Session Three - Questions and Answers

The Central Truth:

Acts 4:19,20

But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard.”

Hearing the Truth:

“faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”

Question 1: What kind of Biblical support is there to help individuals who feel that their integrity will be compromised if they follow the order of a superior?

Acts 4:19,20

But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen or heard.”

Question 2: In the military community there can be a lot of pressure to behave immorally. What advice would you give to Christians in these situations?

Isaiah 5:20

Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

The Example of D_____

Question 3: Is there a difference between killing in hand-to-hand combat and killing by using a weapons system that kills from a distance?

Question 4: What happens if a military person is responsible for killing civilians because he or she had the wrong information?

Question 5: Can Christians in the military employ weapons that kill indiscriminately such as nuclear or chemical weapons?

Question 6: How can a Christian leader evaluate others without being biased towards Christians who demonstrate character and traits that agree with his beliefs?

Proverbs 24:11, 12a

Deliver those who are being taken away to death, And those who are staggering to slaughter, O hold them back. If you say, "See, we did not know this," Does He not consider it who weighs the hearts"

Galatians 6:1

Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

Matthew 7:4, 5

"Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly enough to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

Question 7: How proactive should a member of the military be about handling misconduct or ethical violations among his peers?

Question 8: How can I be sure that I know enough about an order to obey it?

Discussing the Truth (25 minutes):

"Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this"

Ask the members of the group to choose the question from this session that most interested them. Ask someone to read the question they chose and then discuss Tommy's answer and their own concerns. Allow other members of the group to share before moving on to another question.

Applying the Truth (On Your Own):

“Do not merely listen to the word, do what it says”

Pray and ask God to help you choose one of the following applications to implement during the next week. Place a check mark in the box next to the one you choose. You may want to consider coming back later and working through the rest of the applications in this section.

- ☐ 1. Read Daniel chapter 1. Why did Daniel take a stand over the issue that he did? What characteristics and qualities did Daniel display in the way that he chose to make a stand? How can depending on God help you have the wisdom and humility of Daniel?

- ☐ 2. Memorize one of the verses from this session that was particularly meaningful to you.

- ☐ 3. Read the story of Naaman and Elisha from 2 Kings chapter 5. How does Naaman’s dilemma about kneeling with his king in the temple relate to issues you face in the military? Write down one situation where you believe it would be OK to “go along” and another situation where you would feel forced to “take a stand.”

God and the Military

Answer Key

Session One

ministry
authority
1) Home
2) Church
3) Government

Three Great Questions:

1) authority
Centurion
2) responsibility
3) response

Session Two

deadly force, deadly
kill
cheek
citizen
representative

Session Three - Questions and Answers

Daniel