



The Bible & Nonviolence

The Bible, and especially the teachings and example of Jesus Christ, are deeply concerned with a nonviolent way of being: it provides us with a rich treasure-trove of prayerful wisdom and guidance on the issue.

By sitting with the following scripture passages, you can incorporate their vision and beauty into yourself. To do this, we recommend using the reading technique known as lectio divina, a Benedictine way of praying where you read one scripture passage several times in one sitting, each time drawing out a deeper layer of meaning.

Then God spoke all these words: ... You shall not kill.

-Exodus 20: 1 & 13

May all kings bow before [God],
all nations serve [God].
For [God] rescues the poor when they cry out,
the oppressed who have no one to help.
[God] shows pity to the needy and the poor
and saves the lives of the poor.
From extortion and violence [God] redeems them,
For precious is their blood in [God's] sight.

-Psalm 72: 11-14

Do no plot evil against your neighbors, when they live at peace with you. Do not contend with someone without cause, with one who has done you no harm. Do not envy the violent and choose none of their ways.

-Proverbs 3: 29-31

They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; one nation shall not raise the sword against another, nor shall they train for war again.
-Isaiah 2: 4

[Jesus] began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. ... Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. ... Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be children of God."

-Matthew 5: 2, 5, 7, and 9

Then Jesus said to him "Put your sword back into its sheath, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword."

-Matthew 26: 52

Rather, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good.

-Romans 12: 20-21

Where do the wars and where do the conflicts among you come from? Is it not from your passions that make war within your members? You covet but do not possess. You kill and envy but you cannot obtain; you fight and wage war.

-James 4: 1-2

Finally, all of you, be of one mind, sympathetic, loving toward one another, compassionate, humble. Do not return evil for evil, or insult for insult; but, on the contrary, a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing.

-1 Peter 3: 8-9

