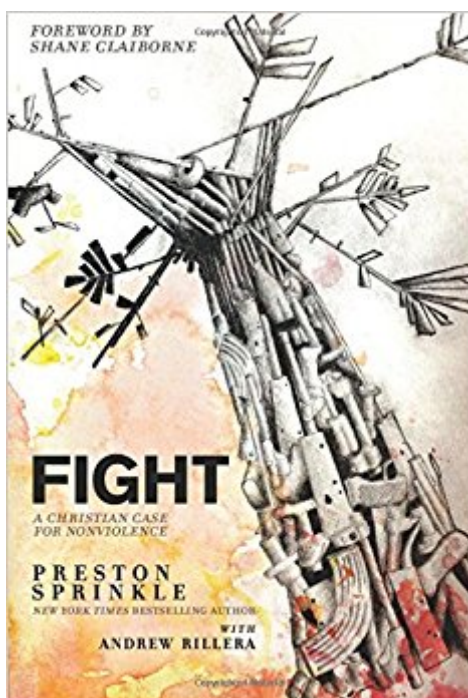


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# Fight: A Christian Case For Non-Violence



## Synopsis

Fight explores violence in the Bible and challenges us to live out Jesus's call to non-violence. With prophetic relevance, New York Times bestselling author Preston Sprinkle tackles the controversy surrounding violence and grapples with surprising conclusions. Anyone who has struggled with the morality of violence will appreciate this convincing biblical guide.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Sprinkle (*Erasing Hell: What God Said About Eternity and the Things We've Made Up*), a gun-owning believer, asks Christians, especially evangelical Christians, to look anew at Christianity and violence. The book tackles difficult parts of the Old Testament to argue that nonviolence is at the core of God's plan for humanity. In the bloodiest parts of the Old Testament, God vanquishes foes when humans step aside and trust in him rather than chariots and weapons. The New Testament continues this theme when Jesus preaches love of enemies and uses non-violence to defeat evil. Even Revelation shows Jesus vanquishing Satan through suffering, not violence. Having surveyed the Bible, Sprinkle then addresses challenging questions, such as what to do if an armed intruder threatens a family, whether Jesus was violent in expelling the moneylenders, and whether it would have been right to assassinate Hitler. The book does not explore how submission and forgiveness can be used against women and minorities, but is persuasive in its argument that the Bible expects Christians to suffer rather than inflict harm.

"Considering the hostile and violent state of our world, Christians cannot afford to be ignorant on this

issue.... Preston has taken the time to make a solid biblical argument. I highly recommend that every believer examine the truths in this book." (Francis Chan)"In Fight ... Sprinkle offers a strikingly powerful, Christ-centered case for nonviolence as a way of life." (Christianity Today)"This is a book that should be read by every evangelical small group in America. If the truths contained within its pages were to be absorbed, the face of culture in the USA would be transformed as Christians took their 'fight' to their knees instead of with violent words, weapons, and bumper stickers." (Kurt Willems, Pangea Blog)"In a bold new book called Fight, evangelical pastor and bestselling author Preston Sprinkle sets out to answer these important questions as he makes a compelling case for nonviolence. Drawing from his expansive theological background, research, and countless interviews, Preston addresses questions such as how to reconcile what seems like a vengeful God of the Old Testament with the forgiving, nonviolent Christ of the New Testament; how American should defend herself against aggression; what Scripture teaches about Capital Punishment; and whether Christians should kill in self-defense." (Patheos Book Club)"We need Preston Sprinkle's book because there are too many Christians who haven't given a moment's thought to their own violent use of our glorious Scripture's message of peace by approving and applauding the use of violence to accomplish peace. The contradictions at work are baffling. Bravo to Preston Sprinkle!" (Scot McKnight)"Preston Sprinkle ... lays out a strong Biblical case that the God of Moses and Joshua is the same God incarnated in Jesus. This is a God who calls us to non-violence in our confrontations with evil and the agents of war. For those who take the Bible seriously this book will do much to move us beyond sentimental pacifism to a scriptural basis for non-violent resistances." (Tony Campolo)"Those who read this book with an open mind will be forced to do what the author himself did: ã Æ rethink what it means to be Christian, especially in the most militarily powerful nation on earth." (Michael J. Gorman)

I was born a Mennonite. I have been steeped, deeply, in a Christian tradition that has stressed nonviolent living from a Biblical, Jesus centered perspective for almost half a century. And yet, Preston presents an argument in favor of nonviolence that I haven't heard spoken so eloquently, even in the most conservative of Mennonite churches. Even in his strong arguments against war, violence, fighting, and the culture of death in American society, Preston has not lost the distinctive Christian tone of grace and mercy and humility, recognizing that he is just another human trying to make sense of the world and seeing the same in those who would oppose him. While he doesn't come down with a hard line against war and people who advocate war, he certainly doesn't hold back in expressing why he feels those views are incompatible with Jesus' Way. This book, deeply

theological, was yet approachable and easily understood by those who may not have strong theological training. At the same time, there are plenty of notes and references that help back up the conversational tone of the book with reams of research and study. Even if you disagree with Preston, you cannot deny that his Jesus centered approach to the question challenges many assumptions in our culture. Even I, with my personally history, found some assumptions that needed challenged. Every American who claims to be Christian in our post 9-11 society should read this book and think hard about what it truly means to fight evil the way Jesus did and the way Jesus asks... no... commands us to.

Fight does not bring a whole that is new to the discussion of Christian non-violence, but what it does do is present the case from an unusual perspective: conservative, Reformed, and evangelical. Most Protestant Christian proponents of non-violence are from small, fringe denominations such as Quakers, Mennonites, and Plymouth Brethren, and few Protestants are familiar with Catholic writings on non-violence. Preston Sprinkle, on the other hand, brought the theological muscle to Francis Chan's response to Love Wins. He is also an adult "convert" to non-violence. I was already mostly convinced of the case for non-violence, but I am hoping that Sprinkle's wide and mostly conservative audience will read and heed this book. Sprinkle does a good job of systematically reviewing the relevant OT and NT texts, as well as early church theologian writings. He makes a very convincing case that the Israelites were enjoined from militarism and were meant to rely on God rather than on soldiers and weapons. Right away this distinguishes OT Israel from modern US politicians who use OT references to support US militarism. Jesus' words and actions, of course, are the primary positive support for non-violence and Sprinkle clearly shows how Jesus overwhelmingly supported non-violence, even to the point of submitting to the cross. In fact, Sprinkle makes the case that no matter what the short-term outcome, Jesus is honored and Satan is wounded when Christians respond non-violently. One of the things that was new for me in this book was the idea that Christians can serve in the military as long as they are not involved in killing. I have encountered pacifists in the past who claimed that Christians should not serve in the military in any capacity because they are supporting killing, even if they don't engage in it themselves. Sprinkle argues that Christians need to be salt and light in every profession, even the military, as long as they don't violate their Christian ethics. I have used this argument in other contexts, but had never thought about it in this context. This also fits with the general principle that we are not personally responsible for the morality of others, just our own, a principle which comes in handy in many other ethical contexts (e.g., LGBT rights, abortion, etc.) There is a lot more that could be said

about this topic (which is especially relevant at present as the world grapples with its response to ISIS) and about this book, but I highly recommend that you read it instead. Five+ stars!

For years I have been wrestling with the issue of violence. The Sermon on the Mount and the entire tenor of the New Testament seem to be contrary to our American thinking when it comes to militarism and violence. Preston Sprinkle seems to be a humble man who aims above all to truly be obedient to our Lord Christ. I believe he wrote this book with the heart of trying to truly discover how Christians should think about violence. He doesn't punt on the tough issues, yet he doesn't get into the weeds. Importantly, he doesn't condemn his brothers and sisters who disagree with his exegesis and logical deductions. I love his focus on the cruciform love of Christ and how Jesus defeated sin and death through nonviolence. This is a discussion the American church needs to have.

I got the audible cd set and also have ordered the book. Having listened to the audio set, I find this to be a very convincing argument for non violence within the Christian church. From very good documented early church beliefs and findings to covering scripture backed reasons for non violence, the author does a terrific job, and I would recommend this book for studies within Christian church denominations. The author covers delicate subjects like glorifying military within the contexts of Christianity and does a fine job of covering the bases. The material certainly causes some real soul searching, as it did for me. Part of what makes this powerful is that the author did not come from Amish, Anabaptist or Mennonite backgrounds but rather conservative evangelical background and yet comes to conclusions that much of the evangelical community probably should follow instead of blindly following "Just War Theory." Highly recommend.

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