

# Ben's story study guide

# The Impact of War

**Ben's story**  
Iraq War veteran  
Benjamin Peters  
reflects on war,  
peace and the call  
to follow Jesus.  
Taped at  
Mennonite Church  
USA Convention,  
July 2015.

## Opening exercise

Go to Wikipedia.org and print out a picture of U.S. soldiers in Fallujah, Iraq (See: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second\\_Battle\\_of\\_Fallujah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_Battle_of_Fallujah)). Invite the students to view the photo for several minutes, close their eyes and imagine themselves exposed to danger in that setting for days on end. After a time of silence, invite them to reflect on how that exposure might make them feel in the immediate setting, and how it might affect them long-term.

View the video, "[The Impact of War](#)" (5:44)

## Questions for reflection

- Invite students to react to the video. What do they wonder about? What they want to remember?
- Invite students to reflect on whether they have ever doubted God ... and why. What is there about war that would lead people, including soldiers like Ben, to doubt God?
- Invite students to say what they know about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Using the resources listed below, explain PTSD more fully. Note that PTSD is not a sign of weakness. It is a normal, human response to trauma.
- Invite students to consider this question: Is the PTSD experienced by soldiers their individual problem, or is it a burden that we all share? Explain.

## Biblical reflection

Read Psalm 38:5–11. Note that it was shared with a therapist by a Vietnam War veteran who said that the Psalm describes how he feels. Read Numbers 31:19, noting that even in the Old Testament, there was an acknowledgement of the need to heal from the trauma of war.

## Other resources

"The trauma of war and our collective responsibility."

See: [PowerPoint Presentation \(mennonites.org\)](http://mennonites.org)

"About trauma" (from "Strategies for Trauma Awareness and Resilience," by David Baldwin).

See: [emu.edu/cjp/star/toolkit/about-trauma.pdf](http://emu.edu/cjp/star/toolkit/about-trauma.pdf)

Soul Repair Center See: [brite.edu/soulrepair](http://brite.edu/soulrepair)

"Returning Veterans. Returning hope." Sunday school curriculum, lessons 3 and 4. See:

[returningveteransreturninghope.pdf \(mcc.org\)](http://mcc.org)

*Through All the Plain*, by Benjamin John Peters, Cascade Books, 2014