Welcome to the study of justice! Let's start with utilitarianism. According to the principle of utility, we should always do whatever will produce the greatest amount of happiness and whatever is necessary to prevent the greatest amount of unhappiness. But is that right? Should you always try to maximize happiness? Should you always do whatever is necessary to minimize unhappiness?

1. There are times when the only way to prevent harm to a large number of people is to harm a smaller number of people. Is it always permissible to harm a smaller number in order to prevent harm to a large number?

2. Suppose you are driving through a narrow tunnel and a worker falls onto the road in front of you. There is not enough time for you to stop. If you keep straight, you will hit the worker and kill him, but if you swerve left into oncoming traffic, you will collide with a school bus and kill at least five children. What's the right thing to do? Does utilitarianism have the right answer?

3. Ten thousand innocent civilians live next to a munitions factory in a country at war. If you bomb the factory, all of them will die. If you don't bomb the factory, it will be used to produce bombs that will be dropped on fifty thousand innocent civilians in another country. What's the right thing to do?

4. Suppose a man has planted a bomb in New York City, and it will explode in twenty-four hours unless the police are able to find it. Should it be legal for the police to use torture to extract information from the suspected bomber?

5. Now suppose the man who has planted the bomb will not reveal the location unless an innocent member of his family is tortured. Should it be legal for the police to torture innocent people, if that is truly the only way to discover the location of a large bomb?