

Is It Biblical to Arm Ourselves for Self-Defense?

What we're seeing today is not a gun problem; it's a moral problem called sin. We are witnessing the rapid deterioration of a nation. We have lost our moral compass and we have lost the fear of the Lord. When the fear of the Lord decreases, evil increases.

"A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both" (Dwight D. Eisenhower).

One of the Scriptures often used to support banning weapons is found in Proverbs 20:22, "Do not say, 'I will recompense evil'; wait on the Lord, and He will save you." This Scripture is dealing with vengeance and vigilantism, not self-defense. Those who want to do harm will always find a way around the law. Restricting firearms is not the answer.

According to Romans 13:4, one of the purposes of the authorities is to "execute wrath on him who practices evil."

They are God's avengers: "Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled, either by a power within them, or by a power without them; either by the Word of God, or by the strong arm of man; either by the Bible, or by the bayonet" (Robert Winthrop; 1809-1894).

Please don't misunderstand: As Christians, I believe that we are to seek peace at every turn and not drape the cross with the flag. But what about self-defense as a last resort and biblical mandates to protect when spouses or children are involved?

The Old Testament offers a plethora of examples, but what about the New? In Matthew 26:52, Jesus says to Peter, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword." Jesus didn't denounce the sword, but clarified its place. When we take premature, emotionally charged action, it may cost us our lives.

Later Jesus adds, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me?" If He was a thief and a robber, the clubs and swords would have been justified. In my opinion, these Scriptures imply that weapons do have a place in society. Albeit we must be careful.

Additionally, In Luke 22:36 Jesus says, "But now, let him who has a purse take it and also a bag. And let him who has no sword sell his garment and buy one." What is one to do with this Scripture? First, I would err on the side of peace, but this isn't always an option. One thing is certain: A sword was for defense. Jesus initially sent them on a peaceful mission trip where they did not need these items, but now Jesus may have been saying, "I was your provision and your safety, and I still am, but I also want you to be prepared ... to use wisdom."

But some may argue, "Didn't Jesus say to love our enemies, and bless those who curse us, and do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who spitefully use and persecute us?" (Matt. 5:43-48.) Yes. However, these references refer to personal assaults, offenses and character assassinations. It is taking a quantum leap to believe that Jesus is saying, "Do good to those who are trying to physically harm your family."

Paul tells Timothy that if "any do not care for their own, and especially for those of their own house, they have denied the faith and are worse than unbelievers" (1 Tim. 5:8). But those who seek to protect their family, which is often a greater responsibility (if not equal), are often labeled war-mongers and accused of misapplying the Scriptures.

The Scriptures must be read in their totality. For example, when Jesus was slapped, He didn't turn the other cheek. He said, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why do you strike me?" (John 18:23). Although we are to err on the side of grace and peace, there is a time and a place for confrontation and protection.

Clearly understand that I'm not advocating violence or aggression; I'm advocating scriptural consistency and continuity. Context is the key factor here. Forgiving is not being passive, and granting grace is not being gullible.

Are we called to guard our families spiritually, emotionally and financially but not physically? This makes no sense. However, my concern with the current gun debate is that we are buying into the fear frenzies. A minimizing of sovereignty is directly related to a magnifying of worry. "Most Christians salute the sovereignty of God but believe in the sovereignty of man" (R.C. Sproul).

Many are prepared militarily but not spiritually, instilling unhealthy fear in their families. We are putting the fear of man into them rather than the fear of God. I hear all about Glock, Smith and Wesson and Remington, but little about brokenness, surrender to God and humility. Our gun safes are full, but our prayer closets are empty. This is the real problem—we need to spend less time watching O'Reilly, Hannity, Beck and Coulter and more time reading Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Every time God's people trusted in their weapons and armies, He called them to repentance. Our protection is in daily submission to Him. Psalm 121:1-3 adds: "I will lift up my eyes to the hills, from where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip; He who keeps you will not slumber."

Our current trend beckons us to be very careful about who, or what, we "worship." Who, or what, we place our trust in. 