

Can Christians Kill in Self-Defense

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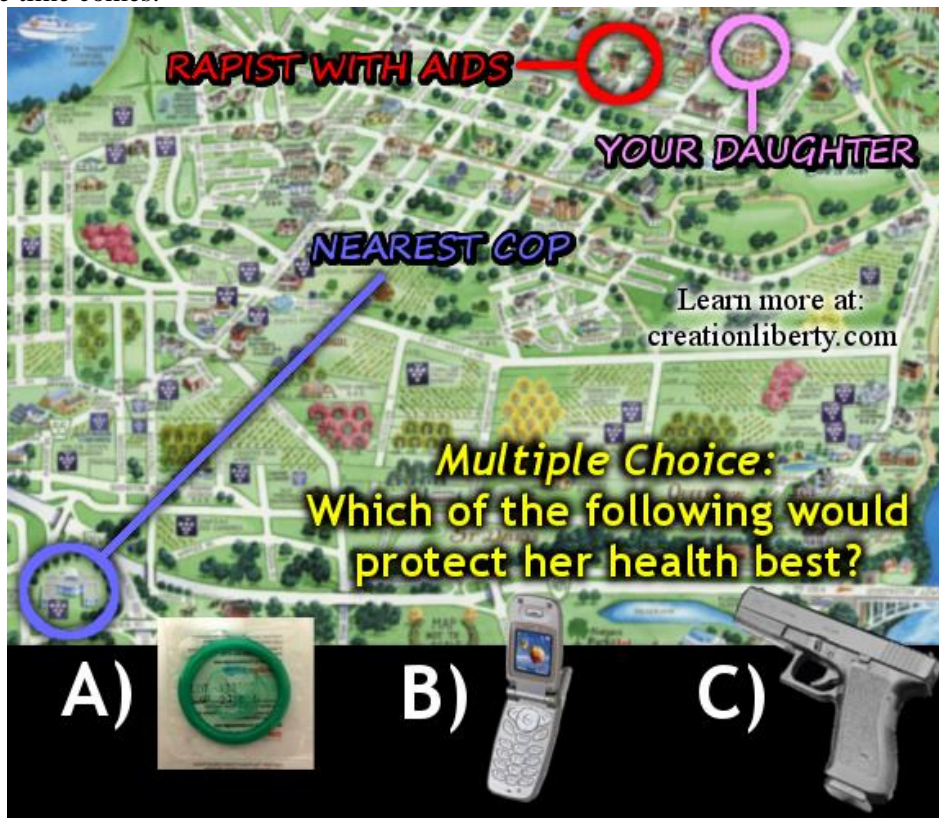
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Evil men won't just go away because we hide ourselves. Eventually, many of us will find ourselves in conflict with a wicked aggressor.

Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

-Luke 22:36-38

The Son of God needs no defense, but this is an example to us that we ought to have a way to defend ourselves from wicked men who come after us and our homes. We can't just assume nothing bad will ever come our way, and we should be prepared when the time comes.



Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

-Matthew 19:18

murder (n): act of unlawfully killing a human being with premeditated malice, by a person of sound mind. To constitute murder in law, the person killing another must be of sound mind or in possession of his reason, and the act

must be done with malice prepense, aforethought or premeditated

(See 'murder', Noah Webster's Dicitonary, 1828, retrieved May 28, 2014, [www.1828.mshaffer.com])

Murdering someone is done out of an act of rage, or pre-planned hatred, and thus, self-defense is not included in the definition of murder. The problem most Christians in reconciling this issue is the simple commandment in Exodus:

Thou shalt not kill.
-Exodus 20:13

The Bible-hating scoffer typically says: "*So you wouldn't kill someone if they were threatening your family?*" The question is designed as an attempt to embarrass a Christian for having a contradiction in their philosophy, but the Bible-hating scoffer doesn't study the Bible to look for answers, therefore he/she doesn't realize that the Bible makes provision for self-defense, and although this is not in the New Testament, this is an allowance or exception not a "don't do this" commandment.

If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him.
-Exodus 22:2

Let's do a little reasoning: If you catch a thief in your house, attack him with a weapon, and he dies from it, the blood shed is talking about making atonement for sin via sacrifice in the temple. Thus, the Lord God is explaining to the Jews that if the owner of the house kills a thief who breaks into his home, the owner has committed no sin, because **the Lord God does not protect the wicked**; He does not bless the works of unrighteousness.

Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.
-Psalm 82:4

When God says "*Thou shalt not kill*," he is giving men a commandment that the life of a man is not in the hands of his neighbor. God judges men, and issues punishments, therefore, He has decreed that if a man defends his home and family against a wicked thief, and the thief dies, it is the equivalent of God's judgement on the thief's life for his sin.

However, God does not take pleasure in the punishment of the wicked. God punishes because He does what needs to be done as the Judge over mankind, not because he takes pleasure in it.

For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord GOD: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye.
-Ezekiel 18:32

Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?
-Ezekiel 33:11

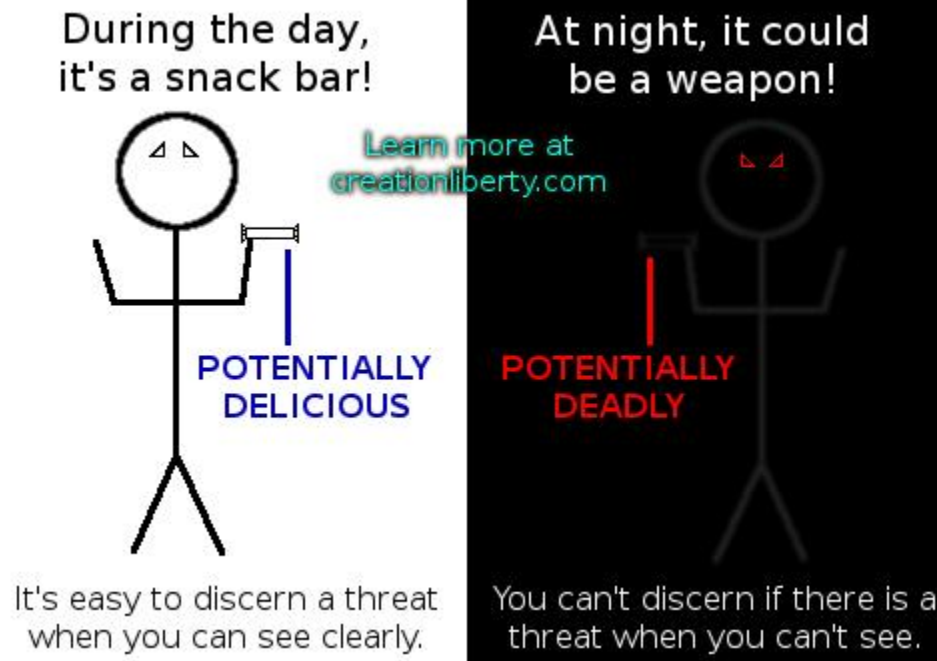
The Lord God is long-suffering so that the wicked will repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ..

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.
-2 Peter 3:9

Because of God's longsuffering towards mankind, He laid down specific circumstances through which killing in self-defense is allowed.

If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution;
-Exodus 22:3

During the day, if someone breaks into your home, you can see clearly if there is a threat. Not everyone who has broken into a home is automatically a threat. It could be a drunken man who entered the wrong home, or even a teenage child who snuck out of the house and is sneaking back in. However, if it is dark in the house, it is very difficult to determine if someone may be holding a weapon that could injure you or your family. At nighttime, God allows the killing of someone in self-defense, since you can't see if the criminal is a threat to the lives of your household.



In broad daylight, it is much easier to stop and assess the situation. You can question the individual, and in the case someone may be breaking in because he/she is hungry, you may even find an opportunity to be charitable to another.

Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry;
-Proverbs 6:30

If a good man heard rustling downstairs, in broad daylight, and a poor woman was in his kitchen stealing food for her family who was hungry, the good man would not react to her out of anger or in self-defense. A charitable man would give her the food to help her and her family, and a Christ-like man would offer up a place to stay and get cleaned up.

The Bible does not ever issue the death penalty for thieves because if you kill the thief, then there is no one to pay for the losses of the victim. That's why Exodus 22:3 said "*he should make full restitution.*" God, in his just ways, does not invite punishment on the innocent, but multiplies it on the wicked as a consequence for their actions.

If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.
-Exodus 22:1

If those caught stealing were forced to work back the money to pay 4-5 times what they stole, it would deter a lot of theft in our country, and teach criminals the value of honest labor. However, we end up ignoring the Bible's standards, sending thieves off to prison where they are given three square meals a day, lodging, clothing, and showers, while the victims are left to deal with insurance companies (assuming they even have insurance), and they often do not get proper justice and restitution for their losses.

As a Christian, what if a thief gets away with my stuff?

First, let the authorities know. There is nothing in the Bible that prevents the law of the land from punishing evildoers, but rather, the Bible frequently calls for it.

Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

-1 Peter 2:14

Second, also let your neighbors know, so that they can keep watch.

But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

-Matthew 24:43

And finally, let it go. It's just stuff. Not everything that happens to a Christian child of God is good, but all those things will work together for good.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

-Romans 8:28

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

-Matthew 6:21

There's nothing wrong with having things, but sometimes we tend to get too attached to this world that will pass away. Is your heart aimed towards the world, or towards heaven? When we are victim of a thief, certainly we have cause to be angry and frustrated, but let's practice focusing on our eternal rewards.

I have heard Bible-hating scoffers make the argument that if a Christian is truly saved, then the Christian should die off so the thief can live on, but anyone who reads their Bible knows that's a ridiculous notion. Again, God does not protect the wicked, and we all must pay the consequences of our actions, whether in this life or the next.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

-Galatians 6:7

The time may come that you must defend your home and your family. As a Christian, we want to be ready to show mercy to others, as the Lord has shown mercy to us, but you should also be ready to do what is necessary to protect yourself and your family from the wicked. You do not need to pour guilt on yourself for defending your home and family.

If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

-1 Peter 4:14-15

I had an angry woman write me after publishing this article who demanded I repent of this doctrine I have taught because Jesus said:

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

-Matthew 5:39

Sadly, this woman has probably believed in a doctrine her pastor taught her, rather than looking to the context. The typical new-age pastor teaches (or heavily implies) that if anyone does anything bad to you, you have to ignore it and let them walk all over you.

To this woman, I would reply: "According to the doctrine you believe, if, God forbid, you are ever raped, when the man is done with you, you need to say, 'Thank you sir, may I have another?'" Of course, she would not do this, which means she doesn't live the way she says she believes (i.e. hypocrisy), so let's go back to verse 38 and get a context with which to understand what Christ is teaching:

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

-Matthew 5:38

Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

-Exodus 21:24-25

What most Bible students don't stop to consider is that this is referring to *PUNISHMENT* for evil; criminals would receive the same punishment they dished out. Notice specifically in Matthew 5 that Christ gives examples, and he never points out suffering thieves, rapists, murderers, etc.

Let's look at the other examples:

And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

-Matthew 5:40

Notice that it does *NOT* say to give anyone anything they want if they sue you. It says if man sues you *AND TAKES AWAY THY COAT*, meaning that he won the lawsuit and the courts awarded him his claim. False doctrine has turned gullible church-goers into fools because if a man wants money from you, walks onto your property, purposefully trips over a tree root, then blames you for it and sues you, you can Biblically fight against that wicked man in court; you don't need to give him a dime.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

-Matthew 5:41-42

If someone comes to you in need, then give him something if he asks you for it. This is not referring to a thief demanding money for faking an injury because the context shows us someone who wants to borrow something, that is, someone who has a need that you can fill, but to think that the Lord Jesus Christ is protecting and justifying unrighteousness and sin is ludicrous to anyone who studies Scripture.

Christ is telling us that if a man gets angry at us and strikes us in his fury, striking back is not the answer because it only fuels the hatred. It's kind of like the old saying, "An eye for an eye will eventually make the whole world blind." It does *NOT* mean if a woman has been raped that she should open herself up and freely offer the man more sex, or that if a man sneaks into your home and murders your daughter that you should offer up your son to the murderer as well, and if you believe something like that, you have a desperate need to study the context of Scripture because you have no understanding.

Please help our ministry by taking the time to share this teaching with others, and to learn more about this type of subject I would encourage you to read our article: "[Does the Bible Allow Slavery?](#)"