

# Questions About What Bible Says About Use of Weapons & Deadly Force to Defend Others

By Pastor Ed Anderson

I am based on a U.S. military installation. What does Bible say about the use of weapons to defend freedom and the harm of others? I would not hesitate to end the life of a terrorist. Please comment.

## Answer:

Thank you for your service, your honesty, and your desire to honor God even in the weighty matters of military duty and moral decision-making. This is a **deeply personal and theological question**, and Scripture gives us **a framework** to think biblically—even when answers may not be simple.

## **Serving in the Military: Is It Wrong?**

**No**, the Bible does *not* forbid military service.

In fact:

## **Soldiers Were Not Told to Quit**

- In *Luke 3:14*, soldiers came to John the Baptist and asked, “*What should we do?*”

John did **not** say, “Leave the military.”

He said, “Don’t extort money... be content with your wages.”

This implies that **military service can be honorable** when carried out with integrity and restraint.

## **What About Using Lethal Force?**

You asked: “*I would not hesitate to end the life of a terrorist.*”

Let’s walk through this in biblical truth:

## **1. Government’s Role Includes Justice and Defense**

“For he (the ruler) does not bear the sword in vain. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.”

— *Romans 13:4*

Paul affirms the **right of governments to use force** for protection and justice.

When you serve under lawful authority to **defend innocent life**, you are not acting out of personal vengeance—but under an ordained role.

## 2. Killing in War ≠ Murder

The 6th Commandment says:

“You shall not **murder**.” (Exodus 20:13)

Hebrew word: ***ratsach***

It means *intentional, unlawful killing*.

It **does not** refer to justified defense, war, or capital justice.

**David, Joshua, and many others** were soldiers and kings who fought wars and were not condemned—because they fought under God’s command or in defense.

## 3. Jesus Commended a Soldier’s Faith

*“I have not found such great faith, even in Israel!”* (Luke 7:9)

That was about a **Roman centurion**—a high-ranking military officer.

Jesus didn’t rebuke his service—He **praised his faith**.

## What About Terrorists?

Your instinct to stop someone intent on mass murder is **not sin—it is justice**.

“Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter.”

— *Proverbs 24:11*

Killing for **vengeance** or hatred is sin.

But taking action to **protect innocent life** from evil? That is **righteous restraint**.

## **But Never Lose Your Conscience**

The danger is not that you serve with courage.

The danger is **losing compassion**, becoming hardened, or justifying all violence.

Here's the balance Jesus gives:

"Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves." — *Matthew 10:16*

### **As a Christian in the Military:**

1. **Pray before battle** – for justice, restraint, and protection.
2. **Don't dehumanize** even the enemy. Defeat evil, not just people.
3. **Guard your heart** from hatred, trauma, or moral numbness.
4. **Know that your identity is not in your rank or uniform, but in Christ.**

### **Final Word:**

You may be required to **take life to preserve life**.

That is not the same as murder.

But your greatest weapon is not your firearm.

It is your **faith in the God of justice, mercy, and ultimate victory**.

"The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is His name." — *Exodus 15:3*

And one day, **all weapons will be laid down**, and **peace will reign** forever.