

BIBLE ON SELF-DEFENSE

Nowhere in Scripture does it say that Christians can't protect themselves or their family. What we should never do though is seek revenge. We must be slow to anger and handle all situations with wisdom. Here are a few examples. If someone breaks into your house at nighttime you don't know if that person is armed or what they came to do. If you happen to shoot him you are not guilty. If that person breaks into your house in the daytime and sees you and starts to run, if out of anger you run after him and shoot him you are guilty and in Florida this is against the law.

A person posing a threat to you is different from someone who is not. If someone punches you in the face as a Christian you must walk away and don't try to retaliate. I know as men we have pride we think to ourselves I'm not going to let that guy punch me and get away with it, but we must let go of the pride and use biblical discernment even if we know we can beat the person up. Now it's one thing if someone punches you once and leaves you alone, but it's different if someone is chasing after you in relentless attack mode and tries to harm you.

This is a situation where you have to defend yourself. If you can run then run, but if you can't and someone poses a threat you do what you have to do. It is perfectly fine for Christians to own firearms or go to boxing, karate, or any fighting class, but remember never retaliate and always be wise. Only defend when you have to. Sometimes just cause you can do something doesn't mean you should.¹

So, I think what it means is that Jesus is telling us not to hit back when someone slaps us an insult. I don't think it is really talking about escaping or defending ourselves against a violent attack that would do us bodily harm or even kill us.

Christians shouldn't retaliate when persecuted specifically for their Christian faith but should take that as part of what God calls them to do to suffer for the sake of the testimony of the gospel.²

Protecting self and goods is assumed

²¹ When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are safe;

²² but when one stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil. (Lk. 11:21-22 ESV)

⁴³ But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. (Matt. 24:43 ESV)

¹ <https://biblereasons.com/defending-yourself/>

² <https://www.crossway.org/articles/a-biblical-argument-for-self-defense/>

²⁷ But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. Then indeed he may plunder his house. (Mk. 3:27 ESV)

Carrying defensive weapons is assumed and not condemned

DAVID carried his sling when away from his sheep

³⁷ And David said, "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you!"

³⁸ Then Saul clothed David with his armor. He put a helmet of bronze on his head and clothed him with a coat of mail,

³⁹ and David strapped his sword over his armor. And he tried in vain to go, for he had not tested them. Then David said to Saul, "I cannot go with these, for I have not tested them." So David put them off.

⁴⁰ Then he took his staff in his hand and chose five smooth stones from the brook and put them in his shepherd's pouch. His sling was in his hand, and he approached the Philistine. (1 Sam. 17:37-40 ESV)

Peter had a sword while traveling with Jesus

⁵¹ And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.

⁵² Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

⁵³ Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?

⁵⁴ But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?" (Matt. 26:51-54 ESV)

Carrying defensive weapons is "commanded" to by Christ

knapsack or sandals, did you lack anything?" They said, "Nothing."

³⁶ He said to them, "But now let the one who has a moneybag take it, and likewise a knapsack. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one.

³⁷ For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors.' For what is written about me has its fulfillment."

³⁸ And they said, "Look, Lord, here are two swords." And he said to them, "It is enough."

(Lk. 22:35-38 ESV)

The law justifies defense and even killing intruders

² If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguilt for him, (Exod. 22:2 ESV)

God instituted government TO PROTECT

ESV **Romans 13:1** Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval,

⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But *if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain.* For he is the servant of God, *an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.*

⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.

(Rom. 13:1-6 ESV)

¹³ Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme,

¹⁴ or to governors as *sent by him to punish those who do evil* and to praise those who do good.

(1 Pet. 2:13-14 ESV)

God has always encouraged defending the weak

"Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

(Psalm 82:3-4 ESV)

"Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy." (Proverbs 31:8-9 ESV)

"Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause." (Isaiah 1:17 ESV)

Proverbs 24:11 Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter.

Ezekiel 33 "... ⁶ 'But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and a sword comes and takes a person from them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require from the watchman's hand.'

God condoned and even instigated battle

^{ESV} **Psalm 144:1** *Of David.* Blessed be the LORD, my rock, *who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle;*

² he is my steadfast love and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield and he in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me. (Ps. 144:1-2 ESV)

Self defense does not negate proper trust of God

¹³ So in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in open places, I stationed the people by their clans, with their swords, their spears, and their bows.

¹⁴ And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. *Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome,* and *fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.*"

¹⁵ When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall, each to his work.

¹⁶ From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah,

¹⁷ who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other.

¹⁸ And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me.

¹⁹ And I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "The work is great and widely spread, and we are separated on the wall, far from one another.

²⁰ In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us."

²¹ So we labored at the work, and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn until the stars came out.

²² I also said to the people at that time, "Let every man and his servant pass the night within Jerusalem, that they may be a guard for us by night and may labor by day."

²³ So neither I nor my brothers nor my servants nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us took off our clothes; each kept his weapon at his right hand. (Neh. 4:13-23 ESV)

ESV **Ezekiel 33:1** The word of the LORD came to me:

² "Son of man, speak to your people and say to them, If I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from among them, and make him their watchman,

³ and if he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the trumpet and warns the people,

⁴ then if anyone who hears the sound of the trumpet does not take warning, and the sword comes and takes him away, his blood shall be upon his own head.

⁵ He heard the sound of the trumpet and did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But if he had taken warning, he would have saved his life.

⁶ But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, so that the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes any one of them, that person is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand. (Ezek. 33:1-6 ESV)

AVOID VIOLENCE especially over personal insult

³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

³⁹ But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

⁴⁰ And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well.

⁴¹ And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.

⁴² Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you.

⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

⁴⁴ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,
⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.
⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same?
⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?
⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.
(Matt. 5:38-6:1 ESV)

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Trust only in God

¹⁶ The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.
¹⁷ The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue.
¹⁸ Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love,
¹⁹ that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine.
²⁰ Our soul waits for the LORD; he is our help and our shield.
(Ps. 33:16-20 ESV)

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God. (Ps. 20:7 ESV)

Psalm 44:6-7 I put no trust in my bow, my sword does not bring me victory; but you give us victory over our enemies, you put our adversaries to shame.

Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

No revenge

Romans 12:¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all.
¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," says the Lord."

Matthew 5:38-39 "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.

Leviticus 19:18 "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Proverbs 24:29 And don't say, "Now I can pay them back for what they've done to me! I'll get even with them!"

12. 1 Thessalonians 5:15 See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.

1 Peter 2:23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

Work for peace

Romans 12: ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Psalm 34:14 Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

Romans 14:19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

Hebrews 12:14 Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

Pursue Love toward enemies

Romans 12: ²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

(Rom. 12:17-21 ESV)