
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **What does the Bible say about Christians and open-carry laws?**

I'm reading from an Oklahoma Governmental website entitled "*Oklahoma Open Carry Frequently Asked Questions*":

Q: What is Open Carry?

A: Open Carry refers to an unconcealed handgun, which is a loaded or unloaded handgun carried on your person in a belt or shoulder holster that is wholly or partially visible.

Q: Is Open Carry legal in Oklahoma?

A: Starting November 1, 2012, a handgun license shall authorize a person to carry concealed or unconcealed.

<https://www.ok.gov/governor/OpenCarryFAQ.html> accessed 1/11/16).

We know now, from this website, what our government says about self-defense, concealed weapons, and open-carry weapons. But what does the Bible have to say about Christians carrying concealed weapons or openly carrying weapons for self-defense?

In 2015 a friendly young man came to my home to inspect for termites. We began to discuss the subject of Christians and self-defense. This friendly young man made this statement, "*Of course God wants us to defend ourselves. He doesn't expect anyone to just stand there and let someone kill him or his family.*"

WHAT GOD THINKS

Let me begin by pointing out we only know what God thinks by what God has revealed in the scriptures. We do not know what God thinks by what we ourselves think about something.

Isalah 55:8-9

⁸ "For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.

⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

God reveals His thoughts only in scripture (Jn 16:13). Unless one can show in scripture that God authorizes Christians to have concealed or open-carry weapons, then no one can logically say, "*Of course God wants us to defend ourselves.*"

A FALSE DICHOTOMY

Second, my friend presented a false dichotomy or a false choice. My friend suggested there are only two options to choose from if a Christian or his family is threatened:

- The Christian can either "just stand there" and let someone kill him or his family,"
- Or the Christian can kill his opponent by shooting the opponent.

Is there no third or fourth options? What about running away from the opponent? Jesus said,

Matthew 10:23

²³ When they persecute you in this city, **flee** to another. ...

Contrary to my young friend, I can truly say, "This is what God wants." I know that because I can read what God wants in scripture. This is God Himself telling Christians what to do. You will notice there is no mention of fighting back and using lethal force. There's no mention of:

- Concealed weapons.
- Open-carry weapons.
- Martial arts or mixed-martial-arts.

The only people who think Jesus advocated violent self-defense are people who claim to be "Christians." Non-Christians know clearly what Jesus advocated. Isn't that a sad commentary on those who claim to be "Christian" and yet advocate violent self-defense.

AN OBJECT LESSON

My third and final point concerns an object lesson which Jesus administered to His disciples on the night He was arrested to be crucified.

Luke 22:35-36

³⁵ And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?"

So they said, "Nothing."

³⁶ Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take it, and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one.

You will notice Jesus instructed His disciples to buy a sword. What was the purpose of this instruction? Was Jesus arming His disciples so they could fight and defend Him as well as defend themselves from the illegal arrest which was soon to occur? The answer is, "No."

Luke 22:38

³⁸ So they said, "Lord, look, here are two swords."

And He said to them, "It is enough."

Obviously Jesus did not intend a fight with lethal weapons. Two swords are not "enough" to defend Jesus and the apostles against a mob of dozens and dozens of soldiers.

Q: Why, then, did Jesus give instructions to buy two swords?

A: Jesus was intending to use the swords as an object lesson. He had the disciples obtain the swords for the very purpose of taking the swords away from them and instructing them to never use the sword.

Matthew 26:51-52

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

⁵² But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

When Jesus rebuked Peter and told him to put his sword up, Jesus at the very same time rebuked all future disciples who would use lethal force to defend themselves.

- Christians are authorized to run away from trouble (Mt 10:23).
- Christians are authorized to hide behind locked doors (Jn 20:19).
- Christians, however, are not authorized to use lethal force.

Governor Mary Fallin and the State of Oklahoma may authorize citizens to carry and use concealed weapons and open-carry weapons for self-defense, but neither Governor Fallin nor the State of Oklahoma speak for God. Jesus does speak for God and Jesus forbids His disciples from using lethal force for self-defense.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Call again next week when we consider a new subject on ***Bible Talk***.