

## e-concepts

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#### Debated Issues: Using Violence to Defend Your Family

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##### A Definition

Liberal Christians want to have a “discussion” about everything. Conservative Christians say, “This is just plain wrong, so there is no need to debate it.” So, I will define what a debated issue is this way:

**A debated issue is an act that is not today, nor has been historically, generally agreed upon as being wrong by a plurality of mature Christian leaders.**

Many things are debated today that have not been debated throughout history, either because they did not exist historically or values have changed (some of which should not have changed and some of which have changed for the better). Who is mature and who is a Christian leader may itself be debated. But usually, for the most part, most of the time, Christian leaders will be recognized as *those who led you who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct*, [believers will decide to] *imitate their faith* (Hebrews 13:7). For example, drinking alcohol has been debated all through history (Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Matthew 19:7-9) and violence in video games has not existed as an issue until recently. What they have in common is that all these are debated by Christian leaders today.

**Debated Issues Are Issues that Are Debated.** That means, rational, biblically-based, Christian arguments can be made for both sides of the issue. And the arguments are made (formally or casually) by those who are considered by a plurality of Christians to be mature leaders. **Debated issues are not those which are clearly right or wrong.** For example, the *deeds of the flesh* and the *fruit of the Spirit* are not debatable among mature Christian leadership (Galatians 5:19-23).

##### Using Violence to Defend Your Family

###### Arguments Against

The Bible promotes personal non-violence. The Old Testament violence and wars were about establishing Israel in their land without the influence of the idolatrous Canaanites. It was not about personal violence. Solomon wrote: *Do not envy a man of violence, and do not choose any of his ways... If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink; for you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you* (Proverbs 3:31; 25:21-22; Romans 12:17). Jesus clearly ruled out violence as a response to evil, *But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also [and] But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you* (Matthew 5:39 and 44). Paul gave the same perspective, *never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men* (Romans 12:17-18). If we believe God is sovereign over every part of our lives, then we should trust Him to protect us and our families, not violate His commands as a means of self-defense.

###### Arguments For

The Mosaic Law made a distinction between killing someone breaking into your house at night, when the assumption is the family needs to be protected, and someone who just breaks in during the day to steal. *If the thief is caught while breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account. But if the sun has risen on him, there will be bloodguiltiness on his account. He shall surely make restitution; if he owns nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft* (Exodus 22:2-3). God does not categorically condemn violence. David violently killed Goliath (1 Samuel 17) and Samuel violently killed King Agag (1 Samuel 15:33). Jesus added this directive for His disciples as they left the upper room, *whoever has no sword is to sell his coat and buy one* (Luke 22:36). **Jesus' commands about turning the other cheek are about forbidding vengeance, not protecting your family.** If you are a parent, you have a responsibility to do what is reasonable to defend your family. *But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever* (1 Timothy 5:8).

\* Learn more by checking out our study material on “Debated Issues” at [relationalconcepts.org](http://relationalconcepts.org) \*

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