

## Should a Christian Serve in the Military?

That is a question many Christians have struggled with through the centuries. Can a faithful Christian serve in the military or law enforcement? We believe the answer is “Yes!” Military and law enforcement service is both compatible and desirable for Christians. Here are five quick Biblical reasons why.

- 1) The most direct answer to the question is found in John the Baptist’s response to some soldiers in Luke 3:14. When the soldiers asked what repentance meant for them, John’s answer could be summed up as “be a good soldier”!
- 2) From Naaman, the Syrian general in 2 Kings 5 to Cornelius, the Roman centurion in Acts 10, the Bible is replete with examples of soldiers who have faithfully served our God. Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samson, David and many more great servants of God were also mighty warriors who killed many people in the service of God. In fact, the most amazing faith that Jesus ever found was in a Roman centurion, as seen in Matthew 8:5-13.
- 3) Faithful military service is used several times in the Bible as an analogy for faithful Christian service, as seen in 2 Timothy 2:1-4, 1 Timothy 1:18, 2 Timothy 4:7, and 1 Corinthians 9:7. You might say that Christians serving in the military have an advantage in understanding what it takes to live a faithful Christian life.
- 4) The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 13 regarding the role of civil government and the Christian’s relationship to it. Even though the “earthly ruler” at that time was the wicked Nero, Paul wrote:

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and he will commend you. For he is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.

Romans 13:1-4, NIV

This passage shows clearly that when a soldier or policeman, representing duly authorized government, acts responsibly in his duty, he is doing the will of God in protecting the innocent and bringing punishment on the wrongdoer.

- 5) God has never, in any of His dealing with men, referred to killing by the military as murder – never. Neither does he refer to killing in self-defense as murder. Nor does God say that capital punishment is murder. God has never pronounced any punishment for those who kill in war, in self-defense or to put to death an evildoer. When God gave the Ten Commandments, included was this:

“Thou shalt not kill.”  
Exodus 20:13, KJV

The New International Version reads: “You shall not murder,” and that is really the correct rendition. God goes on to show what is to be done with the murderer.

“He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall surely be put to death”  
Exodus 21:12, KJV

The execution of a murderer was not murder then, nor is it today. God allowed His people to protect themselves and their loved ones.

Should a faithful Christian serve in the military? Only you can answer that question for yourself. We hope these Biblical reasons will help you to come a peaceful, confident resolution of that question.