

# Comply Or Resist

By Patrick Wyett



You might've given this question at least a brief reflection. I've seen the topic discussed online and heard it in passing conversations. From a Christian perspective, what *should* we do in light of an increasingly violent world and in the face of encroaching tyranny?

I have prayed much about this article that it be worded, as God would have me to write it, not for my sake, but for yours. Read carefully and understand what I'm about to say. These words draw on US history and governance, as well as the Bible.

You must understand that the application of truth bears consequences when it threatens the "powers that be." A warning here: Being right does not always keep one from being imprisoned or killed. Sometimes it increases the chances. On the other hand, compliance with tyranny will not keep you from being imprisoned or killed either. In the 20th century: A greater number of humans were murdered by their own governments (262 million), than were killed in all the wars fought during the same period of time (37 million). That's a 7 to 1 ratio.

Before disarming indigenous populations, the citizenry had to be propagandized into believing that somehow being rendered defenseless made one safer. Modern history shows that there are two beneficiaries of gun control:

Criminals and tyrants. The difference is that criminals prefer unarmed victims. Tyrants demand unarmed victims.

There's abundant historical and legal precedent for individuals not only having the right to defend themselves, but the means to do it as well. The foundation of this right was established in the Bible. Yes, self-defense is a God-given-right, also known as a natural or unalienable right.

An unalienable right is by definition a right that cannot be taken away by force or threat of force. Nor can it be willfully given away or even sold. Not by individuals, not by groups and not by government. Yet such rights are routinely outlawed, or in other instances, reduced to government licensed privilege. Stated succinctly, if you have to get government approval to do something, it's not a right. Think about that for a second. How free are you really?

The opening of the Declaration of Independence is a beautiful, inspired explanation of the appropriate response to tyranny. By appropriate I mean lawful, moral and righteous. These words echo across the centuries, resonating with the same truth, the same power as they did in 1776. I'll bold key words and phrases for emphasis, inserting my comments in parenthesis:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that **all men** are created equal, that **they are endowed by their Creator** (God) **with certain unalienable rights**, that among these are **life** (which includes the ability to defend oneself, others and our nation with lethal force.), **liberty** (freedom from tyranny) and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men (governments are instituted to secure our rights!), **deriving their just powers** (only those specifically granted and authorized by the Constitution) **from the consent of the governed** (We the People; for whom the government is supposed to work for, not the other way around). **That whenever any form of government becomes destructive to these ends** (when government violates the laws that constrain it and usurps authority not granted to it by legislating in areas specifically prohibited to it), **it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it** (government), and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness.

Were the Founders calling for a revolution? No, they were justifying the one that they were already engaged in. These men were predominately Christian—as was the greater colonial society as a whole. This is key: A Christian people struggling against oppression. Dismiss the revisionist lies of those who claim otherwise, hold in contempt the babble of those who thwart truth in favor of agenda.

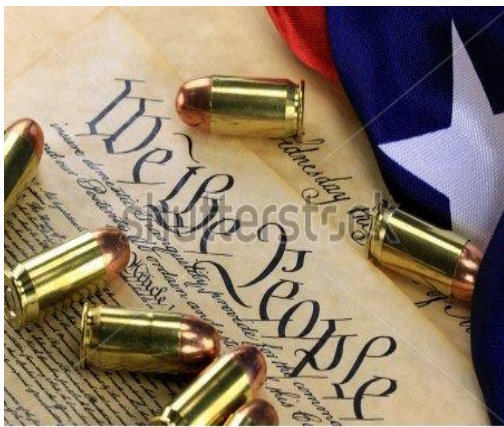
Let's continue with paragraph two of the Declaration of Independence. No comment or emphasis this time.

Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

Kind of radical, huh? Actually, “No, not really.” You've only been conditioned to think that such words are radical.

As George Orwell said, “In a time of universal deceit, telling the truth is a revolutionary act.”

As such, hearing or reading a forthright truth goes against your programming. Makes you feel uncomfortable. That's good. Now we're getting somewhere.



www.shutterstock.com · 170584538

“But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Timothy 5:8).

Part of that provision, aside from food, drink and shelter, is security. You have a duty before God to defend your family to the best of your ability. Let me put it another way. You don't just hope that the money to provide for your family magically appears, you take steps to ensure that it does. Likewise, their safety deserves the same consideration and effort.

“When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace” (Luke 11:21).

Notice that Jesus described the strong man as being armed. The right of self-defense is incumbent on having the means to defend your self. Without a weapon, your self-defense capability is greatly diminished.

“Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.” (Luke 22:36)

Jesus was speaking of the time after He would be gone and before His return. His followers would need to have the means to defend themselves; a sword. Or in our day—a firearm. So important is this need that one is to sell their closest possessions if necessary to buy one.

But what about this verse?:

“And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword” (Matthew 26:51-52).

So glad you asked. Jesus' mission was that of the sacrificial lamb, not a conqueror, at least not at that time in the physical sense. His purpose was to die for the sins of the world as our Lord and Savior. That was God's will.

Though well intentioned, Peter was resisting God's will. A sometimes obvious but overlooked point here is that Peter was armed. Jesus knew he was armed. It simply wasn't the proper time for the sword. Purpose determines actions.

Well, what about the Ten Commandments?

"Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13).

The precise wording according to literal interpretation of the original language is, "You shall not murder." Murder is the taking of innocent human life. Even the laws of man distinguish between justifiable self-defense and murder. This basis is biblical.

On a side note, why is murder wrong?

"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" Genesis 9:6).

Murder's wrong because we're each made in God's holy image—all of us. This is a profound point of realization. God Himself created us, He loves us, and He sent Jesus to die for us. Life itself is a gift. I say this in reminder that taking a human life is no small thing even if necessary and justified. That said, Ecclesiastes chapter 3 comes to mind:

"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8).

I know some of you are nodding in the affirmative up to this point, but only to a point. There's a concern, a "Yeah, but." That "but" often arises from Romans chapter 13. There are no aberrations in the Bible, only a lack of understanding on our part. Any seeming "conflict" needs to be resolved. Even more than that, we want to be right by God's Word, abiding in and living the way expects us to.

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee" (Hosea 4:6a).

Come and let us seek knowledge as we examine Romans 13, verses 1-7:

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans 13:1).

God ordains all powers and governments. The question here is, to what purpose? When the children of Israel were righteous, they enjoyed God's blessings. When they were wicked, they earned His wrath. Evil rulers are often the bitter fruits of a nation rebelling against God. Especially the US, one in which we seemingly get to choose our elected officials. The wickedness you see in office is merely a reflection of the wickedness across our land. Choosing sin is choosing judgment: That's where we are, at.

"Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Romans 13:2).

This part can be difficult to accept for the patriotic amongst us. Count me in that group. I remember our history and heritage. We aren't that nation. Understanding this is to swallow the bitter pill of truth. We are a land of evil; a modern day Sodom and Gomorrah. What God ordains for destruction can't be saved by patriotic fervor. His will, will be done. My brothers and sisters, do we care more for our country or for Jesus? Only a nationwide repentance before a holy and merciful God could possibly save us. Sackcloth and ashes, but that's not happening. As a nation and world, we're not sorry for our evil, we're sorry for the consequences. Even at that, we don't equate one with the other.

We need to make a distinction here. You can't fight physically to save the world from its choices willfully made and continues to make. Besides, it's not your job to save the world; Jesus did that 2000 years ago at the cross. It's your job to tell the world what He did to save souls. This clarified—you do have the right and responsibility to defend your self and loved ones against those who'd inflict harm. In doing so you may die fighting on your feet. I find this possibility more preferable than dying on my knees, defenseless.

Don't get too attached to this life or world—it's all temporary. It goes away. Perhaps you choose a pacifistic approach to this scenario. If your faith allows for this, so be it. I fault no one who acts on the dictates of his or her conscience. It's between you and God. Just realize what this might entail. There are worse things than a relatively quick death. I don't wish to come across as macabre, I'm just making a point.

“For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same” (Romans 13:3).

Righteous rulers are not a terror to good works. Unrighteous ones are. You know which of the two we have now, in both parties. Evil is the power. Nowhere in the Bible are we told to give our allegiance to evil. We don't submit to it any more than the people of Germany should've submitted to Hitler. Yes, there was a price for those who didn't. And obviously for those who did as well. With evil, there is no winner. God's holiness assures that.

“For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil: (Romans 13:4).

Again this verse refers to righteous rule, not corrupted rule. The thought here is that everything God does is for the purpose of good, even bringing judgment on a deserving nation and world. Evil must be punished as it always has been.

“Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake” (Romans 13:5).

We do what's right even in difficult circumstances not just because we could be punished—but because it's the right thing to do. This life is not the prize; it's the proving ground of our faith.

“For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing” (Romans 13:6).

Good or evil, those in power hold authority to fulfill God's plans. I accept this. However, my God is in heaven, not Washington DC.

“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour” (Romans 13:7).

What dues do those delighting in evil deserve? What tribute? What honor? Before you answer, the same answer applies to all, whether a government official or citizen.

“Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, we ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29).

Throughout history, God has blessed those who've sought Him. The Revolutionary War was won not by force of arms, but by the prayer and faith of a reverent people who sought His providence and purpose. God delivered the victory. Yet He did so through the efforts of those who beseeched Him. Their effort was a demonstration of, and commitment to—their faith. We are no longer that people or nation. Not even close.

I've heard some Christians say that we must obey government no matter what. Citing Romans 13, they conclude that government is the legitimate authority; so if for instance they demand that we be disarmed, we should surrender our guns. Of those so persuaded, I don't question their faith based solely on this assumption. I do question their understanding. Here's why:

The Constitution doesn't give you rights, God does. The Constitution establishes our form of government and limits governmental authority. Politicians and their minions cannot legally or morally violate the limits placed upon them. They swear an oath before God, at least the non-Muslim ones do, to uphold and defend the Constitution. When they violate that oath, they become an illegitimate authority before God and man. They are law-breakers. Criminals. Treason anyone?

The irony here is that they rebel against God's laws while at the same time fulfilling His will by their actions, simultaneously destroying and being destroyed through divine judgment. Such are the wages of sin.

The Second Amendment to the Constitution states: "A well-regulated militia, being necessary for the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

Well-regulated means well armed and trained. There are those who would interdict doubt as to the meaning of the Second Amendment by asking what the definition of the word "militia" means. Fair enough. George Mason, who along with James Madison known as the Fathers of the Bill of Rights, both ask and answer that very question.

"I ask, sir, what is the militia? It is the whole people, except for a few public officials."

Many pages could be filled with quotes from the Founders as to our explicit right to keep and bear arms. To save paper, we'll let Thomas Jefferson cut to the heart of the matter.

"The strongest reason for the people to retain the right to keep and bear arms is, as a last resort, to protect themselves against tyranny in government.

That's a bold declaration. Not coincidentally, it's where we're at and why some in government are trying to disarm us. Free men own guns, slaves don't. Those who are slaves to sin would make you slaves to them.

One of the favored sayings at the time of our independence was, "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God."

Another one was, "No king but King Jesus." That last one has a nice, everlasting ring to it, doesn't it?

A little practical advice: If you have a firearm, know how to use it. Shoot it, clean it, understand how it functions, practice reloading quickly, and store it safely. Always be safe. I know that ammo's expensive. Practice anyway. Practice like somebody's life depends on it, because it might. Become fast and accurate. Think and learn tactics.

I don't think Jesus told you to get a sword just so you can turn it over to the Philistines. It's because of Philistines that you need it. Faith, strength and courage my friends...the times, they are a changin'...Take heed.

[patrickwyett@excite.com](mailto:patrickwyett@excite.com)