



Preventing Gun Violence

What Do You Think about Gun Control?

Gun violence in America continues to rise. Crazy mass shootings at college campuses, movie theaters, and fast food restaurants ruin an increasing number of innocent lives. Gun manufacturers and their associations and Washington lobbies continue to pour millions into campaigns and advertising to assure us that gun control won't work. They say that we should buy more of their guns rather than fewer.

This study brings the issue to your group. Arguments for both sides are presented. You will write what you believe should be done, if anything. Then, as a group, you will discuss options. Many Christians concerned about saving lives are taking actions to do something. How about you?

Scripture Connection

Despite the presence of violence in the Bible, the Scriptures continually seek a world where the wolf lies down with the lamb (Isaiah 11:6) and violent weapons are destroyed (Isaiah 2:4). Jesus suggests confronting violence not with more violence but rather by other non-violent methods that disarm enemies. Guns were not around when Jesus walked the earth, but he certainly cares about gun deaths today. Followers can model Jesus' response to violence with creative nonviolent actions that promote peace and end the cycle of killing.

Guns Are a Problem

- Eighty-six Americans die from gunshot wounds every day. Thirty-two are murdered. Twelve are children and youth under eighteen. There are over 30,000 deaths a year.¹
- The war in Iraq, which lasted nine years from 2003 to 2012, took the lives of 4,486 American service men and women.² That number is less than one-sixth the number of Americans murdered by firearms in the U.S. in any single year during the same time period.
- The third leading cause of death by injury in the U.S. is being killed by a gun. Eighteen percent of all deaths by injury in the U.S. are caused by guns.³
- The gun murder rate in the U.S. is almost 20 times higher than the next 22 richest and most populous nations combined.⁴
- There is a correlation between gun ownership and becoming a victim of gun violence. Those with guns are 4.5 times more likely to be shot in an assault than those not possessing a gun. If guns protected us from violence, the U.S. would be the safest country on earth.⁵

What Do You Think?

What should Christians do about gun violence? What will you do?

Endnotes

1. Factsheet from the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, http://www.bradiycampaign.org/xshare/Facts/Gun_Death_and_Injury_Stat_Sheet_3-Year_Average_FINAL.pdf.
2. Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, <http://www.icasualties.org/Iraq/>.
3. Factsheet from the NCHS, “NCHS Data on Injuries” (May 2012), http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/factsheets/factsheet_injury.htm.
4. Bill Weir, “Gun Deaths: A Familiar American Experience,” ABC News, July 21, 2012, <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2012/07/gun-deaths-a-familiar-american-experience/>.
5. Charles C. Branas et al., “Investigating the Link between Gun Possession and Gun Assault,” *American Journal of Public Health* 99, no. 11 (November 2009): 2034–2040.