



CHAPTER SIX

The Second Amendment

The Right to Keep and Bear Arms

MEMORY VERSE

**"Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teaches my hands to war,
and my fingers to fight."**

Psalm 144:1

FOR THE PARENT OR GRANDPARENT

This amendment has two parts, not five, so it reads shorter than Chapter Five. Two sittings work well: the amendment and the militia, then the right itself with the family activity.

Why did the Founders include the Second Amendment?

Without the Second Amendment, there is no way to protect the freedoms in the First Amendment.

Young people, imagine your family lives on a farm far away from the nearest town. If danger came to your home, who would protect your family?

Today, we do have police officers, sheriffs, firefighters, and the National Guard, but if they were not there in time to protect, it would be left to your family to defend yourselves. This is the doctrine of self-defense.

The Founders generally viewed the right of self-defense as a natural right—one that existed before government. For example, Sir William Blackstone, whose writings greatly influenced the Founders, described self-preservation as one of the fundamental rights of individuals. His legal commentaries were widely read in colonial America. This understanding influenced the way many Americans thought about the Second Amendment.



Back in the late 1700s, America was very different. Many towns had no professional police force, and the nation had only a small standing army. Citizens often relied on local militia. These were groups of ordinary people trained to help defend their communities when called upon.

The Founders believed that a free people should be able to help defend their homes, their communities, and their nation according to the law. That is why they included the Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights.

The Actual Second Amendment

RATIFIED 1791

"A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

What does it mean? The Second Amendment has two important ideas.

"A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State,

1

the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

2

President George Washington warned,

"Government is not reason, it is not eloquence,—it is force! Like fire, it is a dangerous servant, and a fearful master; never for a moment should it be left to irresponsible action."

1

A Well Regulated Militia

First, was a well-regulated militia. In the Founders' day, a militia was made up of ordinary citizens who could be called to help defend their communities and the nation in the time of attack.

"Well regulated" meant they were expected to be organized, trained, and disciplined—not disorderly or reckless.



2

The Right to Keep and Bear Arms

Second, was the right to keep and bear arms. The amendment recognizes a right of individual citizens to keep and carry arms. Over time, courts have interpreted this right in different cases, including recognizing an individual right while also acknowledging that certain regulations may be consistent with the Constitution.

WHY ARE THESE TWO TOGETHER?

A militia is citizens acting together; the right to keep and bear arms is what makes that possible. The Founders wrote both into one sentence because **neither one stands alone** — a free people must be willing to serve, and free to prepare.

Children should understand that rights are always connected with responsibility, wisdom, and obedience to the law. The Second Amendment teaches that Americans have an important constitutional right related to keeping and bearing arms.



It also reminds us that rights should always be exercised with responsibility, good judgment, and respect for the law. Just as we learn safety before riding a bicycle or driving a car, anything that can protect life must also be handled carefully and responsibly.

FOR THE PARENT OR GRANDPARENT

From the author: "Young people, it would be good to learn how to handle firearms, clean guns, and practice shooting. You never know when you will need those skills to defend your home and person." This is a parent's decision and a parent's lesson — the age, the setting, and the supervision are yours to judge.

Why was this Amendment important?

The Founders had recently fought a war for independence.

THE GOVERNMENT'S DUTY

They knew that governments should protect the people,

THE CITIZEN'S PART

but they also believed that a free people should not become completely dependent on government for every aspect of their security.

They wanted a nation where citizens accepted responsibility for helping defend their communities when lawfully called upon.

They also knew human nature, and the danger that governments — including our own — could drift toward tyranny and oppress their citizens.



REMEMBER THIS

The Second Amendment was established as **another check and balance** to keep government in their lane, which was to protect our God-given rights and liberties.

Bible Connection

The Bible teaches that protecting innocent life is essential. Nehemiah encouraged the people rebuilding Jerusalem to be prepared to defend themselves while continuing their work.

NEHEMIAH 4:17

"Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon."

The Bible also teaches that wisdom and peace should guide our actions,

"If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men."

Romans 12:18

Christians are called to be peacemakers while recognizing that Scripture also records legitimate self-defense and the protection of others.

The Virtues Behind the Second Amendment

The Second Amendment is not only about a constitutional right. It also points to important character qualities.

PRINCIPLE

VIRTUE

Protecting innocent life

Courage

Responsible ownership

Self-control

Serving the community

Duty

Preparing wisely

Wisdom

Respecting the law

Integrity

Rights without character can be dangerous.

Character helps us use our rights wisely.

Rights Come with Responsibilities

The Founders understood that freedom requires responsibility. Owning tools or equipment that can protect life also requires:

- ◆ Learning proper safety.
- ◆ Respecting the law.
- ◆ Exercising self-control.
- ◆ Protecting innocent people.
- ◆ Never use force carelessly or unlawfully.

The Bible teaches that the strong should protect the weak.

PSALM 82:3–4

"Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked."

REMEMBER THIS

Wisdom means preparing wisely, avoiding unnecessary danger, and intervening when needed and necessary.

Constitution Fun Facts

- ◆ The Second Amendment was ratified on December 15, 1791.
- ◆ In the eighteenth century, many communities relied on citizen militias because there was no large permanent army or nationwide police system.
- ◆ The phrase "well regulated" generally meant properly trained, organized, and functioning well in the language of the Founders' time.
- ◆ The Second Amendment has been the subject of many court cases and public debates throughout American history.
- ◆ The whole amendment is one sentence long — just twenty-seven words.

FOUNDER SPOTLIGHT



George Mason

1725–1792

George Mason was one of Virginia's leading statesmen and the principal author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, a document that influenced the Bill of Rights.

He believed that liberty was safest when citizens remained informed, virtuous, and prepared to defend their communities.

FAMOUS QUOTE

"To disarm the people is the best and most effectual way to enslave them."

This quotation is widely attributed to George Mason in discussions of the Virginia Ratifying Convention, though historians debate the exact wording. It reflects a concern expressed during the founding era about preserving liberty.

Words to Know

Arms Weapons that may be used for lawful purposes such as defense.

Bear Arms To own and carry arms.

Militia Citizens who could be called to help defend their community or nation.

Well Regulated Properly trained, organized, and disciplined.

Security Safety and protection.

MEMORY VERSE

"Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teaches my hands to war, and my fingers to fight."

Psalm 144:1



COLOR IT IN

You finished Chapter Six!

The Second Amendment — two down, eight to go.

BILL OF RIGHTS



2 OF 10

- 1 Citizens who could be called to help defend their community or nation are a
- 2 Weapons that may be used for lawful purposes such as defense are called
- 3 "Well" meant properly trained, organized, and disciplined.
- 4 Safety and protection is another word for
- 5 The amendment protects the right of the to keep and bear Arms.
- 6 The amendment says that this right shall not be
- 7 A well regulated Militia is necessary to the security of a free
- 8 George was the principal author of the Virginia Declaration of Rights.
- 9 He said that to disarm the people is the best way to them.
- 10 Our memory verse says, "Blessed be the LORD my"

Second Amendment Word Search

Words run across, down, and diagonally — forwards and backwards. Circle each one as you find it.

Z M G R W L Y R K I W K I S
V G Q N G I D K Q T V F F T
G Z W D L D S E B U B A A R
P E O P L E S D G S L R D E
V M K W C C S M O A G I I N
M I N N P D D E R M R F T G
I E Q R C K E P N A Y U G T
L E C D R O G T G Z T R O H
I N V H E K N X A X I F F C
T S F U H O I D X L R E L G
I L T I S R R G E K U G H F
A A G A Y A F O A F C G X A
P V M W T O N Z O S E A E R
Y E C C A E I B O K S M S R

WORD BANK

Militia

Arms

Regulated

Security

People

Infringed

State

Mason

Enslave

Strength

Courage

Wisdom



Two of these words are not answers to anything. They are what this right must always be joined to — the courage to protect others, and the wisdom to know how.

Family Questions

Talk these through together before you write. There is no hurry.

1 • Why do you think the Founders believed citizens should share responsibility for the nation's security?

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2 • What did "well regulated" mean when the Constitution was written?

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3 • Why is responsibility just as important as freedom?

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4 • How does the Bible teach us to balance courage with peace?

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5 • What are some ways our family can practice responsibility every day?

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FOR THE PARENT OR GRANDPARENT

Question three is the hinge of the chapter. Ask for something the child is already trusted with — a chore, a tool, a younger sibling — and let them work out for themselves why the trust came with rules.

Family Activity

Time to take the responsibility challenge. Make a list of things in your home that require responsibility.

EXAMPLES:

☐

A bicycle • Name the safety rules you keep before you ride.

☐

A family pet • Say who feeds it, and what happens if no one remembers.

☐

A kitchen knife • Show how it is carried, and who in the house may use it.

☐

A car • List three things a driver must do before the engine starts.

☐

Power tools • Explain why these wait for training and permission.

Discuss why every useful tool requires wisdom, training, and self-control.

Then talk about why the Founders believed constitutional rights should also be exercised with responsibility and respect for the law.

A Grandparent's Thought

The Second Amendment reminds us that freedom is not only about enjoying rights—it may also need to be defended.

The Founders believed that a free nation depends upon citizens who are prepared, disciplined, and committed to the common good.

The Bible teaches the same principle: courage should be guided by wisdom, strength should be restrained by self-control, and every action should be motivated by love of God and love of neighbor.



True strength is not found merely in possessing power. It is found in having the character to use that power wisely and justly.