



Civics

for Christian Homeschoolers:

Citizen of Heaven,
Subject on Earth

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(Sample)

(Section titles indicate the week and day that section is read—e.g., “12.4” means that section is read on Week 12, Day 4.)

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(or the end of this sample).

1.2 – How to Study Civics, Two Key Questions

ONE OF THE GOALS OF THIS BOOK, as touched upon briefly in the introduction, is to help equip a young person like you to be able to do two main things:

1. understand the difference between the *just* and *unjust* use of the law (that is, the proper purpose of government)
2. develop a Christian viewpoint of your duties as a **citizen** of heaven and a **subject** of “your” government.

It is critical, then, that we stand fast, as Christians, first, in appropriately relating to our earthly government, but more importantly, in holding to this Biblical principle:

We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

And if we’re going to obey God rather than men, we ought to study to know what His word says, so we can compare it to what *man* says. Here’s a key concept we need to understand and put into practice for *any subject* we study:

Every written or spoken claim made by men should be compared to the Word of God.

Here are a few examples about how we can do this:

Example 1:

Someone says this to you:

“The government should pay for everybody’s school—I mean, education is our *right*, isn’t it?”

You can respond, “Well, that would involve the government’s taking money from one group and giving it to another, which is actually *stealing*, if you think about it. And the Bible says the government is to be a *terror* to evil actions like stealing. So its true purpose is to *punish* stealing, not *participate* in it.”

Example 2:

Imagine you’re a homeschooling parent, and you hear your child say, “Mom [or Dad], I read this magazine article that says it’s stupid to make your kids do a yearly evaluation just because the *government* says to. Do we still have to do one?” You can respond, “Well, I agree it’s unnecessary for the government to require a yearly evaluation, but it really doesn’t violate any part of our Christian



faith, and the Bible says, ‘Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake.’”

Example 3:

In a group conversation after church, somebody says, “Our representative voted in favor of *that* stupid bill? What an *idiot*! I hope a dump truck runs over his big, fat head! What do *you* think?” You can answer, “Yeah, I think it’s a bad law, and he shouldn’t have voted for it, but Christians are commanded to *pray* for government authorities, not speak *evil* of them.”



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Of course, the above examples are ones that you might hear in our *modern* day; sometimes we read writings by authors who lived many years ago—sometimes even centuries ago. So here are two critical questions for you to ponder as we begin the study of Civics (**and this applies to any subject!**):

1. Is it vital to compare what others say on a subject to what God’s Word says on that subject?
2. Should we still compare what someone says or writes to God’s Word even if the speaker/writer belongs to one or more of these groups?
 - Those who lived hundreds of years ago
 - Famous Christian preachers, authors, and/or leaders
 - Men or women who are highly regarded by many historians and/or today’s Christians
 - Early American leaders and Presidents

I hope to goodness you answered “Yes” to both of those questions! *Any* statement or claim made by *anyone* at *any* time in history *absolutely* should be compared to God’s Word.

For example, many would say that the Apostle Paul—who was a missionary, a martyr, and the author of a healthy chunk of the New Testament—was the greatest Christian who ever lived. But when he preached to the Christians in the city of Berea, *they didn’t just accept without question what he said as the truth*. Instead, they “searched the scriptures daily” to compare what Paul said with what the Bible said (Acts 17:10-11). “Okay, we checked it out, and what Paul said today matches up with what the Bible says, so what he said was all

right,” was the attitude of the Bereans. And that’s exactly what our approach should be today!

Any statement made by anyone at any time in history absolutely should be compared to God’s Word.

It’s also completely understandable, though, that a young person like yourself might feel unqualified or too intimidated to question something said by someone who falls into one of those groups I listed. And that’s all right; certainly nobody expects you to be as knowledgeable about law and history and politics than someone like that (I certainly don’t come close).

But comparing others’ ideas to God’s Word is a valuable skill to practice. Of course, this doesn’t mean that you start rudely arguing with everything anybody else says, like some kind of smart-alecky know-it-all. (You don’t want to be like that type of arrogant, smug little seven-year-old homeschooler—you know the kind I’m talking about—who loudly and smugly tries to correct, say, an adult tour guide leading a group of families on

a field trip, while everyone else in the group fantasizes about stuffing several tennis balls into little Chastity Grace’s mouth.) But when others are talking about politics or government—or any topic!—you can ask questions, try to recall the Bible’s words on the subject being discussed, and respectfully point out any differences that you know exist.

So, let’s get ready to learn a little Civics! I pray that this book will help you think Biblically and logically, boost your confidence, and make it fun and interesting for you.

Let’s Review!

- 1. What does the example of Paul and the Berean Christians remind us to do?**
- 2. What is the best sized tennis ball to stuff into the mouth of an arrogant little homeschooler who corrects adults? How can you respond to those who say something that doesn’t line up with what God’s Word says?**

For Additional Thought

Name another subject of study that you as a Christian homeschooler should strive to approach with a Biblical worldview. Why is this important in the subject you chose?



1.3 – Nuts and Bolts of Civics and Citizenship

Civics Defined

THE WORD *CIVICS* COMES FROM the Latin words *civis* (“citizen”), and *civitas* (“city,” “town,” “state,” “community”). The study of **civics** usually involves a review of various characteristics of government. It also includes the study of citizens and their relationship to (a) the government they live under, and (b) others around them who also live under that same government.

What Exactly Is a “Citizen”?

A **citizen** can be loosely defined as simply a person who lives and works in a certain nation or state. A stricter definition of the word “citizen” often refers to someone who has been born in that nation, often to a parent or parents who are legally citizens of that same nation, and who has certain rights and privileges not necessarily granted to *all* residents of that nation.

The Roman Empire in ancient times provides one historical example of this: Its government divided residents into several classes (including slaves), only a fraction of whom enjoyed the rights of full citizenship from birth to death. The Bible shows this class division¹ in the account of the Apostle Paul’s arrest by the Roman government after being falsely accused, and at the point when a Roman captain is about to scourge (whip) him, even before he had been found guilty of any crime. Paul first asks the captain, “Are you legally permitted to have me whipped, since I am a Roman citizen and have not been found guilty of a crime in a court of law?” The captain—who is concerned at Paul’s words, because he does not want to be liable for potentially violating a Roman citizen’s rights—then stops the scourging from being carried out. In fact, the captain even then remarks to Paul that he had to *buy* his own freedom, to which Paul replies that he was *born* a Roman citizen.

Like that account of Paul and the Roman captain, the United States Constitution is supposed to protect certain important rights of citizens. In fact, it is also supposed to protect the basic rights of non-citizens too. It’s partly because of that benefit that many people worldwide seek to obtain U. S. citizenship, or at least want to live and work in America. And when someone—whether he’s a citizen or not—has a personal history in a certain nation, of course, that experience tends to develop in him a kinship with local culture and language characteristics that differentiates him from residents of other nations—and even other areas in the *same* nation.

For example, as a resident of the United States of America—as compared to, say, Germany or Nigeria or Japan—I know that if a local friend invites me

¹ See Acts 22.

to watch a game of “football,” he doesn’t mean the game using a round ball, in which players aren’t allowed to touch the ball with their hands.² Instead, my friend is no doubt referring to the game where players wearing helmets and pads slam into each other repeatedly until 40 or 50 wind up with concussions.

And as a resident of North Carolina, as compared to, say, New Hampshire, Oregon, or Pennsylvania, I can be reasonably confident that if my family goes to a restaurant, a waitress—I mean, *server*—will at some point call me “Honey” as she offers a refill of sweet tea.



What the U. S. Constitution Says About Citizenship

The word *citizen* or *citizens* appears 22 times in the U. S. Constitution. Here are five key references to citizenship found there (emphasis added):

1. **Requirements for Representatives:** Only someone who has been a United States citizen for at least seven years and lives in the state that elects him may serve in the House of Representatives (Article I, Section 2).
2. **Requirements for Senators:** Only someone who has been a United States citizen for at least nine years and lives in the state that elects him may serve in the Senate (Article I, Section 2).
3. **Requirements for Presidents:** Only someone who is a “natural-born citizen” who has lived in the United States for 14 years or more is eligible to become President (Article II, Section 1).
4. **Protections Across States:** “The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States” (Article IV, Section 2).
5. **Citizenship Requirements:** “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside” (Fourteenth Amendment).

The last item above mentions “naturalized” citizens. A person not *born* a United States citizen can become a **naturalized citizen** if he goes through a legal process. This process is determined by Congress (and can be changed), since the Constitution grants that body the power to “establish a uniform rule of naturalization” (Article I, Section 8). Right now, the U. S. government requires those who want to become naturalized citizens to follow certain steps, including these:

² but *are* allowed to fall down, writhing in agony, if a player on the opposing team brushes up against *them*



- Get a permit to live in the United States (a “green card”)
- Live in the United States for at least five years
- Have fingerprints taken
- Pass an English test and a civics test
- Take an oath to the United States at a public ceremony

Requirements for Citizenship in Other Nations

The United States is not the only nation, of course, that sets requirements for citizenship. Establishing legal requirements to becoming a citizen is common around the rest of the world. Here are some examples of the requirements for those who would like to become citizens of various nations:

<p style="text-align: center;">AUSTRALIA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be at least 16 years old • Pass a citizenship test • Live there as a permanent resident • Be of “good character” 	<p style="text-align: center;">MEXICO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Live there for at least five years • Take an oath • Prove you can speak Spanish • Pass a test about Mexican history
<p style="text-align: center;">JAPAN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be at least 20 years old • Live there for at least five years • Have “good mental health” • Prove that you can support yourself (and your family) 	<p style="text-align: center;">EGYPT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be at least 21 years old • Live there for at least 10 years • Be familiar with the Arabic language • Be sane and not disabled, so you’re not a “burden” on society

Let’s Review!

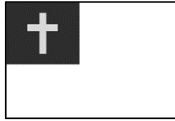
1. List the citizenship requirements for a United States representative, senator, and President.
2. Define the term naturalized citizen. Name several requirements a person must meet to become a naturalized citizen of the United States.

For Additional Thought

Think of a nation you’re interested in. Look up the requirements for citizenship, and jot down one interesting requirement.

1.4 - Take Action!

Citizen of Heaven



1. Find out the names of your district state representative and two senators. Write down their names, and look up their pictures online.
2. Pray for these three officials, and make a mental note (or write it down somewhere) to pray for them regularly.

Subject on Earth



Do an Internet search (www.duckduckgo.com is a great search engine) for “practice United States citizenship test,” and take it online. Write down how many you get right out of how many questions there are. Did you pass? 😊



7.3 – Socialism and Communism: The Absolute Pits

TODAY, LET’S FOCUS ON TWO OTHER government types: socialism and communism. Regrettably, support for these two systems has proliferated over the last few years, especially among young persons. In a recent poll of “millennials,” for example, 44 percent said they thought socialism was the best government/economic system, and seven percent preferred communism.³ This isn’t surprising, as most government-schooled students are taught year after year that the government should “run things” and “provide for everyone.” Somehow.

Socialism: Sounds Nice, Doesn’t Work

Socialism is characterized by several government actions:

- Seizing great powers for itself (and using these powers)
- Taxing “the rich” at a higher percent than “the poor” (the *government* decides who’s in each group, of course), and transferring this wealth (what Bastiat calls “plunder”)
- Penalizing, discouraging, and regulating private property
- Taking over of large segments of society or industry (education, health care, insurance, and so on)

Socialism worsens the lives of those under it—except for rulers, who get rich.

Socialistic governments discourage and criticize private property and penalize those who own it—often by pretending to pursue “fairness” or “equality” for the people. Socialists are famous for berating “the rich” for being dishonest, uncaring, and greedy; and socialists support programs that claim to be aimed at equalizing the people, no matter how.

It’s tough to say exactly *when* a government crosses the line from simply having many unjust programs of plunder and actually becoming socialist. We can clearly see in America today many programs that plunder; many would argue that the U. S. is fast approaching socialism. Of course, many Americans are perfectly happy with that and likely support socialism for two reasons: First, they see poverty, and socialism *sounds* virtuous, I guess, because it has the word “social” in its name and promises to deliver “fairness,” whatever that means. Second, most socialists have, as mentioned, sat for years under

³ Bradford Richardson, “Millennials Would Rather Live in Socialist or Communist Nation: Poll,” November 4, 2017, *The Washington Times*, <https://m.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/nov/4/majority-millennials-want-live-socialist-fascist-o>.

government schoolteachers, who almost never mention socialism's dismal, disastrous, and destructive track record.

But socialism's horrible 100 percent failure record leaves socialists without a leg to stand on. **Socialism has *never* succeeded as a governing system.** Ever. It has always—every single time—increased poverty, disease, and death.⁴ The exception to this wretchedness is *socialist rulers themselves*, and their families and friends, who become fabulously wealthy from swindling citizens. One recent example of this phenomenon occurred in socialist Venezuela. Dictator Hugo Chavez destroyed that nation's economy, which ended up with empty grocery stores, mass hunger/near-starvation, and general misery. But Chavez, his daughters, and his officials waltzed off with *tens of billions of dollars* in taxpayer money they had surreptitiously stolen over many years.

Why Socialism Can't Possibly Work

Famed Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises (1881-1973), who was a great champion of justice and liberty, explained the basic reason why socialism as an economic or government system cannot possibly work.⁵ He pointed out that **government planners, unlike business owners, have no idea how much of a good or service they should produce, or how much to charge for it.**

In a free market economy, millions of a nation's business owners spend their entire workweeks reacting to customers' purchasing decisions, adjusting how much they produce and how much they charge for it. No group of government planners, no matter how brilliant, could ever come close to duplicating the *billions* of decisions business owners and consumers make every day. There's really no way anyone—especially not a Christian—can successfully defend socialism, for at least four reasons:



Ludwig
von Mises

1. It has never worked.
2. It *can't* possibly work.
3. It ends up robbing from the poor and giving to the rich, because the rich wield power or strongly influence those in power. (And giving the rich more power over the poor is what socialists always claim they *oppose!*)
4. It turns the moral purpose of the law upside down by *stealing* property and *denying* the people of their liberty, instead of *protecting* property and *upholding* the liberties of the people.

⁴ One example that some American children *have* heard is the attempt at socialism (and resulting starvation) in the Plymouth Colony, before William Bradford ordered every family to farm its own land.

⁵ Ludwig von Mises, *Economic Calculation in the Socialist Commonwealth* (1920).



No Support for Socialism in the Bible

“But—but—Jesus was a *socialist revolutionary* who wanted to create economic equality among the people!”

That’s what some modern philosophers claim, apparently after chugging down four or five beers. But that claim is clearly false: The Bible affirms the right to own property many times in both the Old and New Testaments. Of course, one of the Ten Commandments, “*Thou shalt not steal*” (Exodus 20:15) only makes sense if the other person *owns the stolen property*. This idea is echoed in the New Testament in Ephesians 4:28: “*Let him that stole steal no more,*” among other passages. During the days of the early church, for example, after Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of their land, pretending to give all the money to the church, Peter then told them this (Acts 5:4, emphasis added):

*Whiles it remained, was it not **thine own**? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?*

And Jesus affirmed private property in His parable of the man who hired men to work in his fields. When the hired men who had worked all day (and were paid the same as the men who only worked a part of the day) got angry with their employer, that employer said this to one of them (Matthew 20:13-15, emphasis added):

*Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take **that thine is**, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with **mine own**?*

Some others claim—possibly after repeatedly hitting themselves in the head with hammers—that the Bible supports socialism when it recounts the early Christians, who “had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need” (Acts 2:44-45). But obviously this was a *voluntary* system that Christians joined into—looking out for each other; sharing their money and property; and taking care of the needy, widows, orphans, and families whose primary wage earners had been jailed or killed for their Christian faith. In fact, here’s how it worked, according to the Apostle Paul’s own instructions to the Corinthians (emphasis added):

*Every man according **as he purposeth in his heart**, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7).*

In other words, there’s no *command* on how much Christians should give to their poor fellowcitizens (“*every man according as he purposeth in his heart*”), or even that they have to give at all (“*not...of necessity*”). Christians are to give voluntarily, **when and how much they feel led by the Holy Spirit** to give. And the above historical account of the early Christian church’s actions in Acts

can't be taken for a model for *non-Christian governments* to force some in society to give up their property or money to others who didn't earn it.

Supporting Socialism = Opposing Logic and Freedom



Alexis de
Tocueville

French historian and political writer Alexis de Tocqueville, who gained fame for his 1835 work *Democracy in America*, described socialism like this (emphasis added):

A third and final trait, one which, in my eyes, best describes socialists of all schools and shades, is **a profound opposition to personal liberty and scorn for individual reason, a complete contempt for the individual.** They unceasingly attempt to mutilate, to curtail [limit], to obstruct personal freedom in any and all ways. **They hold that the State must not only act as the director of society, but must further be master of each man,** and not only master, but keeper and trainer....For fear of allowing him to err, the State must place itself forever by his side, above him, around him, better to guide him, to maintain him...to confine him. They call, in fact, for the forfeiture...of human liberty....[W]ere I to attempt to sum up what socialism is, I would say that it was simply a new system of serfdom....

Democracy [representative government, in this case] and socialism are not interdependent concepts. They are not only different, but opposing philosophies. Is it consistent with democracy to institute the most meddlesome, all-encompassing, and restrictive government, provided that it be publicly chosen and that it act in the name of the people? Would the result not be tyranny, under the guise of legitimate government...? Democracy extends the sphere of personal independence; socialism confines it. Democracy values each man at his highest; **socialism makes of each man an agent, an instrument, a number.** Democracy and socialism have but one thing in common—equality. But note well the difference. Democracy aims at equality in *liberty*. Socialism desires equality in *constraint* [control] and in *servitude* [slavery].⁶

Communism: Extreme, Violent Socialism

Communism is a more extreme version of socialism. Socialism, as we've seen, perverts the proper use of the law, which is to function as a "terror" to "evil" by protecting others from having their right to life, liberty, and property violated. Instead, socialism uses laws to plunder society and establish a powerful government that violates citizens' liberties. Like socialism, communism uses government force to strip the people of their liberties. **But communism is even worse than socialism, because com-**



The Communist
"Hammer and
Sickle" Logo

⁶ *Tocqueville's Critique of Socialism*, 1848, <https://oll.libertyfund.org/pages/tocqueville-s-critique-of-socialism-1848>.

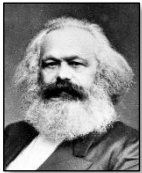


munism is characterized by even more of a threat and use of jail, violence, and murder against anyone who resists.

Communists take their key beliefs from their “bible,” a long essay titled *The Communist Manifesto*, written in 1848 by German philosopher Karl Marx (who was, by the way, an atheist and obsessed with Satan and satanic symbols). Marx believed that the world would evolve through several stages of knowledge and progress. The next-to-last stage (he thought) would be socialism, which would then transition into the last stage (you guessed it): communism. Marx saw this last stage as marked by an almost complete lack of government, in which the people all happily worked only as much as they wanted, voluntarily sharing every cent of their earnings and possessions with everyone else. This blissful, heaven-on-earth perfect state of work and happiness would eventually take over the entire world.

That’s not how it turned out.

The first communist state began in Russia in 1917, when an army led by Vladimir Lenin overthrew the Russian government. Lenin then—in an amazing coincidence—installed *himself* as dictator of what he called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (also called the U.S.S.R., or the Soviet Union). In 1924 Lenin died, and Joseph Stalin took his place as dictator from 1924 to 1953. From 1917, the year of the Russian Revolution, to 1989, when the U.S.S.R. broke apart, that first and most famous communist nation oversaw a reign of oppression, terror, and mass murder unseen in the world until then.



Karl Marx

Communism’s inherent bloodiness comes from evolutionism and atheism, two of Marx’s core beliefs, and the beliefs of nearly all Marxists. That is, *if man is just an evolved animal, right and wrong do not exist*. After all, animals kill and steal from each other all the time when they want something, and there’s nothing *sinful* about it—they’re just...animals. So it is with man, Marx taught. And with no God to fear, Marx believed, rulers should be permitted to do whatever they want—*absolutely whatever they want*—to accomplish their objectives.

Other communist dictators followed Marx and Lenin’s examples in setting up communist regimes. They cruelly oppressed citizens, silenced any disagreement or criticism they were aware of, and jailed or murdered those who threatened (or even looked like they *might* threaten) their rule.

In the twentieth century alone, communist governments (Russia, China, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Cuba, and others) brutally murdered over 100 million persons—and some historians estimate the total is closer to 150 million.⁷

Some of the major beliefs Marx promoted in the *Communist Manifesto* include these:

⁷ Stephane Courtois, *The Black Book of Communism* (Harvard University Press, 1997).

- Outlawing religion, especially Christianity⁸
- Eliminating private property
- Indoctrinating children via government schools
- Controlling transportation and communication (to manipulate the way citizens travel and get news)⁹

Under socialism, when rulers use the law to plunder citizens, empowering and enriching themselves as well, they usually at least (pathetically) try to *excuse* their taking away property rights and other liberties by claiming that they're doing it to "help the poor," "promote equality," "support the working man," "save the environment," or some other noble-sounding cause that many government-educated persons often swallow without giving it too much thought.

Communism just carries to its logical extreme this socialistic government "right" to plunder and take over citizens' property, insisting that the state has the right to keep building up socialism more and more until the government takes total control over every aspect of society. Lenin himself openly admitted: "The goal of socialism is communism."

Some communist dictators do *claim* that they set up and operate communist states for the good of the people who will live under it. But most communist rulers barely even bother to pretend they're looking out for the people's welfare. They just announce that they are in charge; in their view, the world arose from an evolutionary process, and therefore...

- they are the "fittest,"
- they are fulfilling their "evolutionary destiny," and
- *they can do anything they want to anybody they want to do it to*, especially to those who get in their way.

On that note, this must be said: Some of the greatest respect due anyone who ever lived belongs to those Christians who suffered and died violently under communist governments, *still* submitting to and praying for their evil rulers.

With communism's history of godlessness, tyranny, and murder, it's hard to take anyone seriously who talks about it as a workable system of government. It's so horrible that many philosophers and writers have asked: "How could such a system come about?" Alexander Solzhenitsyn (1918-2008), a Nobel Prize-winning Russian writer who was jailed for eight years for criticizing then-dictator Joseph Stalin, answered that question this way:

⁸ One reason why Christianity is persecuted in communist countries is that Christians teach of a future *heavenly* kingdom, which undercuts communist claims that a paradise based on communism can be created on *earth*.

⁹ There are other head-shakingly awful elements found in the *Communist Manifesto* that we'll review and discuss in class when we read excerpts from the *Manifesto*, which is included in Volume 2 of *World Literature for Christian Homeschoolers*.



Men have forgotten God; that's why this happened.

A Word You Should Know

As an informed young person, you should be familiar with the term **fascism**.

Fascism describes a *philosophy that promotes the absolute power of the state as its ultimate goal*. The name *fascism* originates from the Latin word *fascis*, which is a bundle of rods tied together with an axe.¹⁰ The Roman Empire used the *fascis* as a symbol of its power and authority.

Fascist governments take over or heavily regulate businesses, restrict individual rights, and act upon the belief that the state has the right to do whatever it wants, whenever it wants, however it wants. Of course, those who support fascism are often—by an amazing coincidence—the exact same ones who want to be *in charge* of the government, and not be *ruled* by it.

Probably the two most well-known fascist states were in Italy from 1922-1945, led mainly by Benito Mussolini, and in Nazi Germany from 1933-1945, under Adolph Hitler. Socialist and communist governments, because of their anti-property and anti-liberty tendencies, certainly can be classified as fascistic.

And here's the real kicker: In the loony world we live in, those who *support* big governments often call those who *oppose* powerful governments "fascists"! I've heard many conversations in my life that sounded something like this:

STUDENT PROTESTER: Excuse me, sir! Will you sign this petition to make college education *free* for all students?

MAN WALKING BY: Well...uh, no. I don't think governments should take money from some and give it to others who didn't earn it. That's stealing. You want to go to college? Then pay for it yourself!

STUDENT PROTESTER: You *fascist*!

Let's Review!

1. Define *socialism*, *communism*, and *fascism*.
2. Why can't socialism or communism possibly work well?
3. How do atheism and evolutionism contribute to the system of communism?

For Additional Thought

If they don't work, why do you think socialist and communist governments still exist, and why do many people still support them?

¹⁰ We'll study this idea of the *fascis* more thoroughly in our World History class review of Ancient Rome; it's quite fascinating!

10.4 – Take Action!

Citizen of Heaven



1. **Pray for the President of the United States. Then pray for your parents and siblings, as well as any “fellowcitizen” Christian(s) you know struggling or facing hardships.**
2. **Imagine yourself as a special advisor to the President. One day, in front of many others in a meeting, the President orders you to appoint a known abortion supporter as an assistant. How can you handle the situation in a way that obeys God, but also “honors the king,” as the Bible commands Christian subjects to do?**

Subject on Earth



Look up the population of the United States and write down the number. Now, since there are also 435 representatives in the House, how many residents does each representative now represent, instead of the original 30,000 residents per member? (You can use a calculator, of course, to speed up the division problem.) How effectively do you think a representative can speak for this many residents? Can you come up with a way to fix this conundrum? (Be fearless and creative!)



11.3 – Juries, Part 1: Two Types, Two Challenges

IMAGINE YOU OPEN YOUR MAILBOX, and inside you find a letter from your local government ordering you to appear at an upcoming date for jury duty. Well, you have many things to think about! Let’s talk about some of them today, starting with some jury basics:

Two Main Jury Types

There are two main types of juries. A **grand jury** is a group of about 16-23 local adult citizens who are called *to determine whether there is enough evidence to charge someone with committing a crime* (usually a more serious one). If a grand jury decides there’s enough evidence, it will **indict**¹¹ the person (charge him of a crime). A **petit jury** is a group—usually 12—that sits in court and sorts through evidence given by the prosecution and the defense. Based on this evidence, a petit jury *decides whether a defendant is “guilty” or “not guilty.”*



The Constitution’s Take on Juries

The Constitution mentions juries several times:

- **Local Jury Trial** – Article III, Section 2 secures the accused the right to be tried by a jury in the same area where the supposed crime took place.¹²
- **Grand Jury Required** – The Fifth Amendment says that no one has to answer for a serious crime unless he is indicted by a grand jury.
- **Unbiased Local Jury** – The Sixth Amendment guarantees an accused person a trial by an “impartial” (unbiased) jury made up of persons who live in the area where the supposed crime took place.
- **Jury’s Decision Final** – The Seventh Amendment confirms the right to a jury trial and says that a jury’s decision is final, unless it is successfully appealed to a higher court.

The Importance of Juries and Justice

Remember our discussion of common law? One of the points I stressed was that in many cases, common law transcends statutory law, since unjust statutory laws are often passed by distant legislative bodies that unfairly burden the people, instead of provide justice for the people.

¹¹ pronounced “in-DITE”

¹² See Week 11, Day 1.

To restate: Common law more often reflects the law’s moral purpose: to provide justice—or more accurately, to prevent *injustice*.

So, since local citizens don’t usually participate in the writing of laws, what’s one way they can legally restrain the government from promoting injustice?

The answer: juries! In our nation, the key institution of the local jury charged with judging an accused person’s guilt or non-guilt is critical. Here’s why:

Local juries more often rule in a way that reflects common law traditions, regularly taking an opportunity to ensure that *justice* is rendered to a person accused of a crime.

Jury Challenge #1: Judges and Prosecutors (Bad Ones)



A Petit Jury Box

The first point local juries (or *any* jury, for that matter) should consider in ruling whether an accused person is guilty or not guilty is the possibility that a judge or a prosecutor is misusing his position and distorting a trial and slanting it against the accused. The unpleasant truth: There are judges and prosecutors across our nation who act wickedly, corruptly, or unjustly in courtrooms where the lives and futures of accused persons hang in the balance.

As a way to encourage people always to pray to our just, merciful God, Jesus told a parable¹³ of an “unjust judge” who didn’t care about the plight of a widow in danger. Even though she had every right to expect the law to protect her from an enemy who threatened to harm her, the judge helped the widow—one of the most vulnerable members of society!— *only because she kept asking him for help, and not because he was fulfilling his proper role as a government representative: to prevent her from being harmed.*

Some judges and prosecutors today commit unjust acts like preventing defense attorneys from presenting evidence that shows an accused person is innocent, ordering juries to find a defendant guilty, or something similar.

Jury Challenge #2: Laws (Yes, Bad Ones)

In addition to dealing with corrupt judges and prosecutors, sometimes juries find themselves grappling with *the law itself*. We read previously about the ex-

¹³ See Luke 18:1-8. No doubt Jesus used this example because many of His listeners, even 2,000 years ago, were familiar with similar judges.



cess number of confusing, malleable, hard-to-understand (and therefore hard to obey) statutory laws currently on the books.

Here’s an example of how much of a problem this has become: In a study by the U. S. Government Accountability Office, 19 different professional tax preparers—*experts who make a living figuring out how much their customers owe in taxes*—were asked to calculate the same exact tax return (an example just made up for the study). The result?

Every single tax preparer got something wrong, and only two out of 19 preparers figured out the correct refund amount that was due.¹⁴

Juries should consider the possibility that a judge or prosecutor is corrupt—or that a law is simply unjust.

Now, if these tax returns had been real and checked carefully by government agents, mistakes would have been found, and the taxpayers and preparers could have been fined or jailed.

We discussed on a previous day¹⁵ the number of baffling, confusing statutory laws in our nation. In his book *Three Felonies a Day: How the Feds Target the Innocent*,¹⁶ attorney Harvey A. Silvergate points out that today’s average American unknowingly breaks several serious laws by just living his everyday life, completely unaware that he could be indicted, convicted, and jailed or fined for harmless acts he doesn’t even know are listed as crimes. In other words, these crimes (a) are almost never committed with the intent of breaking laws, and (b) shouldn’t be crimes in the first place.

What Can Be Done?

So what can juries do about corrupt judges/prosecutors and unjust laws, which often bring innocent persons face to face with fines, loss of property, prison time, or worse?

Well, juries in thousands of cases have had to stand up and act decisively to make sure justice was delivered in the case in which they heard evidence. This is why William Blackstone¹⁷ famously called the right to a jury trial the “palladium [safeguard] of civil rights.”¹⁸

¹⁴ Statement of Michael Brostek, United States. Government Accountability Office, “Paid Tax Return Preparers: In a Limited Study, Chain Prepares Made Serious Errors,” April 4, 2006, www.gao.gov/new.items/d06563t.pdf

¹⁵ Week 8, Day 1

¹⁶ Harvey A. Silvergate, *Three Felonies a Day: How the Feds Target the Innocent* (Encounter Books, 2011).

¹⁷ See Week 8, Day 2.

¹⁸ Jacob G. Hornberger, “The Bill of Rights: Trial by Jury,” January 1, 2005, The Future of Freedom Foundation, www.fff.org/explore-freedom/article/bill-rights-trial-jury.

And how, exactly, can juries “safeguard” the rights of an accused person whom they believe has been unjustly accused of a crime? There’s a two-word answer coming up next week!

Let’s Review!

1. How are *grand juries* and *petit juries* different?
2. How can judges and laws, which are supposed to provide justice, result in *injustice*?

For Additional Thought

Think of a way that a judge presiding over a case can create a situation where there is injustice for the accused person.



13.2 – Voting, Part 1: Elections and the Right to Vote

VOTING SEEMS LIKE A CLEAR-CUT issue on the surface: “Everybody needs to vote—it’s how we Americans participate in our government!” But like any other civics-related topic, it deserves close inspection beyond the simplistic claims of many citizens and politicians.



Elections for U. S. Government Officials

Of course, there are many more elections in states, counties, and towns (for mayors, sheriffs, school board members, and other local officials). Here we’ll focus on the elections of representatives, senators, and Presidents.

House of Representatives – The House is, again, one of the two bodies of the U. S. Congress. States typically have districts in which elections are held to decide who represents each district in the House (voters vote for a candidate in their local district). Representatives are elected for two-year terms.

The number of districts/representatives allowed for each state is roughly tied to each state’s population. Because of their relatively small populations, Alaska, Delaware, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming have the least number of representatives (1 each). California has the most representatives (53). A majority of votes wins the election. There are 435 representatives in the House.

Senate – The Senate is the other body of Congress. There are two senators per state (100 total, of course). Each senator is elected for a six-year term.

Originally, the Constitution was set up so that state legislatures sent senators to Congress. This made it more likely that states would send senators who would guard against attempts by the U. S. government to seize power over the states. Unfortunately, the Seventeenth Amendment, which was passed in 1913, eliminated the involvement of state legislatures in sending senators to Washington, D.C. Now all a candidate has to do is convince a majority of his state’s voters to win the election.

President – As discussed before,¹⁹ the President of the United States is elected through the Electoral College “point” system. Presidents are elected to four-year terms.

¹⁹ Week 10, Day 3

Who Has the Right to Vote?

First, a few voting nuts and bolts . States require certain things before someone may legally vote. The government of the state where I live (North Carolina), for example, says that a voter must be...

- 18 or older
- a U. S. citizen
- a resident (for 30+ days) in the county where he votes
- a non-felon (not currently in prison, on probation, or on parole for committing a felony)

That seems reasonable upon first glance, but it's not too comforting to stop and appraise the above requirements for voters—and the basic requirements are similar in most other states. The state is saying, essentially, that a voter...

- must not be (currently) dead²⁰
- must be a U. S. citizen
- must live within a certain area
- isn't a convicted violent criminal
- must have had 18 or more yearly cakes with candles

Of course, the U. S. citizenship requirement is often too lightly regarded by those born in America; it means more to those who have immigrated here and worked to fulfill the naturalization process. But it still seems like a pretty undemanding list to check off to qualify as a voter. It might be helpful, however, to consider some other basic requirements.

Who Should Have the Right to Vote?

Restrictions on who has the right to vote have been common for hundreds of years. In various historical eras and locations, laws have limited the right to vote to groups like these:

- property holders
- taxpayers
- men
- those 18 and older (or 21 and older)

The idea of allowing only those who own some property to vote in elections sounds repulsive to today's typical politically correct citizen. But the key idea behind it (although it has never worked perfectly, of course) was that *only those who had some property at risk*, depending on how an election went, should be allowed to vote.

That is, should someone who, for example, doesn't work at all and collects welfare *have the same one vote* as someone who owns a business, provides millions in wealth to the community, and employs 1,000 workers? And isn't there a possibility that those who don't own any property (or as much property) will

²⁰ Many scientists who hold test tubes and wear white lab coats now believe this condition often makes voting more difficult, although not impossible.



tend to try to vote themselves the property of the greater producers and property owners in society?

This isn't to say, of course, that only the above bulleted groups should have the right to vote. But it does seem like a decent attempt to limit the impact of voters who would focus their votes on attempting to take the property of others. In his autobiography *Up from Slavery*, the great American and former slave Booker T. Washington referred to this concept of tying voting rights to property ownership, saying this:

[A]s I look back now over the entire period of...[the freedom of former slaves], I cannot help feeling that it would have been wiser if some plan could have been put in operation which would have made the possession of a certain amount of education or property, or both, a test for the exercise of [the right to vote].

Let's Review!

1. How are representatives, senators, and Presidents elected?
2. Why have some governments restricted the right to vote to those who own property and/or pay taxes?

For Additional Thought

What requirement(s) would *you* place upon a person before he is eligible to vote?

14.3 – The Poor, Part 2: What Governments and Christians Can Do

REMEMBER OUR PREVIOUS DISCUSSION²¹ on how Christians should take care of their poor? We talked about early Christians who took care of the needs of their fellowcitizens (Acts 2:44-45) and how God instructs Christians to “do good,” especially to other Christians (Galatians 6:10). And since we know that Jesus said, “[T]he poor always ye have with you,” what should we do about the non-Christian poor, especially in our community?

Why Government Programs Don’t End Poverty

Let’s start by looking at how government actions, some of which are supposed to *help* the poor, actually continue poverty, and even make it worse. It’s critical to grasp the concept of *why* governments hurt the poor with their programs. First, recall the section on socialism you read a few weeks ago.²² We saw that socialism *can’t possibly work*, because this fact is unescapable when a government tries to run an economy:

Government planners lack accurate signals on how they’re doing—via instant feedback from customers—like most businesses have. Planners also lack the urgency to act on signals they *do* receive.

Business owners use this feedback to change prices, add or discontinue products, and make more or fewer products—so their businesses will *survive*.

But the same poor, erroneous results occur any time a government agency tries to help the poor, set the price of bread, educate children, or run anything else, for that matter:

The problem that is supposed to be fixed by the government remains—and often worsens. And *the government has no incentive to become more efficient and responsive*, like a business owner has.

That is, the business owner has to adapt to his customers’ various wants or go out of business and put himself and his family at risk. No matter how badly a government program is run, those running it almost never lose their jobs, because there’s no direct risk to them, like there is to a business owner. *If government employees/managers/agencies perform their jobs poorly, it’s the taxpayers’ money—not their company’s money—that gets wasted.*

And here’s a fascinating idea to ponder: Imagine you’re in charge of a government program that’s supposed to help the poor, then think about this: **What would happen to your job if your program succeeded in totally ending pov-**

²¹ Week 6, Day 2

²² Week 7, Day 3



erty? It's pretty obvious. So then, what do you think will be the mindset of employees of a government program to end poverty? Will they do all they can to reduce the number of poor?

Another point for Christians to consider: Should we be in favor of government programs to help the poor?

Regardless of what the government says about this program or that program, we shouldn't forget this: *Any* government action that takes money from somebody and gives it to somebody else who didn't earn it is *theft*. And the proper purpose of the government, as we've reviewed many times in this book, is to be a *terror* to evil, not to *participate* in it!

How Governments Can Help the Poor

Here are just a few of the ways that the U. S. government (as well as other governments, of course) *can* help the poor:

1. **End the “War on Poverty.”** This program—like every other U. S. government program with “war” in its name (“War on Drugs,” “War on Terrorism,” etc.)—has been a colossal failure. The War on Poverty began in 1964, supposedly to end poverty in the United States. Taxpayers have spent to date more than \$22,000,000,000,000 (that's \$22 *trillion*) on the War on Poverty. Currently it has about 80 welfare programs,²³ but the percentage of Americans counted as “poor,” *which was decreasing when the War on Poverty began*, has remained roughly the same. Even worse, the War on Poverty has fixed into the minds of millions the idea that they don't need to be self-reliant, even if they're able to work, since the government (which means taxpayers, of course) will take care of their needs.
2. **End minimum wage laws.** When the government says that no one is allowed to work for, say, less than \$15 per hour, *it hurts the very people it claims to help*—the poor! That is, those not yet worth \$15 per hour to an employer will lose their jobs. Obviously, when the people losing their jobs are the ones at the lower end of the wage scale...that's not exactly helping the poor. (We'll talk more about minimum wage laws later this year in Economics.)
3. **Cut or Eliminate Taxes.** When businesses are taxed, they send money to the government that they would've used partly to raise the salaries of existing employees and hire more employees, including entry-level workers who earn the lowest wages. This fact was confirmed yet again in 2017 when Congress lowered the business tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent. When this happened, several companies, including AT&T and Comcast,

²³ Rachel Sheffield and Robert Rector, “The War on Poverty After 50 Years,” September 15, 2014, The Heritage Foundation, <https://www.heritage.org/poverty-and-inequality/report/the-war-poverty-after-50-years>.

announced that they would provide hundreds of millions of dollars in pay raises and bonuses to employees.²⁴

Governments can help the poor in other ways (cutting regulations, spending, and ending giveaways to foreign nations, and more), but the point is this: As we can easily deduce from the above examples, government programs and actions are clearly not the functions of a *just* government—one that limits itself to being a “terror” to “evil.” And surprise, surprise—God’s Word turns out to be right yet again!—a government that violates the Bible’s description of the government’s *true* purpose ends up worsening the plight of those under its rule.

What Christians Can Do for the Poor

First, our *approach* to the subject of wealth and poverty is important: We ought to see every talent we have and material good we have as a blessing received from God:

For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

Do we work hard at jobs to earn money?

Do we practice the piano for years to become skillful?

Do we shoot thousands of jump shots to become better basketball players?

Do we experiment hundreds of times before an invention finally works successfully?

Of course we do!

But still, in every case, **it is God who gives us the ability and opportunity.**

We ought to view everything we own—our talents, our possessions, and our money—as ultimately *His*. Then aiding the poor becomes more of a “giving what God has given us.”

That said, here are a few things we should keep in mind when considering and helping the poor in our community:

1. **Set a good example.** In our age, because of broken families, indulgent and lazy parents, and a government school system that instills an “I’m entitled!” mentality into children, many Americans, especially young persons, just flat out don’t have the desire or know-how to *work*. So Christians need to set a good example:

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now

²⁴ Anjali Athavaley and David Shepardson, “AT&T, Two Banks Offer Bonuses, Pay Hikes in Wake of U. S. Tax Reform,” December 20, 2017, Reuters, www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-tax-companies/att-two-banks-offer-bonuses-pay-hikes-in-wake-of-u-s-tax-reform-idUSKBN1EE2NB.



them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12).

Christians shouldn't expect to eat if they don't work, and they need to quit wasting time nosing into others' business, and use that time to work. We ought to show others what God intends for mankind regarding work.

2. **Take care of the poor.** Christians should be known as generous to the poor. Truly needy individuals in our community—the fatherless, the widows, the elderly, the disabled—need our attention and assistance. When we “*remember the poor*” (Galatians 2:10) like the ideal woman in Proverbs 31 who “*stretcheth out her hand to the poor*” (Proverbs 31:20), it glorifies God, conveys an effective testimony, and blesses the *givers*, too:

The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it (Proverbs 29:7).

He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor (Proverbs 22:9).

He that giveth unto the poor shall not lack...he that hideth his eyes shall have many a curse (Proverbs 28:27).

And if we *Christians* don't unselfishly help the broken and needy members around us, how are we any different from the social-media-obsessed, endlessly-selfie-taking, screen-addicted, \$7-cup-of-coffee-buying, pleasure-seeking members of society we see everywhere?

3. **Prove our faith in Christ.** There's something amiss with someone who claims that he's a Christian and doesn't care about the poor or needy, whether they are within or without the Christian church:

[W]hoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion...how dwelleth the love of God in him?(1 John 3:17)

If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone (James 2:15-17).

That is, both above passages of God's Word ask a serious question: Can a person who regularly refuses to help others in need even be a Christian at all?

Let's Review!

1. Why do government programs almost never actually accomplish what they set out to do?
2. Name some ways governments can help the poor.
3. Name some ways Christians can help the poor.

For Additional Thought

Can you think of another specific way that a government that lowers taxes can help the poor?

**NEXT:
SAMPLE QUIZ!**





Home School Partners – High School 1B: Civics, Week 4: Quiz 1

- ___ 1. *The Law* describes individuality, liberty, and property as ____.
(A) gifts from God (B) granted by the government
(C) less important than the law (D) unimportant
- ___ 2. *The law* is properly defined as the collective right of ____.
(A) food and clothing (B) self-defense (C) equality (D) voting
- ___ 3. According to *The Law*, if the government did not provide for people's needs, then the people would ____.
(A) provide for themselves (B) be forced to steal from others
(C) starve to death (D) need more laws
- ___ 4. *The perversion of the law* that has happened in many nations happens when the government ____.
(A) protects the rich (B) steals property it should protect
(C) lets people alone (D) protects property
- ___ 5. The "fatal tendency of mankind" that Bastiat points out is fact that people often try to ____.
(A) protect their own property (B) give away too much
(C) live without having to work (D) get rich
- ___ 6. A government that limited itself to its proper function would produce a more ____ society.
(A) just (B) stable (C) prosperous (D) all of these
- ___ 7. The entire, appropriate, moral purpose of government is to ____.
(A) provide for people (B) ensure equality
(C) stop property violations (D) take care of the poor
- ___ 8. Bastiat's term *lawful (legal) plunder* refers to when ____ steal(s) from ____.
(A) government, people (B) people, stores
(C) government, government (D) people, government
- ___ 9. *Lawful (Legal) plunder* threatens a society more than *illegal plunder* because legal plunder ____.
(A) angers plundered victims (B) confuses justice
(C) makes voting too important (D) all of these
- ___ 10. Bastiat's main point about "suffrage" (voting) is that it wouldn't matter *who* voted in a nation as long as ____.
(A) all adults voted (B) voters couldn't vote to plunder
(C) women could vote (D) voters were educated
- ___ 11. The example of Paul and the Berean Christians reminds us to ____.
(A) treat others kindly (B) respect authority
(C) check man's words against God's word (D) all of these

- ___ 12. To be eligible for the U. S. presidency, a person must have lived in the United States for at least ___ years.
(A) 7 (B) 9 (C) 10 (D) 14
- ___ 13. To be eligible for the House of Representatives, a person must be a U. S. citizen for at least ___ years.
(A) 7 (B) 9 (C) 10 (D) 14
- ___ 14. To be eligible for the Senate, a person must be a U. S. citizen for at least ___ years.
(A) 7 (B) 9 (C) 10 (D) 14
- ___ 15. The definition of a *naturalized* U. S. citizen is someone who has _____.
(A) been born in the U. S. (B) completed steps to become a citizen
(C) both A & B (D) neither A nor B
- ___ 16. What two conditions have traditionally qualified someone as a *natural-born* U. S. citizen? (Choose two.)
(A) being born in the United States
(B) passing a citizenship test
(C) having lived in the United States for at least five years
(D) having two American citizen parents
- ___ 17. The debate over whether “anchor babies” are U. S. citizens hinges upon whether they are actually _____.
(A) under the U. S. gov’t’s jurisdiction (B) old enough to be citizens
(C) born in the U. S. (D) able to vote
- ___ 18. The Fourteenth Amendment was written to grant U. S. citizenship to _____.
(A) women (B) those 18 and older
(C) former male slaves (D) illegal immigrants
- ___ 19. Philippians 3:20 says that a Christian’s true _____, or citizenship, is in _____.
(A) jurisdiction, the world (B) conversation, the world
(C) jurisdiction, heaven (D) conversation, heaven
- ___ 20. The word *fellowcitizens* is used to describe _____.
(A) persons in one nation (B) families
(C) Christians on earth (D) those waiting on U. S. citizenship

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