

Civics: A Christian Worldview.
Two Excuses for Too-Powerful Government (10-15 minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY

Instructions

1. **Objective:** Students review two common excuses used by (a) advocates of too-powerful government and (b) Christians who want to use government to stamp out sin in society.
2. Print copies of Page 2 for each student, and hand out.
3. Tell students (give them 5-7 minutes!) to read the handout and fill in the blanks, then discuss as a class.

Answer Key

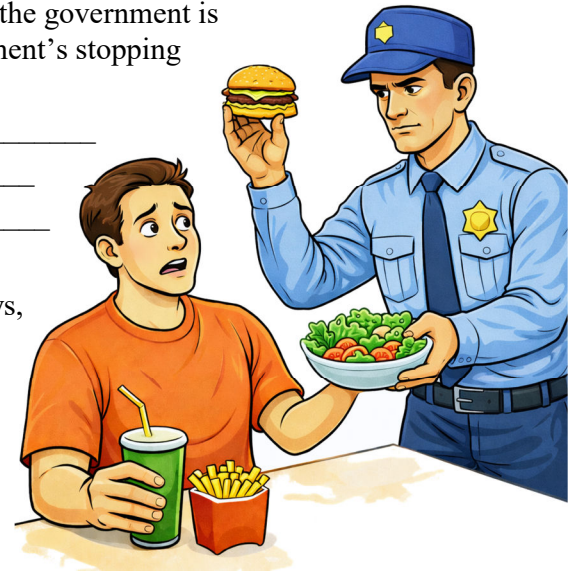
1. The government is supposed to be a threat to those who would harm, and a punisher of those who *do* harm—but *other people*, not themselves. It would be ludicrous, anyway, to try to do something like this; what would the government have to do—prevent people from smoking, eating ice cream, drinking alcohol, watching too much TV, not exercising enough, and so on?
2. Hatred is compared to murder in the Bible, yes, but it does not physically *harm* the object of hatred, so it is outside the legitimate jurisdiction of the law. (What’s the law supposed to do—have the person who hates someone else executed for murder?) Now, if the “hater” acts upon his hatred to assault or steal from or damage the property of the person he hates, that’s certainly a matter for the law.
3. Jobs and wages are totally outside the proper purpose of the law, unless some type of theft/fraud or injury occurs. (Examples: an employer cheats an employee out of wages, a consumer of a product is made sick or dies after using it, and so on.)
4. Adultery is wrong, yes, but if no one is physically harmed or stolen from, it’s not a matter of the law. Now, if someone assaults someone else, yes, that’s certainly a matter that the law should take care of, becoming a “revenger” of that person who was assaulted.
5. It’s true; some parents wouldn’t. But that doesn’t mean the government should order *everyone* to put their children in government schools! Besides, *not* putting your children in school is *not harming* them. Some might call it “neglect” (and of course, many Christians would call it “smart”!), but this does not involve anyone harming or stealing from anyone, and thus should be outside the government’s authority.

Civics: A Christian Worldview. Two Excuses for Too-Powerful Government

Use the blanks to answer the following examples that demonstrate the common claims of (a) those who believe in too-powerful government, or (b) those Christians who want to use the government's power to stamp out not only *crimes*, but *sins* that do not harm or commit theft from others.

1. "The government needs to regulate food choices, because citizens often don't make healthful decisions on their own. Come on—you Christians always say that the government is supposed to be a threat to *harm*, so you should support the government's stopping people from *harming* themselves!"

2. "Hating someone should be punished by law, because the Bible says, 'Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer'" (1 John 3:15).



3. "The government should control wages and employment, because jobs are hard to find sometimes, and some people just can't be trusted to find or keep jobs on their own."

4. "The government should outlaw adultery, because it's morally wrong—even if no one is harmed."

5. "We need government schools, because without them, a lot of parents wouldn't even bother to teach their kids how to read or write."
