

Civics: A Christian Worldview.
The Bible and *The Law*. Government's Proper Role (20-25 minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY

Instructions

1. **Objective:** Students review eight scenarios and explain why they are improper uses of government force, then compare to the Bible's teaching on government's proper role.
2. Print a copy of Pages 2 and 3 for each student (front to back if possible!), and hand out.
3. Read the instructions together, and answer any questions.
4. Give students 15 minutes to answer individually, then discuss together as pairs/groups/tables.
5. When groups are finished discussing together, discuss as a class. Ask for many volunteers!

Answer Key

1. **Minimum wage laws**
 - Activity: Labor
 - Force: Fines or legal penalties
 - Issue: Blocks voluntary contracts between workers and employers.
2. **Feeding the homeless without permits**
 - Activity: Charity
 - Force: Fines or arrest
 - Issue: Punishes compassion unless controlled by government.
3. **Forced business closures**
 - Activity: Business
 - Force: Closure orders and fines
 - Issue: Criminalizes peaceful economic activity.
4. **Farm subsidies**
 - Activity: Agriculture
 - Force: Taxation
 - Issue: Transfers wealth to favored producers.
5. **Required union representation**
 - Activity: Labor
 - Force: Loss of job or legal exclusion
 - Issue: Forces association and financial support against conscience.
6. **Homeschooling restrictions**
 - Activity: Education
 - Force: Legal penalties
 - Issue: Overrides parental authority.
7. **Restrictions on church gatherings**
 - Activity: Religion
 - Force: Fines or closures
 - Issue: Regulates worship instead of protecting it.
8. **Occupational licensing**
 - Activity: Labor
 - Force: Fines or shutdowns
 - Issue: Requires permission for honest work and protects insiders.

Key Takeaway

The Bible teaches that government exists to restrain evil and punish wrongdoing, not to manage peaceful human activity. When government uses force to control these, it goes beyond being “a terror to evil” and becomes a source of injustice.

Civics: A Christian Worldview. The Bible and The Law. Government's Proper Role

Frederic Bastiat argued that government's proper role is to protect justice, not to organize human activity by force. Many centuries before Bastiat, of course, the Bible taught this—that government exists to restrain evil (harm), not to control every aspect of man's life, saying that government's purpose is to be *“not a terror to good works, but to the evil...for he [the ruler] is...a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil”* (Romans 13:3). With this in mind, read each scenario carefully and answer the questions to the right.

<p>Scenario 1: A state legislature raises the minimum wage to a new level and announces that any employer who pays less will face fines or legal penalties. Even if a worker willingly agrees to work for a lower wage to gain experience or keep a job, the agreement is made illegal by the government.</p>	<p>What action is the government taking?</p> <p>What human activity is being organized by law (labor, charity, religion, agriculture, business, art, or education)?</p> <p>What force/penalty is used to enforce this policy?</p> <p>Why is this not a proper role for government?</p>
<p>Scenario 2: A city enforces rules requiring permits before individuals or churches may distribute food to the homeless in public spaces. Those who give food without approval may receive fines or face arrest, even if no harm or disturbance occurs.</p>	<p>What action is the government taking?</p> <p>What human activity is being organized by law (labor, charity, religion, agriculture, business, art, or education)?</p> <p>What force/penalty is used to enforce this policy?</p> <p>Why is this not a proper role for government?</p>
<p>Scenario 3: Government authorities order businesses such as restaurants or gyms to close, even though the owners have committed no crime. Business owners and employees are legally prevented from working and earning income.</p>	<p>What action is the government taking?</p> <p>What human activity is being organized by law (labor, charity, religion, agriculture, business, art, or education)?</p> <p>What force/penalty is used to enforce this policy?</p> <p>Why is this not a proper role for government?</p>
<p>Scenario 4: Farmers are sometimes paid or required by law to limit how much they produce or to destroy excess crops. These actions are enforced to control prices, even while people in other areas lack affordable food.</p>	<p>What action is the government taking?</p> <p>What human activity is being organized by law (labor, charity, religion, agriculture, business, art, or education)?</p> <p>What force/penalty is used to enforce this policy?</p> <p>Why is this not a proper role for government?</p>
<p>Scenario 5: In certain workplaces, the law requires all employees to be represented by a union, even if individual workers disagree with the union's positions or activities. Workers who refuse union representation or fees may be legally prevented from keeping their jobs.</p>	<p>What action is the government taking?</p> <p>What human activity is being organized by law (labor, charity, religion, agriculture, business, art, or education)?</p> <p>What force/penalty is used to enforce this policy?</p> <p>Why is this not a proper role for government?</p>

<p>Scenario 6: Parents who choose to homeschool their children must follow detailed state requirements regarding curriculum, testing, or reporting. Families who do not comply may face fines or other legal consequences.</p>	<p>What action is the government taking?</p> <p>What human activity is being organized by law (labor, charity, religion, agriculture, business, art, or education)?</p> <p>What force/penalty is used to enforce this policy?</p> <p>Why is this not a proper role for government?</p>
<p>Scenario 7: During certain periods, the government limits the size or frequency of religious gatherings. Churches that exceed these limits may face fines or closure orders, even when similar secular activities are permitted.</p>	<p>What action is the government taking?</p> <p>What human activity is being organized by law (labor, charity, religion, agriculture, business, art, or education)?</p> <p>What force/penalty is used to enforce this policy?</p> <p>Why is this not a proper role for government?</p>
<p>Scenario 8: A person who wants to braid hair, sell food from a cart, or offer small personal services must first obtain a government license. Without completing required courses, paying fees, and receiving approval, the individual can be fined or shut down even when customers are willing to pay.</p>	<p>What action is the government taking?</p> <p>What human activity is being organized by law (labor, charity, religion, agriculture, business, art, or education)?</p> <p>What force/penalty is used to enforce this policy?</p> <p>Why is this not a proper role for government?</p>

Sum-Up

In a short paragraph, explain how these examples relate to the biblical teaching that government is meant to be “a terror to evil” rather than a manager of peaceful human activity.
