

Civics: A Christian Worldview.
Liberty or Public Good? (10-15 minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY

Instructions

1. **Objective:** Students differentiate between liberty and claims of “public good” made by dictators (like the ones described in the last section of *The Law*).
2. Print this page for yourself—no handout for students!
3. Ask students to fill in the blank: Romans 13:3 Bible says that rulers are to be a “___” to “evil” (TERROR).
4. Ask students: “What does the word *evil* in this verse refer to?” (HARM TO OTHERS)
5. Tell students: “I’m going to read off 10 statements; tell me whether each represents LIBERTY or ‘THE PUBLIC GOOD’” (go around the room and take turns asking students).

Statements

- “Citizens should be free unless they harm others.” (LIBERTY)
- “People should be forced to be moral for society’s benefit.” (PUBLIC GOOD)
- “We must eliminate bad habits by law.” (PUBLIC GOOD)
- “Virtue cannot be forced.” (LIBERTY)
- “People should choose how to live, unless they harm others.” (LIBERTY)
- “Equality must be created by legislation.” (PUBLIC GOOD)
- “A strong ruler can fix society faster.” (PUBLIC GOOD)
- “Freedom is messy but necessary.” (LIBERTY)
- “Laws should shape citizens’ character.” (PUBLIC GOOD)
- “Law should only stop injustice.” (LIBERTY)

Debrief

Ask students:

- How do the “**public good**” statements *sound good* at first?
AWW, but probably something like “They make it sound like the government is trying to improve society.”
- How could you briefly **define liberty**?
Something like “the free exercise of your abilities, as long as they don’t violate others’ rights.”
- If a government followed **Biblical standards**—threatening and punishing those that harmed and/or stole from others, without trying to run society—**how would this improve society**?
AWW, but people would feel more secure against violent evildoers, would be happier that government wasn’t trying to run their lives, would be more willing to work hard—knowing that government wouldn’t steal so much via taxes, and so on.