

Civics: A Christian Worldview.
Legislator Ego, or Normal Ego? (15-20 minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY

Prep

- Print this page and a copy of Page 2 for each student.

Instructions

1. This is an activity that helps students understand how many legislators/rulers view themselves as better than others, and even above the law.
2. Hand out Page 2 to students. (This is to be done **individually**, not in pairs/groups this time!)
3. Give students about 8-10 minutes to complete the scenarios.
4. When time's up, discuss as a class. (Take turns calling on different students!)

Answer Key to Scenarios

1. L
2. L
3. N
4. N
5. L
6. N
7. L
8. L
9. N
10. N
11. L
12. N
13. L
14. L
15. N

Wrap-Up Questions

- What contradiction did Bastiat point out about many legislators?
That legislators are human, just like everyone, so why should they (or we) assume that they don't have the normal character flaws and self-serving natures as everybody else?
- Can you think of other examples you've seen of politicians behaving this way? (*AWV.*)
- Deuteronomy 17:18-20 says this: "*And it shall be, when he [the king] sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book...and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life...That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment....*"
What does this passage mean?
(That kings shouldn't view themselves as being better than everyone else.)

Civics: A Christian Worldview. Legislator Ego, or Normal Ego?

Frederic Bastiat argued that legislators often assume they are wiser and more capable than ordinary citizens. For each statement below, decide whether it reflects a **Normal Ego** (the legislator sees himself as equal to other citizens), or a **Legislator Ego** (the legislator assumes he is more qualified than ordinary citizens to make life decisions for them). Write your answer next to each.

1. “Many workers fail to save enough for retirement, so requiring automatic payroll deductions into government-approved retirement accounts ensures they will be better prepared in the future.” _____
2. “Left to themselves, many people would make choices that harm their own well-being.” _____
3. “Our role is to ensure no one violates another person’s rights.” _____
4. “We must be cautious about expanding our authority, since we are no less human than those we govern.” _____
5. “During economic downturns, citizens often reduce spending in ways that slow recovery, so it is helpful for legislators to direct certain industries and financial activities to keep the economy stable.” _____
6. “The law should intervene only when one person harms another.” _____
7. “Society functions best when responsible individuals help shape the choices of others.” _____
8. “Without proper structure provided by law, many people would fail to reach their full potential.” _____
9. “We should remember that legislators are just as capable of making mistakes as anyone else.” _____
10. “Citizens are generally capable of managing their own affairs.” _____
11. “Because many citizens do not fully understand nutritional science, it is reasonable for legislators to restrict certain foods and require others in order to improve public health.” _____
12. “We must respect that citizens often understand their own needs better than distant officials do.” _____
13. “Law can serve as a useful tool to help guide citizens toward wiser choices.” _____
14. “Sometimes citizens may resist policies that ultimately serve their long-term interests.” _____
15. “It is not our place to assume superior wisdom simply because we hold office.” _____