

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview:
“Based on What?” Challenge (15–20 minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY

Goal

Students recognize that most claims about government are unsupported opinions unless grounded in a clear standard, and begin to start thinking: What is the standard by which we judge government actions/policies?

Instructions

Note: You can run this: whole-class discussion, in pairs, or quick written responses followed by discussion.

STATEMENTS (if you want, write all these on the board and put students in pairs to answer):

1. “Government should provide healthcare.” (Do as a practice question as a class; see below.)
2. “Government should stay out of people’s lives.”
3. “We need more laws to fix society.”
4. “Freedom is the most important thing.”
5. “Government should make things fair.”

1. For each statement:

- Read it aloud (or write it on the board).
- Students must immediately respond out loud or in writing. (This is if you do it as a class.)
- Ask students after they answer: **“Based on what?”**
- Identify the likely foundation behind the claim.

2. **Tell students:** “Today we’re not debating whether these statements are right or wrong. We’re asking a more basic question: **What are these claims based on?**”

3. Do Statement #1 out of 5 together (read aloud and/or write on the board):

Statement #1: “Government should provide healthcare.” (Ask students to respond; note responses.)

Ask students: “Based on what?” (“What do you base your answers on?”)

Possible responses (this applies to all five questions): compassion, fairness, personal experience, economic reasoning, Scripture, etc.

Clarify when all five questions are answered: “Notice—those are different kinds of foundations.”

4. If you do the exercise in pairs, give students 10-12 minutes to answer, then discuss as a class. **Important: If students give vague answers (“because it’s right” or “I think it’s fair”), press them:**

- “How do you know it’s right?”
- “Who says it’s fair?”
- “Where does that standard come from?”

Teacher Note: Students will often assume their view is “obvious” (not grounded), appeal to emotion without realizing it, and/or use vague terms like “fair” or “right” without defining them.

Wrap-Up

Say something like this: “Most people have strong opinions about government—but when you ask ‘based on what?’ **those opinions often rest on emotion, habit, or assumption. A solid position requires a clear standard.** Next, we’re going to ask: **What is the right standard?**”

“If we claim to follow Christ, then our views on government shouldn’t come from culture, emotion, or politics first—but from Scripture. So the real question is not just ‘What do I think government should do?’ but ‘Where does God say authority comes from, and what it is for?’” **That’s what our next book section addresses.**