

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview:
“Do They Agree?” Quick Match Challenge (10-15 minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY

Goal

Students compare the main ideas of Locke, Bastiat, and Mill to what the Bible says are the legitimate functions of government.

Instructions

1. Put students in pairs, and give them these four guiding ideas:
 - John Locke — Government protects life, liberty, and property.
 - Frédéric Bastiat — Law is collective self-defense; must not become “legal plunder.”
 - John Stuart Mill — Government may act only to prevent harm to others.
 - The Bible — Government exists to punish wrongdoing and uphold justice (protect others from harm).
2. Students read each scenario. For each one, pairs must (a) decide if the government should act, (b) decide how Locke, Bastiat, and/or Mill would agree with the Bible, and (c) briefly explain why they would agree.
3. Students complete the questions (give them 8-10 minutes); discuss as a class.

Scenarios/Key

1. A used car dealer rolls back odometers and lies to customers, selling unsafe cars at high prices. Several buyers later suffer costly breakdowns and financial loss.
Government should act. Agreement: Locke → violation of property; Bastiat → theft by deception (illegal plunder); Mill → harm to others; Bible → wrongdoing that should be punished.
2. A 25-year-old man drinks heavily in his own home every weekend. He harms his health but does not drive, disturb others, or damage anyone else’s property.
Government should NOT act. Agreement: Mill → no harm to others; Locke → no violation of others’ rights; Bastiat → outside law’s proper role; Bible → sin, but not a civil crime unless harming others.
3. A homeowner deliberately cuts down his neighbor’s trees to improve his own view, knowing they are not on his property.
Government should act. Agreement: Locke → violation of property; Bastiat → unlawful taking/destruction; Mill → harm to another; Bible → injustice requiring punishment/restoration.
4. A city passes a law requiring all homeowners earning above \$80,000 per year to pay an extra 10% property tax. The money is used to fund rent payments and grocery stipends for other residents who do not meet that income level.
Government should NOT act. Agreement: Locke → taking property from some who committed no wrong; Bastiat → “legal plunder” (law used to take from some to give to others); Mill → not preventing harm; forcing one group for benefit of another; Bible → government punishes wrongdoing; this is not punishment but compelled transfer.

Wrap-Up/Final Direction

Ask students:

- “Which scenario was the hardest to decide?”
- “What do all four sources consistently protect?”

Key Takeaway: Government’s proper role is consistent across all four—to protect people from harm (life, liberty, property) and to *not* control personal behavior or redistribute without wrongdoing.

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