

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview:
“Obey or Refuse?” – Decision Line (15-20 minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY

Goal

Students apply biblical principles to difficult situations involving government authority, personal conscience, and obedience to God.

Instructions

1. Put students in pairs/groups.
2. Students read each scenario. For each one, they discuss whether it is right as a Christian to obey the government, or to refuse to obey.
3. Give students 8-10 minutes to discuss, then discuss as a class.

Scenarios/Suggested Answer Key

1. *Obey – Romans 13 teaches submission to lawful taxation even when rulers misuse funds or govern poorly.*
2. *Refuse – The restriction targets worship specifically while allowing comparable gatherings. Hebrews 10:25 and Acts 5:29 apply.*
3. *Refuse – Christians may not participate in deception or dishonesty to protect themselves.*
4. *Not consistent with Scripture – Christians may criticize rulers, but Scripture commands honor, truthfulness, and restraint rather than reviling or malicious speech.*
5. *Refuse the law – The government is forbidding obedience to God’s commands concerning Scripture and the spread of truth.*
6. *Refuse – Christians may not give ultimate allegiance or worship-like honor to human rulers.*
7. *Refuse – Government should not rightly forbid the preaching of biblical truth simply because it is unpopular or offensive.*

Wrap-Up/Final Direction

Ask students:

- Why is the Biblical position different from both blind obedience and automatic rebellion?
- Why do Christians need to differentiate between whether the government is commanding sin or merely requiring something unpleasant?
- In what manner should Christians respond, even when refusing?

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Read each scenario. For each one, answer the question at the end, and briefly include why/why not.

1. A Christian business owner believes local leaders waste enormous amounts of tax money on programs he considers immoral and destructive. Frustrated, he decides to stop paying part of his required property taxes because he does not want to “support evil.” Should he obey the law and continue paying the taxes?
2. City officials announce that churches may not meet publicly for worship “until further notice” because officials claim religious gatherings create social tension in the community. (At the same time, concerts, sporting events, and political rallies are still permitted without restriction.) Should Christians comply with the order?
3. An employee at a government office is told to approve a report that hides major financial waste. His supervisor assures him that “everyone already knows the numbers are misleading,” and warns him that refusing could cost him his career. Should he obey his supervisor?



4. A Christian commentator regularly posts sarcastic videos mocking political leaders by name. He exaggerates stories about them, ridicules their intelligence and appearance, and encourages followers to “make their lives miserable.” Is this behavior consistent with biblical commands regarding rulers and authorities?
5. In a nation where evangelism is illegal, a Christian quietly distributes copies of the Bible to interested neighbors after authorities specifically warn citizens not to spread Christian teaching. Should the Christian obey the law?
6. A public-school teacher is ordered to participate in a government ceremony honoring a political leader as the nation’s “highest moral authority.” Participation includes publicly repeating statements that the leader deserves ultimate loyalty above all other commitments. Should the Christian participate?
7. Local officials tell churches they may continue meeting only if pastors agree not to preach on “controversial moral subjects” that could offend members of the community. Should churches accept the restriction?