

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview:

Angel or Sinner? 1 (15-20 minutes)

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY

Goal

Students apply the idea that government is both (a) necessary because humans are sinful and dangerous, and (b) dangerous because rulers themselves are sinful too. Students must think critically about when society needs stronger enforcement against wrongdoing and when government power itself becomes the threat.

Instructions

1. Read the instructions together. (Students must choose one response: “Need More Government Control” or “Government Needs More Limits.”)
2. Give students individually 10-12 minutes to write brief responses, then discuss in pair/small groups.
3. Discuss as a class.

Scenarios/Suggested Answer Key

1. **The Crime Wave** – Over the last year, a city sharply reduced police patrols and stopped prosecuting many thefts and assaults. Local stores are closing because shoplifting has become common, and elderly residents are afraid to go out after dark.

Need More Government Control. Reasoning: Protecting citizens from violence is one of government’s core Biblical duties. Refusing to punish violence allows society to collapse into fear and disorder.

2. **The “Safety Monitoring” Program** – A governor creates a new program allowing government officials to monitor citizens’ private messages and online searches without warrants. Officials insist that “if you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear.”

Government Needs More Limits. Reasoning: Rulers are sinful too. Government power can become oppressive when leaders invade liberty and monitor citizens excessively.

3. **The Mayor’s Luxury Project** – A mayor raises taxes repeatedly to build extravagant government offices, expensive statues of local leaders, and lavish festivals celebrating the administration, while roads and neighborhoods deteriorate.

Government Needs More Limits. Reasoning: Rulers can abuse power through excessive taxation and self-serving behavior, similar to corrupt kings in Israel and many other historical examples.

4. **The Protesters** – A town decides police intervention is “oppressive,” so violent protesters are largely ignored. Soon businesses are burned, citizens are attacked, and many residents stop going downtown entirely.

Need More Government Control. Reasoning: Protecting citizens from violence is one of government’s core Biblical duties. Refusing to punish violence allows society to collapse into fear and disorder.

5. **The Emergency Powers Law** – After a health scare called a “crisis” by some government officials, lawmakers grant the governor temporary emergency powers. Two years later, the powers are still being used to shut down criticism, restrict gatherings, and punish opponents.

Government Needs More Limits. Reasoning: Temporary powers often expand permanently because rulers are sinful and tempted to keep control. Madison’s warning about government controlling itself applies here.

6. **The Fraud Explosion** – A state weakens penalties for financial fraud because leaders believe punishments are too harsh. Soon fake charities, online scams, and dishonest contractors multiply rapidly.

Need More Government Control. Reasoning: Fraud violates others’ property and liberty. The Bible specifically teaches that government should punish theft, fraud, and oppression. →

Wrap-Up/Final Direction

Ask students:

- Why is government both necessary and dangerous?
- Which danger is worse: violent criminals or unchecked government power?
- Why did Madison say government must first control people and then “control itself”?
- What happens when a society has (a) too little government, or (b) too much government?
- Why does the Bible’s view reject both anarchy and unlimited government?

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Read each scenario and choose either “Need More Government Control” or “Government Needs More Limits”; write a brief sentence explaining your reasoning, based on what we’ve learned so far.

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