

# The 5th Commandment and Civil Authorities

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What ideas do you associate with the word “government”?

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- Webster definitions of “government”

- Original 1828 definition:

GOVERNMENT, n. (1) Direction; regulation. “These precepts will serve for the government of our conduct.” (2) Control; restraint. “Men are apt to neglect the government of their temper and passions.” (3) The exercise of authority; direction and restraint exercised over the actions of men in communities, societies or states; the administration of public affairs, according to the established constitution, laws and usages, or by arbitrary edict. “Prussia rose to important under the government of Frederick II.” (4) The exercise of authority by a parent or householder. “Children are often ruined by a neglect of government in parents.” “Let family government be like that of our heavenly Father, mild, gentle and affectionate.”

- Merriam-Webster online dictionary<sup>1</sup>

GOVERNMENT, n. (1) : the body of persons that constitutes the governing authority of a political unit or organization: such as (1 a) : the officials comprising the governing body of a political unit... (1 b) : the executive branch of the U.S. federal government (1 c) : a small group of persons holding simultaneously the principal political executive offices... (2 a) : the organization, machinery, or agency through which a political unit exercises authority and performs functions and which is usually classified according to the distribution of power within it (2 b) [capitalized] : the complex of political institutions, laws, and customs... (2 c) [capitalized] : a small group of persons holding simultaneously the principal political executive offices of a nation or other political unit and being responsible for the direction and supervision of public affairs: (3) : the act or process of governing (4) : the continuous exercise of authority over and the performance of functions for a political unit... (5) : POLITICAL SCIENCE (6 a) : the office, authority, or function of governing... (7) [obsolete] : moral conduct or behavior...

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## Goal — Outline

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- Apply the 5th commandment (children honor parents) to the sphere of civil government
  1. God is **sovereign** over the nations
  2. The **development** of civil government
  3. The **nature** and **purpose** of civil government
  4. **Perspectives** (secular and Christian) on civil government
  5. **Biblical principles** for civil government
  6. **Citizenship as a Christian**: Engagement with civil government (Honor & obedience; Voting; Patriotism; Disobedience; Engaging and changing civil government)
  7. **Current Issues** in American civil government

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/government> Accessed 9/3/2024

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## God is Sovereign over the Nations

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### God is Sovereign

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Q: Where does all authority and sovereign power come from?

A: From God Almighty, who possesses all \_\_\_\_\_ to rule with \_\_\_\_\_ authority [principle #1]

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- God is \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen 17:1; 18:14; Eph 3:20)
  - Sovereignty = “God’s exercise of \_\_\_\_\_ over his \_\_\_\_\_”<sup>2</sup>
  
- God the \_\_\_\_\_ (Gen 1:1; John 1:1-3; Col 1:15-17; Heb 1:1-5; Acts 17:24, 28)
  
- All creation exists to \_\_\_\_\_ God (Rom 11:36; Psalm 19; 113:5-6; Isa 66:1)

### God Rules the Nations

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Q: What is the relationship of the sovereign God to the nations?

A: The sovereign God \_\_\_\_\_ over all the nations [principle #2]

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- God the \_\_\_\_\_ (Col 1:17; Heb 1:3)
  
- God the \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 17:22ff; Dan 5:21; Prov 21:1; Ps 96)
  - God sits \_\_\_\_\_ (Ps 9:7, 11; 29:10; 99:1; 1 Sam 4:4; 2. Sam 6:2; 2 Ki 19:15; 1 Ch 13:6; Is 37:16)
  - God commands all rulers to \_\_\_\_\_ the Son (Psalm 2)!
  - Jesus is the promised ruler (Is 9:6-7; Ac 2:22-36), the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ (Eph 1:16-23; 1 Cor 15:24-28; Rev 17:14; 19:11-16; 1 Tim 6:13-16)
  - Jesus is clothed in \_\_\_\_\_ dress (crown — Heb 2:9 / sword — Rev 1:16; 2:16 / scepter — Heb 1:8 / coat of arms — Rev 5:5)

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If the above are true, how does that shape your expectations for thinking politically as a Christian?

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<sup>2</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 217.

## The Nations are Dependent on God

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Q: What is the relationship of the nations to God?

A: The nations are \_\_\_\_\_ on the sovereign God [principle #3]

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- Inescapable concept: It's not \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_ god
  - By what \_\_\_\_\_ ?
  - Civil government can never be \_\_\_\_\_
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What do you think — can government be good, bad, or neutral? Is neutral secularism an option?

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## Civil Authority is Delegated and Limited

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Q: If God has supreme, absolute authority over the nations, what authority does mankind possess and exercise?

A: Mankind possesses \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ authority from God

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- Delegated : God directly \_\_\_\_\_ authority to civil leaders (Jn 19:11; Rom 13:1; Prov 8:12-15 / Exod 9:16 - Rom 9:14-18; Dan 4:31-32; Is 44:28-45:7; John 19:9-11; Acts 4:23-27 / Ps 75:6-8; Dan 2:20-21; 4:17, 24-25; Rom 13:1-2; Prov 21:1)
  - Limited : God designates the \_\_\_\_\_ of civil authorities
    - God has delegated \_\_\_\_\_ authorities (self; family; church; civil)
    - The head of each of these governments is \_\_\_\_\_
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What are the responsibilities and boundaries of each government?

Give examples of tension between spheres of government.

What happens when a delegated “officer” oversteps one’s particular assignments?

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