

# Selfishness and Governance

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | March 7, 2019



Selfishness is the root of sin, resulting from believing lies about God and breaking the circle of love and trust.

Selfishness is based in fear and brings forth envy and jealousy.

Selfishness leads to exploiting others rather than serving others.

Every human being is infected with selfishness, and we are powerless to overcome it in our own strength. Only through a trust relationship with Jesus Christ can selfishness be overcome and love be restored into the heart.

Every government on the earth is run by humans who are infected with selfishness and, therefore, every government on earth is ruled by selfishness. Unless specific restraints are placed upon the reins of power, these human institutions inevitably become increasingly abusive—not just to other nations, but also to its own citizens. The “rule of law,” which we revere so much, formed first in the city-states of the Near East, thousands of years before Rome. While we view the rule of law as the basis of a functioning society, it is an adaptation to sin based on collective fear and self-preservation. This leads to “justice” as a system of rules, with behavioral monitoring and infliction of punishment against those who break the

rules.

History is replete with examples of how selfishness infects governments:

- Ancient Egypt, with its slave work forces
- Ancient Israel, when kings became corrupt and exploited the people
- Rome enslaving millions, and Caesars who demanded worship
- Christian theocracy in the West and Islamic theocracy in the East
- The abuses of the French aristocracy leading to the French Revolution *and* the revolutionaries who conducted the Reign of Terror

In modern times, societies formed new governments that moved away from monarchies to various forms of democratic representation and diverse economics, such as capitalism, which runs on private ownership of business and the pursuit of profits. Yet without regulation, selfishness corrupts capitalism and the rich exploit the poor. The history of capitalism is replete with human rights abuses—child labor, unsafe work places, long hours, and low wages.

Selfishness wants more for self. It is jealous, envious, and angry at real or *perceived* disparities. “Advocates” for the downtrodden arise who inflame jealousy, envy, anger, and outrage between classes. Politicians, unless renewed by Christ, are dominated by selfishness and arise claiming that they have a better way in which there is no rich, powerful, ownership class and that all the profits will be shared equally and all the benefits will be distributed to everyone. These persuasive voices promise that everyone can receive free health care, education, home, car, food, clothing, and a job. All property will be owned by the community, and the society will be an equal commune in which there are no haves and have-nots.

Russia, China, and Cuba have shown us what communism looks like and how the utopia of communal ownership, to ensure all citizens are equal, turned out to be a lie, one in which monetary power was exchanged for political and military power. Communistic governments have been multiple times more abusive to human rights than capitalism—despite all the problems with capitalism.

Other politicians and political theories have arisen to challenge capitalism. One such alternative system came from socialism in Nazi Germany:

We are Socialists, enemies, mortal enemies of the present capitalist economic system with its exploitation of the economically weak, with its injustice in wages, with its immoral evaluation of individuals according to wealth and money instead of responsibility and achievement, and we are determined under all circumstances to abolish this system! (Nazi party official Gregor Strasser, printed in a 1926 pamphlet, *Thoughts about the Tasks of the Future*).

What do we discover in the history of Nazi socialism? Again, exponentially worse human rights violations and enslavement of society that led to torture and genocide.

How could this happen? Because human beings are infected with selfishness and are vulnerable to having their fears and need to protect themselves exploited by others.

The collective ideals of communism and socialism appeal to our sense of what’s right, but because of innate individual selfishness, these systems don’t last. Those in power inevitably become corrupt and those without power suffer.

Systems like capitalism, which is based on individual drive for one's self-interest, work, but also produce outcomes that seem to violate, to some degree, our idealistic desires. This leads to a choice between two imperfect systems of governance; one that "works" to a degree or one that seems more "right" but is unsustainable.

Winston Churchill eloquently summed this up: "Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

When we forget the lessons of history, we are doomed to repeat the atrocities of the past. And today there are voices arising in America advocating for these same fear-based arguments of the past. It's the same social equality that's based on some form of government ownership and equal distribution of assets to all, such as free health care, food, housing, clothing, education, and job with a living wage—a utopia delivered to all by the government.

But this proposed "New Deal" is not a new deal at all, but simply the recycling, in slightly different language, the old toxic policies of failed socialism of the past. The advancement of such programs requires:

- a populace that is angry and frustrated with the current system
- inflamed fear and the loss of a sense of safety and security
- heightened jealousy and envy of those who are deemed to be advantaged; class division
- perceived threats to future security, designed to further inflame fear and a sense of urgency (global warming, economic collapse, inability to afford education or healthcare)
- forgetting the past (through a flawed educational system that downplays the lessons from history)
- politicians who seek personal power and advancement through inflaming selfishness and fear and then promising socialistic solutions

The Bible speaks of the end of time in which an abusive world government arises to coerce all the nations and peoples of the world to embrace policies based upon fear and selfishness—policies in which love and liberty are replaced with threat and control.

Historically, many have thought such a coercive system would be the merging of the religious right with state government to pass religious laws. However, another possibility, which would also fulfill Revelation's description, is the liberal far and extreme left gaining control of government and passing laws they deem to be necessary to recreate the world in the fashion of their beliefs.

Whatever the case, Christians need to realize there is no system of human government that will solve the sin problem—the problem of human selfishness and fear. There is no political solution, no human ruler, no legislation, no judicial pronouncement, and no policy that will eradicate selfishness from hearts and bring godly love as the ruling power in society. In fact, all attempts to use force only destroys love and creates greater rebellion.

The only path that wins the day for God's government is the path of truth, presented in love, while leaving others free—the path of beneficence, goodness, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, and generosity, the path in which we live love in how we treat others.

And love requires freedom. Societies in which freedom reigns are the healthiest. Even though

selfishness still infects human hearts, love can grow wherever freedom is allowed to reign. But love cannot grow under threat and coercion.

Today, freedom is under threat in the guise of concern for equality for all people and socialistic policies that, if enacted, will destroy liberty and undermine love.

We must be vigilant and discerning to understand the methods of God—truth, love, and liberty—and not be seduced to join with systems and policies that violate God’s principles.

No human government represents God’s kingdom, because all are infected with selfishness, run on imperial law, use force and threat to coerce rule-breakers, and are interested in self-preservation. Yet some forms of government do create healthier atmospheres, where individuals are free to pursue their dreams, aspirations, and the dictates of their own consciences, which allows love to flourish in how we treat others.

As we move forward in time, we must remember that “our citizenship is in heaven” and that every country of the world will eventually rally to the system of the beast, the system opposed to God, and we must recognize those movements and keep our hearts united to heaven and choose the principles of love, truth, and liberty.

In summary:

1. All human governing methods are a direct result of sin and our sinful condition. None have been or will ever be patterned after God’s governance of the universe. However, some approaches to human governance are clearly worse than others, in terms of negative impact on the character of its people.
2. Individuals essentially enter into an agreement with their society’s government and authorities. In return for higher levels of safety and enhanced survival provided by the group structure, the individual willingly gives up a certain level of freedom and self-determination. Both the drive to engage in this relationship and the effectiveness of this transaction are a direct result of sin. Individual self-centeredness, fear, and competition with others is then scaled up to a collective societal level.
3. The Ultimate Cosmic Conspiracy (Satan’s war against God’s government) is centered on this planet and is manifest as mankind projects our most “successful” human governance design onto God. We have created God in our image – a King, Lord, Ruler, Judge, and Dispenser of Justice. We blindly think that because the rule of law “works” on our broken world, this method for governance is God’s will or reflects God’s character and intent. We forget “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.” (Proverbs 14:12, NIV84)
4. God’s character and methods (design law) have not been changed in any way because of the appearance of sin, it’s spread to planet Earth, and the broken governance system based on the rule of law that evolved here.