



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Tenth Amendment

Government Close to the People

Who should make the rules?

Imagine your dad's boss at work deciding what your family should eat for dinner every night. Then the mayor of your city decided what books your family could read. Then the governor of your state decided what color you should paint your bedroom. Would that seem strange? Of course it would!

FOR THE PARENT OR GRANDPARENT

This chapter is about who decides. If the child can say why a family, a town, a state and the nation each have their own jobs — and why no one of them should hold them all — they have understood the Tenth Amendment.

Different People, Different Responsibilities

Different people have different responsibilities. Parents make decisions for the family. Mayors help lead cities. Governors lead states. The President leads the nation.

The Founders believed that government works best when each level of government has its own responsibilities and no one level has all the power.

REMEMBER THIS

That is the lesson of the Tenth Amendment. This is yet another check and balance upon the federal government.



The Actual Tenth Amendment

RATIFIED 1791

"The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."



What does it mean?

The Constitution gives the federal government certain specific powers. These include things like:

- ◆ Defending the nation.
- ◆ Conducting foreign affairs.
- ◆ Coining money.
- ◆ Regulating certain kinds of interstate and international commerce.
- ◆ Establishing post offices.

If the Constitution does not give a particular power to the federal government—and does not forbid the states from exercising it—that power is generally reserved to the states or to the people. This principle is called federalism.

Young people, think of the United States as a team. Each player has a different job. The President has certain responsibilities. Congress has certain responsibilities. Your state government has certain responsibilities. Your local community has certain responsibilities. The Tenth Amendment reminds us that not every decision should be made by the national government.



Why did the Founders include it?

The American colonists had fought a revolution because they believed the British government had become too powerful and too distant from the people. When they wrote the Constitution, they wanted a strong national government, but not an unlimited one.

The Tenth Amendment reminds everyone that the federal government possesses only the powers granted to it by the Constitution. The remaining powers stay with the states or the people. This helps prevent too much power from becoming concentrated in one place.



What Is Federalism?

Federalism means power is shared between the national government and the state governments.

Each has important responsibilities.

Federal Government

- ◆ National defense
- ◆ Foreign policy
- ◆ Immigration
- ◆ Coining money
- ◆ Interstate and international commerce

State Governments

- ◆ Public schools, which need to be abolished
- ◆ State highways
- ◆ State and local law enforcement
- ◆ Driver's licenses
- ◆ Many public health and safety matters

Sometimes the federal and state governments work together, and sometimes courts resolve questions about which level of government has authority.



Bible Connection

The Bible teaches that wisdom often comes from shared responsibility and wise counsel.

The Bible also teaches that different people have different responsibilities. Just as the body has many parts with different jobs, a nation has different levels of government serving different purposes.

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office.”

Romans 12:4

Different responsibilities can work together for the good of everyone.



The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrate

The Tenth Amendment that upholds state's rights also reveals an important historical doctrine, which is called the Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrate. Young people, this is one doctrine you should come to know by heart in these days.

In essence, the teaching of this doctrine declares that when a superior civil authority, such as our federal government, makes unjust, immoral, and unconstitutional decrees, the lesser authority, such as a governor of a state or a sheriff at the county level, has the duty to refuse all unlawful orders. If pushed by the higher authority, the lesser magistrates should actively resist tyranny to protect the life, liberty, and property of those they swore an oath to protect and serve.



The Virtues Behind the Tenth Amendment

CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLE

BIBLICAL VIRTUE

Limited Government

Humility

Shared Responsibility

Stewardship

Local Self-Government

Wisdom

Respect for Authority

Order

Citizen Participation

Responsibility

REMEMBER THIS

The Tenth Amendment teaches that good government is strongest when power is wisely divided and exercised with humility.



Rights Come with Responsibilities

The Tenth Amendment reminds us that self-government begins with self-discipline. As citizens, we should:

- ◆ Learn about our local, state, and national governments.
- ◆ Vote responsibly when we are adults.
- ◆ Pray for our leaders.
- ◆ Participate in our communities.
- ◆ Respect lawful authority while remembering that all authority is accountable to God.



REMEMBER THIS

Freedom depends on responsible citizens.

Constitution Fun Facts

1

The Tenth Amendment is often called the "States' Rights Amendment," although the amendment itself also reserves powers to the people.

2

It was added in 1791 as part of the Bill of Rights.

3

The Tenth Amendment reinforces the principle that the federal government is a government of limited and enumerated powers.

4

Many important constitutional cases have involved questions about how power should be divided between the federal government and the states.



Founder Spotlight



Roger Sherman

(1721–1793)

Roger Sherman was the only Founder to sign all four of America's great founding documents:

- ◆ The Continental Association
- ◆ The Declaration of Independence
- ◆ The Articles of Confederation
- ◆ The United States Constitution

Sherman believed that government should remain close and accountable to the people. He helped create the Great Compromise, which established the House of Representatives and the Senate, balancing the interests of both large and small states.

SHERMAN'S WISDOM

"Government is instituted for those who live under it."

While Sherman believed elected representatives should study issues carefully, he also believed government should remain accountable to the people through constitutional representation.

Words to Know

Federal Government The national government of the United States.

State Government The government of each of the fifty states.

Reserved Powers Powers kept by the states or the people because they were not given to the federal government.

Delegated Powers Powers specifically given to the federal government by the Constitution.

Federalism The constitutional system that divides power between the national government and the state governments.

MEMORY VERSE

"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but
in the multitude of counsellors there
is safety."

Proverbs 11:14





COLOR IT IN

You finished Chapter Fourteen!

The Tenth Amendment — ten down, and the whole Bill of Rights is done!

BILL OF RIGHTS



10 OF 10

- 1 Powers specifically given to the federal government by the Constitution are _____ powers.
- 2 Powers kept by the states or the people because they were not given to the federal government are _____ powers.
- 3 The constitutional system that divides power between the national government and the state governments is _____.
- 4 The government of each of the fifty states is called a _____ government.
- 5 Federalism means power is shared between the _____ government and the state governments.
- 6 Powers not delegated to the United States are reserved to the States respectively, or to the _____.
- 7 The Tenth Amendment was added in 1791 as part of the Bill of _____.
- 8 Roger _____ was the only Founder to sign all four of America's great founding documents.
- 9 Sherman helped create the Great _____, which established the House of Representatives and the Senate.
- 10 Our memory verse says that in the multitude of counsellors there is _____.

Tenth Amendment Word Search

Words run across, down, and diagonally — forwards and backwards. Circle each one as you find it.

N D J J V J Y C P U F O R L
Y E L W Z E T Q Z S Y M T N
Z N O Z E T I L S T A T E P
E F I G M Q L Z V H E M R W
P E O P L E I W J G S F X S
L T R D A H M Z R I F S D H
A W F E T U U H L R M S E E
N O V S S W H A Z P O F T R
O S Q Z Y E R V D H D Y A M
I S G L K E R Y T M S T G A
T M K P D E J V M C I E E N
A S N E R Q F Q E I W F L T
N Q F H M W X T T D O A E F
C O M P R O M I S E Q S D R

WORD BANK

Delegated

Reserved

Federalism

State

National

People

Rights

Sherman

Compromise

Safety

Humility

Wisdom



Two of these words are not answers to anything. They are the virtues that keep power in its proper place.

Think Together

Talk these through together before you write. There is no hurry.

1 • Why do you think the Founders divided power between the federal government and the states?

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2 • What are some decisions that are best made close to home?

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3 • Why is it dangerous for too much power to be concentrated in one place?

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4 • How does the Bible teach the importance of shared responsibility?

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5 • What responsibilities do we have as citizens in a constitutional republic?

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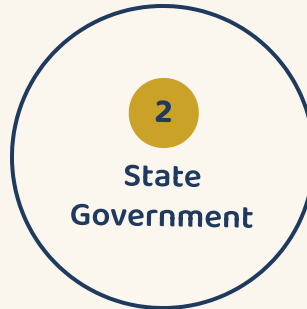
FOR THE PARENT OR GRANDPARENT

Question two is the one to linger on. Let the child name real decisions from your own home, church and town before you talk about the national government.

Who Is Responsible?

Draw three circles on a sheet of paper.

Label them:



Now place these responsibilities into the correct circle:

- ◆ National defense
- ◆ Building local parks
- ◆ Driver's licenses
- ◆ Delivering the mail
- ◆ Police officers
- ◆ Foreign relations
- ◆ Fire department

Talk about why the Founders believed different levels of government should have different responsibilities.



Constitution Corner

Why is the Tenth Amendment important?

The Tenth Amendment protects one of the Founders' greatest ideas.

REMEMBER THIS

Power should remain as close to the people as possible.

Local communities usually understand their own needs better than distant governments. When decisions are made closer to the people, citizens can more easily participate, hold leaders accountable, and work together to solve problems. This helps preserve liberty while encouraging responsibility.



A Grandparent's Thought

The Tenth Amendment reminds us that freedom is protected not only by dividing power among the branches of government, but also by dividing power among different levels of government.

The Founders knew that because people are sinful, power should never become too concentrated. They created a Constitutional Republic where authority was carefully limited, shared, and accountable.

The Bible teaches that God is the ultimate authority over every nation. Human governments God instituted are delegated. This means they have limits and always need checks and balances.

As Christians, we should pray for our leaders, participate responsibly in our communities, and remember that good government begins with good character.

The Constitution gives us the framework for self-government. The Bible teaches us the character needed to govern ourselves wisely. A foolish, immoral people cannot remain free for long. Their unbridled passions forge their chains.

THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

When liberty and virtue walk together, however, a nation can flourish for generations.

