

## Chapter 13: What Life Is Like Without Government

### People Are Basically Equal

Nature has made people pretty equal when it comes to strength and intelligence. Some people might be a little stronger or smarter, but overall, the differences aren't that big. Even the weakest person can hurt or kill a stronger one—especially if they plan in secret or team up with others.

As for being smart, most people get their wisdom from experience. Since everyone has experiences, everyone can become wise over time. People often think they're smarter than others, but that's usually just pride. In reality, most people have similar levels of intelligence—they just don't realize it.

### Why People Fight

Because people are so equal in their abilities, they also have equal hopes of getting what they want. But if two people want the same thing and only one can have it, they become enemies. Each person tries to get what they want and protect themselves—sometimes by attacking first.

People fight for three main reasons:

1. **Competition** – to get more for themselves
2. **Fear** – to protect themselves
3. **Reputation** – to look strong or avoid disrespect

Sometimes people fight over big things like land or safety. Other times, they fight over small things like a rude comment or being ignored.

### What Life Is Like Without Rules

When there's no government or power to keep people in line, it leads to what Hobbes calls a "state of war"—not just actual battles, but a constant threat of violence. This kind of war is everyone against everyone.

In that situation:

- There's no farming, because people fear their crops will be stolen.
- There's no trade or travel.
- There are no buildings, inventions, or education.

- There's no society or community.
- Worst of all, people live in constant fear of being hurt or killed.

As Hobbes puts it, life becomes “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”

### **Evidence from Everyday Life**

You might think this sounds extreme, but we can see hints of it in real life. People lock their doors, carry weapons, and keep things hidden—even when there are laws and police. This shows they don't fully trust each other.

And in some parts of the world, especially where there's no government, people really do live this way.

Even in peaceful countries, when there's a civil war, people go back to this violent way of living. Also, even though kings and governments are powerful, they often don't trust each other. They build armies and forts and spy on each other—just like people in a state of war.

### **No Right or Wrong Without Law**

In this kind of world with no rules, there is no right or wrong. Justice and injustice only exist when there are laws. Without a government, people can only keep what they can hold onto. If someone takes something from someone else, there's no law to stop them. The only "right" is survival.

### **Why People Want Peace**

Thankfully, people don't want to live this way forever. They want peace because:

- They fear death
- They want a better life
- They hope they can build a better future by working hard

Their reason helps them come up with rules for living together—rules that Hobbes calls the “Laws of Nature.”