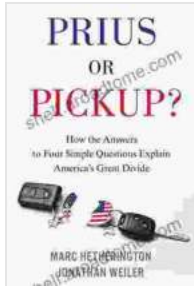


# How the Answers to Four Simple Questions Explain America's Great Divide



## Prius Or Pickup?: How the Answers to Four Simple Questions Explain America's Great Divide

by Marc Hetherington

★★★★☆ 4.1 out of 5

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The United States is a nation divided. We are divided by politics, by race, by religion, and by class. This divide is not new; it has been with us since the founding of the country. But it feels different now. The stakes seem higher, the rhetoric is more heated, and the divisions seem more intractable.

What is causing this divide? And what can we do to bridge it?

I believe that the answers to these questions can be found in the answers to four simple questions:

1. What is the American Dream?

2. What is the role of government?
3. What is the meaning of freedom?
4. What is the nature of human nature?

These questions are not new. They have been debated by philosophers and politicians for centuries. But they are still relevant today, and they are still shaping our politics and our society.

The answers to these questions are not simple, and they are not always easy to agree on. But they are essential for understanding the American divide.

## **What is the American Dream?**

The American Dream is the belief that anyone can achieve success in America, regardless of their background or circumstances. It is the idea that hard work and determination will be rewarded with prosperity and happiness.

The American Dream is a powerful ideal. It has inspired generations of immigrants to come to America in search of a better life. It has also motivated millions of Americans to work hard and achieve their goals.

But the American Dream is also a source of division. For some, it is a reality that they have achieved. For others, it is a distant dream that seems out of reach.

The divide over the American Dream is often reflected in our politics. Republicans tend to believe that the government should play a limited role in helping people achieve their dreams. Democrats, on the other hand, tend

to believe that the government has a responsibility to provide opportunities for all Americans.

### **What is the role of government?**

The role of government is another major source of division in America. Republicans tend to believe that the government should play a limited role in people's lives. Democrats, on the other hand, tend to believe that the government has a responsibility to provide for the welfare of its citizens.

This divide is reflected in our politics. Republicans tend to support policies that reduce the size and scope of government. Democrats, on the other hand, tend to support policies that expand the role of government.

### **What is the meaning of freedom?**

Freedom is a core value in America. But there is no one definition of freedom. For some, freedom means the right to do whatever they want. For others, freedom means the right to live without fear of oppression or persecution.

This divide over the meaning of freedom is often reflected in our politics. Republicans tend to emphasize individual freedom. Democrats, on the other hand, tend to emphasize collective freedom.

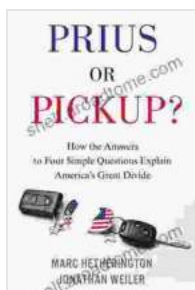
### **What is the nature of human nature?**

The nature of human nature is another major source of division in America. Some people believe that human beings are basically good. Others believe that human beings are basically evil.

This divide is reflected in our politics. Republicans tend to believe that human beings are basically good and that government should be limited in its power. Democrats, on the other hand, tend to believe that human beings are basically evil and that government is necessary to protect people from themselves.

The answers to these four simple questions have shaped American politics and society for centuries. They continue to divide us today, but they also offer a way to understand our differences and to find common ground.

By understanding the answers to these questions, we can better understand the American divide and work to bridge it.



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