

CHAPTER 10

WISE PEOPLE THINK IN TERMS OF DUTIES, NOT RIGHTS OR ENTITLEMENTS

¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. ²¹ But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

John 3:19-21 (ESV)

Whoever is wise, let him understand these things; whoever is discerning, let him know them; for the ways of the LORD are right, and the upright walk in them, but transgressors stumble in them.

Hosea 14:9 (ESV)

¹⁷ If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority. ¹⁸ The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory; but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and in him there is no falsehood.

John 7:17-18 (ESV)

For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child—both alike belong to me.....

Ezekiel 18:4(a) (NIV)

¹⁹ Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)

⁶ And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;

⁷ in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’

⁸ You leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men.”

⁹ And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God, in order to keep your tradition!”

Mark 7:6-9 (RSV)

The overall ‘Human Rights’ agenda – what it is and how it arose

This is a very big subject, and one to which few of us have ever given any real thought. I am referring to the widely-held belief that human beings are born with a number of inherent, automatic rights or entitlements, which cannot be taken away, or even questioned. At first sight, that sounds like it must surely be a good thing and that Christians ought to support it. However, at the risk of being considered awkward, I must challenge it. I would put it to you that, in fact, when viewed biblically, we have *no inherent rights at all*.

We have been taught to think that we do, especially since the Second World War, but that is not how God thinks. At any rate, the Bible does not speak of any such rights. Instead, it only ever speaks of *duties and responsibilities*. The Bible takes a completely different approach. It is *God-centred* rather than *man-centred* and that makes all the difference. Many profound implications flow from these diametrically opposed ways of thinking and we shall explore some of those differences below.

My conclusion, as both a lawyer and a teacher of the Bible, is that any legal or social system which is based on the assumption that we have rights, as opposed to duties and responsibilities, will lead to unjust and, above all, unbiblical, consequences. As where rights-based thinking began, the first traces of it arose in the French Revolution of 1789. That was occurring at about the same time as the American Constitution and Bill of Rights were also being formed. As part of that violent upheaval in France, a misguided and unbiblical document was written entitled the '*Declaration of the Rights of Man*'.

This set out a wholly new basis for a French Constitution. In the third article it states: "*The source of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation; no body, no individual can exercise authority that does not proceed from it in plain terms.*" However, anybody who remembers what Jesus said to His disciples after His resurrection will know that the above statement cannot be true. In Matthew 28:18 He said: "*All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given to me*" and it is God's Word, not the Declaration of the Rights of Man, which we must believe.

If, instead, we believe the Bible, then the implications are very different. For a start, all authority comes from God, not the State, and it is He, not us, who has all the rights. It is absolutely true that God gives us *freedom*. But He does not give us any *inherent* rights that we can claim are ours *by birth*, without having to earn them, or qualify for them, by meeting His conditions. Moreover, although God does give us free will and freedom of choice, those are *not absolute*. They are subject to various constraints, boundaries and prohibitions which He imposes, without ever consulting us or seeking our permission.

How the English legal system used to operate before it was contaminated by rights-based thinking

The biblical way to view our position is that we are *free to do anything unless it is prohibited* by God's Word, or by our conscience, or by the many duties that we owe to our fellow men. Thus, in the Garden of Eden, Adam was free to do anything at all, other than eat fruit from one particular tree. In the English legal system, which developed what is known as the '*common law*', we always used to think along those lines.

That was primarily because, for centuries, our legal system was constructed on biblical principles. However, the arrival of rights-based thinking has changed all that. Let us look firstly at how things used to be dealt with. In 1958, in his book '*The Approach to Self Governance*,' in which he discussed the merits, or otherwise, of the new developments in legal thinking since the end of the war, *Sir Ivor Jennings* wrote:

".....in Britain we have no rights; we merely have liberty, according to the laws; and we think - truly believe - that we do a better job than any country which has a Bill of Rights or a Declaration of the Rights of Man."

Likewise, in Halsbury's Laws of England, Volume 8(2) Constitutional Law and Human Rights (4th edition 1996) which was written just *before* the Human Rights Act, 1998 was passed, it states:

"Although the rights of the individual lie at the heart of common law they are not 'human rights' in the modern sense: in constitutional law, the individual is a subject of the Crown, not a bearer of rights."

The traditional position of the English legal system, as it stood prior to the Human Rights Act, was put very well by *Sir John Laws* in his judgment in *R-v- Somerset County Council* [1995] 1 AER 513, 524. In that case he identified two major constitutional principles:

- a) *the common law rule that private individuals can do everything which is not forbidden and*
- b) *the general principle forbidding a public body from doing anything which is not allowed*

That may look confusing at first sight, but it is actually a simple concept, albeit a radical one. He meant that the general default-setting, or starting point, is that *every individual* has freedom to do everything,

except where that is expressly curtailed by some specific law. By contrast, the general default-setting for *public bodies*, such as governments and councils, was that they do *not* have freedom to do anything, unless permission to do so is granted to them.

Therefore, public bodies were required not to act, but to keep out of things, and they had no basis for interfering in our lives at all unless they had been granted a *specific authority to do so*. This approach maximised the liberty of every individual, and minimised the powers of public bodies, precisely because our legal system, at that time, was not based on rights and did not even think in those terms.

How we ended up with the Human Rights Act

Let's now examine where our modern concept of 'human rights' came from and how we got these new and very different laws. In the immediate aftermath of World War Two the governments of the United Kingdom and the United States pressed for the newly formed United Nations to make a declaration about supposedly fundamental human rights. This resulted in the '*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*' which was adopted by 48 members of the United Nations in 1948.

What they had in mind as the backdrop to this declaration was the array of brutal atrocities which had just been committed by the Nazis and the Japanese. In particular it was a reference to the Nazis' attempt to wipe out the Jewish race. We gave that policy the name 'genocide'. That was the kind of behaviour which the members of the United Nations were seeking to prevent ever happening again. Sadly, the way they went about trying to do that led to far wider ramifications, which they never envisaged.

It is a classic example of the '*law of unintended consequences*'. Three years later, in 1951, the United Kingdom ratified the *European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*. It went further than the United Nations had gone and specified a series of other things which it maintained were also fundamental human rights. The British Government were signatories to this, but did not give full effect to it within the United Kingdom until after the passing of The Human Rights Act in 1998.

There is no room in this book to examine each of these alleged human rights and the case law arising from them. We shall therefore confine ourselves to speaking of the concept of rights as a whole, the implications and consequences of this overall approach, and the attitudes that it tends to produce. At first sight, these so called rights sound like they must be good for us. At any rate, it doesn't seem that they could do us any harm. However, I contend that both those assumptions are wrong.

Even within the churches, we now have a whole generation which is steeped in rights-based thinking and takes it for granted that that must be the correct approach

Accordingly, many British people, including Christians, automatically assume that the Human Rights Act is a good thing. It is taken for granted that to stand up for human rights must surely be what God wants and that no reasonable person could ever be opposed, at least to the broad concept of rights as a matter of principle. However, I would argue that the whole human rights agenda does not actually represent God's approach, values or thoughts at all.

Indeed, it is, in many ways, the very opposite of how a biblically-based legal system would operate, because the very idea that we have inherent, inalienable rights, of any description, is based on *humanist beliefs and human reasoning*. Therefore, it does not reflect the way God thinks about these issues. To explain why I make that bold claim, the best place to start would be to say that God has never actually given any of us *any rights at all*. You can search the whole Bible, but you won't find any rights being given to us.

In fact, if you want to be blunt, *we do not even have a right to live at all*, let alone to do so to any particular level, or to receive any minimum standard of care, behaviour or treatment from others. Our

very lives are in God's hands and are only provided to us for as long, or short, a period as *He* chooses, entirely at His own discretion. Indeed, we ourselves, our very bodies, are His property and so is everything that we think we own. I discuss that point more fully in chapter 9, on political correctness.

God is therefore under no *obligation* even to keep us alive. Or, viewed from the other direction, you could alternatively say that we have no legitimate *right* or entitlement to be allowed to continue living. God is free to end our lives Himself, or to allow them to be ended by someone else, whenever He chooses. We would have no basis for complaint, whatever He might do with us, take from us, or choose not to give us. The same applies to our property, homes, careers, and so on.

A young woman who did not like my views on human rights

I was speaking to a young woman recently who has grown up since the passing of the Human Rights Act 1998. Like many of her age, she has been thoroughly saturated in rights-based thinking, such that it has seeped into all of her values, attitudes and expectations. Therefore, she was chafing when I said that the Bible does not give us any rights, but only freedom, subject to a number of prohibitions, duties, boundaries and responsibilities. She got out her phone, did a word search in the NIV Bible for the word 'right', and came up with this verse from John's gospel which she quoted to me:

Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

John 1:12 (NIV)

She thought this verse disproved my argument and justified her stance. However, what John is speaking about in John 1:12 is not an *inherent, automatic entitlement* that a person is born with. He is referring to what a believer receives *as a result of meeting God's qualifying conditions*. That is His requirement that we *repent* and *receive* Jesus and *believe* in His name. A person who is truly converted and born again will, of course, receive a great many benefits and privileges.

Those will include the 'right' (or 'power', as the KJV and RSV more sensibly put it) to become children of God. However, there is nothing *inherent* in that. One is not *born* with that, as if it was an unconditional or automatic *entitlement*. Such status is only given *to those who respond to the Gospel* and not to those who don't. Moreover, it is only given to them *because* they respond to the Gospel. That is the crucial distinction between the way the Bible speaks and the way a rights-based system operates.

So, in terms of how the Bible speaks, which was the foundation for how the English legal system always used to operate before the arrival of human rights, a person can become entitled to *receive*, or *do*, or *be*, something. That is clearly biblical. We need look no further than Romans, where Paul speaks of how a worker's wages are not seen as a *gift*, but as his *due*, or entitlement. However, it is only because he has *worked*, that he acquires a *right* to his wages, if you want to put it that way. He had no right to any pay beforehand and thus, if he had not worked, he would receive no pay at all:

Now to one who works, his wages are not reckoned as a gift but as his due.

Romans 4:4 (RSV)

The crucial distinction is that the worker only has a 'right' to wages *because he has met the employer's conditions*. He worked a certain number of hours and thus became legally entitled to wages for that work, under the terms of his contract of employment, just as the employer was equally entitled under the terms of that same contract, to receive his labour. But that payment of wages has nothing at all to do with the modern concept of *inherent* rights.

That means a right to which one is *automatically* entitled, *without having to do anything in return*, merely by virtue of being a human being. If it did have that meaning, then the worker in Romans

chapter four would be entitled to receive wages, as of right, regardless of whether he had worked or not, and irrespective of the *quality* or *duration* of his work.

Any legal system which is founded upon the man-centred notion that human beings are born with a number of inherent and undeniable rights is starting from the wrong place. What then *should* our law assume, and on what *should* it be based? The short answer is that it should be God-centred. Therefore, it should reflect the way that God thinks and operates, as is set out in the Bible, not the way that sinful and misguided human beings think.

The biblical approach is the very opposite of rights-based thinking

The biblical approach is that no inherent or automatic rights are conferred by God upon anybody at all. Instead, the Bible takes a radically different approach. It begins from the starting point that every person is *free*, and has freedom of choice, *but that they also owe a series of duties* mainly to God, but also indirectly, at a secondary level, to our fellow human beings. For example, every one of us is under a primary duty to worship God and to obey Him. That puts God very firmly at the centre and, equally firmly, it removes us from the centre.

Then, at a secondary, or subordinate, level, we are also under a duty to love our neighbour and to do to him as we would wish him to do to us. So, our neighbour benefits, though only *indirectly*, from the fact that we are under a duty to obey God's commands. But our duty towards our neighbour does not arise because of any merit on his part. Neither is it due to, or based upon, any inherent entitlement. Our duty to treat him well arises *because God says so*, not because of anything our neighbour has done to deserve it.

On that basis, the reason we may not kill people, or mistreat them in a host of other ways, is because *God forbids us to do so*. Strictly speaking, therefore, it is not that those other people have a *right to live*, or even a *right not to be killed or mistreated*. The correct way to put it, if we wish to approach this biblically, is that *we have a duty* not to kill or mistreat them. Or you could say that we are *not free* to kill or mistreat them. In other words, it works in the exact opposite direction to that of any legal system which is founded upon human rights.

The biblical way of viewing things is that we must obey all God's commands, and not do anything which He has forbidden. A legal system constructed along those lines *puts God at the centre and makes Him important*, rather than *us*. Conversely, any system based on human rights elevates man, puts man at the centre, and makes man important. More to the point, it makes *oneself* important. Most rights-based systems do not even recognise that *God exists at all*, let alone acknowledge any duty to obey Him.

The concept of human rights promotes pride and a general emphasis on self. It also feeds our sinful flesh nature and panders to it, which is the opposite of what God wants. Accordingly, any Christian who wants to think about law, politics and social policy in a biblical way needs to consider very carefully the source or origins of their thinking. They must ask whether it is man-made, and reflects the flawed ways in which *we* think, or comes from God and reflects the perfect ways in which *He* thinks.

Likewise, we need to ask *who is exalted by it*, and whether it puts *man or God at the centre*. Any set of laws or public policies which is based on biblical thinking will always be expressed in terms of words like *duty*, *obligation*, *responsibility*, *stewardship* and, of course, *freedom*. Above all, it will speak in terms of *right and wrong*. It will not contain anything about rights or entitlements, except where those arise as a consequence of our fulfilling the conditions of some contract or covenant.

The damaging implications, unintended consequences, and even absurdities, of rights-based thinking

This distinction is not just theoretical hair-splitting about abstract, philosophical concepts. It makes a real and practical difference. Indeed, the ultimate outworking of any rights-based system is that it will inevitably result in injustices, and even absurdities. For example, at the time of writing this, the UK Government is proposing to introduce a system of age checks to prevent children getting access to online pornography. Most people would view that as a very sensible and necessary step to take to protect our kids from harm.

However, a United Nations official has warned the UK that any such measures would be a “breach of human rights”. He means that any requirement for people to verify that they are 18 or over before viewing pornography would be a breach of their *right to privacy*. But who says that anyone has such a right? At any rate, who says that children have such a right, especially when seeking to view harmful material contrary to their parents’ wishes? God certainly doesn’t. He has told us to “*train up a child in the way that he should go.....*”

But we can’t do that if we aren’t allowed to impose any rules or standards on children, or even to ask them to prove they are 18. One sees that same absurdity regularly in reported court cases. The application of the Human Rights Act in a criminal case, or civil dispute, results in the wrongdoer being protected, and even rewarded, and the interests of the victim, witnesses, or public being ignored. At the very least, they are considered to be subordinate to the wrongdoer’s supposed ‘rights’.

As a result of the London bombings of 7 July 2005, even the then Labour Government’s enthusiasm for the Human Rights Act cooled down. They discovered, as subsequent governments also have, that they cannot deport suspected, or even *convicted*, terrorists. It is claimed that they might face the risk of torture, or of degrading and inhuman treatment, if they were returned to their own countries. Therefore, to avoid that potential risk to them, it is held that we must let them stay in the United Kingdom. Indeed, in one recent case, the court refused deportation because it was claimed that the cell in which the offender would be kept, if he was deported to his home country, would be too small and would not be comfortable!

Consequently, the wrongdoer is protected from that perceived risk of torture, or even discomfort, whether real or otherwise, but innocent members of the public are knowingly *put at risk* in order to make that possible. However, no equivalent hand-wringing takes place over the prospect of putting the general public at risk, or endangering the witnesses who cooperated with the police by providing evidence. Their interests, and even their safety, count for little or nothing because a rights-based system has no real place for them, or at least no prominent place.

But if the prosecution do not have enough *admissible* evidence, or evidence which they are *willing to make public*, then they cannot convict the suspect either. Therefore, in many instances, he can’t even be imprisoned in the UK, let alone deported. Given that we cannot convict them, and cannot deport them, we then have no other option but to let them go free. Having done so, the absurdity is further compounded by the galling fact that we then have to provide them with ongoing social security benefits, and even housing, to which they are also entitled – as of right.

Indeed, we even have to provide them with legal aid to fund their applications to resist our own attempts to deport them. Even Tony Blair, the man who inflicted the Human Rights Act upon us, spoke of his frustration at these unintended consequences of his legislation. As he put it, mainly in relation to Islamic terrorism, “*the rules of the game are changing*”. He therefore began to wonder, at least to some extent, about the value of the Convention and even of the Human Rights Act itself.

Many Home Secretaries have expressed similar concerns since then, although with equal inability, and unwillingness, to do anything about these problems. When those undesirable consequences occur, as they so often do, it is not a coincidence. They arise foreseeably, and even inevitably, because a rights-

based system does not think in terms of *good and evil* or *right and wrong*. Neither does it think of *justice* as requiring criminals and victims to be treated differently, as they each *deserve* to be treated, in view of their actions.

It is not designed to think in those terms and therefore makes no attempt to do so. Those concepts are not even recognised by, and do not easily fit within, any such system. That is why rights-based systems do not differentiate adequately, or at all, between offenders and victims, or even between wrongdoers and witnesses. They see them all as essentially equal. Indeed, if anything, where their interests come into conflict, the human rights agenda consistently puts the welfare of wrongdoers ahead of that of the victim, the witnesses, or the general public.

A rights-based criminal justice system struggles to accommodate the concept of punishment

A rights-based system also has difficulty in accommodating concepts like *punishment* or *retribution*, as it does not even think in those terms. Many people who work within the criminal justice system today are somewhat embarrassed by such words and even object to them. They consider them outdated, or even primitive, concepts and are uncomfortable about any policy or practice where the aim is to punish. Thus the very idea of punishment, which is an essential aspect of justice, *and which the Bible clearly endorses*, is toned down or even rejected as invalid.

By contrast, the aim of *rehabilitation of the offender*, which is a valid, albeit a secondary, part of any biblically based criminal justice system, is then made central. But that is not its proper place. Moreover, rehabilitation is changed from being an *objective* on the part of the *justice system*, to being a *right* on the part of the *wrongdoer*. But he has no such right, at least not in any biblically based system. Rehabilitation is an aspect of God's *grace*, i.e. His *undeserved favour*, albeit that it is delivered via human governments and agencies.

To convert it into a right is to seriously distort the proper position. For one thing, it would cease to be grace because that is, by definition, *undeserved*. However, someone might ask what the alternative is. Should we say that we are in favour of torture? Of course not. All that is needed for us to make torture illegal is *simply to ban it*. That is how the objective can best be achieved, not by declaring that each of us have a 'right not to be tortured' or, even less, a right never to be *put at any risk* of being tortured, which is an argument that is now routinely used when we seek to deport criminals and terrorists.

That approach, whereby the things that we deplore, such as torture, are simply *prohibited*, may sound similar to creating a *right not to be tortured*. However, there is a profound difference which is principally seen in the respective *outcomes*. If we simply make it *a crime to torture people*, rather than creating a *right not to be tortured*, we achieve the objective, without any of the unintended consequences. It is these undesirable side effects of a rights-based approach that create the problems.

Simply banning torture, or any other activity that we wish to prevent, creates few, if any, knock-on effects to the detriment of victims, witnesses, the public, or taxpayers. However, that apparently slight adjustment of turning it from a prohibition into a right creates a mass of unintended problems. We then have to try to tackle all the implications of what we have declared a person's rights to be. All sorts of other people then have to be disadvantaged, or even put at risk, to enable those supposed rights to be observed.

None of that occurs when we think, as we always used to, along the much simpler lines of banning what is not in the public interest and leaving everything else well alone. The way the unbelieving world thinks on this subject will influence your own thinking unless you actively resist being squeezed into the world's mould. Rights-based thinking has already extended its pernicious influence way beyond the realms of criminal law and the civil justice system. Once you begin to look out for it, you see its consequences all over the place.

The entitlement culture which rights-based thinking creates

One could say that in Great Britain we are developing a ‘*culture of entitlement*’. I have witnessed this trend at first hand as an employer. Employees, especially those in their teens or twenties, are increasingly entering the workplace with an inbuilt sense of having rights. It is typical for them to have at the forefront of their minds what they can expect to *get*, as opposed to what they are expected to *give*. They are also concerned not to have to work too hard, or for too long, or not to have to do more work than their colleagues do.

A person who has been brought up to think in terms of entitlements may ask what his job involves, but he does so primarily to make sure that he does “*no more than he has to,*” or “*no more than others do.*” By contrast, a worker who thinks in terms of duty will ask himself “*How can I make sure I pull my weight and do no less than I should, and preferably more than is expected of me?*” I may possibly meet the legal definition of an ‘expert witness’ on this point, given how many people I have employed over the years and the breadth of perspective which that has given me.

I have seen enough employees at close quarters, as a boss, and before that as a colleague, for my conclusions to have some statistical reliability. At any rate, my overall assessment of the *average* British worker, with some shining exceptions, is that they are deficient. Many are like spoiled children. Indeed, for some, that is literally what they are. They put themselves at the centre and think primarily, or even solely, of what they can expect to *get from* their job, not what they can *put into it*.

That is why so many British employers, especially in the hotels and hospitality sectors and also in seasonal jobs like fruit picking, prefer to recruit their staff from Eastern Europe where the culture of entitlement has not yet taken over. When I go to hotels and restaurants, I frequently find that staff from Eastern Europe (unless they are Muslims) *work harder* in relative terms, do *more* work in absolute terms, operate to a *higher standard*, have a better *attitude*, and show better *manners*.

They also have a better overall understanding of the concept of ‘*service*’, than native British workers who have grown up in the UK and been to British schools. The contrast is stark. Of course, no politician will publicly admit any of this. Neither will any employer, as saying openly what I have just said, would put himself at risk of an action for discrimination. So, employers who recruit from abroad will say that they only do so because there is a “*labour shortage in that sector*”, not because foreign workers are ‘better’.

There is an element of truth in the claim that they can’t find enough British staff, but that is not because our population is too small. It is largely because some British people would rather be unemployed than apply for certain jobs. Many are not willing to do “*dirty work*” or to “*demean themselves*” by taking a manual job or a job cleaning in a hotel or serving in a restaurant. However, even that is not the whole truth. Even where native British workers are willing to apply for such jobs, many employers still prefer workers from abroad because they do not have a culture of entitlement.

An example of a young man with an entitlement mind-set

I once recruited a young man aged 19 to work in my law firm. He wanted to be a ‘legal clerk’, and also to be trained up in the IT department. In his very first week in the job we had to move some furniture from one office to another. The whole task would take about 30 minutes. I was actually doing this myself, assisted by the IT manager. So, we were both senior people in the business but we were, nevertheless, moving furniture, and quite happily.

I then said to the young man who had just joined the firm: “*Can you come and give us a hand carrying this furniture to the other end of the office?*” I said this with the full expectation that he would join in willingly. But he didn’t. He said that moving furniture was “*not part of my job description*” and that he “*should not be asked to do it*”. I was amazed by his view of himself, and of what he should, and

should not, be asked to do. That attitude was so deeply ingrained in him that he was even willing to argue with his new boss in his first week in the job and to refuse, point-blank, to assist.

He did not see himself as doing anything wrong, or even unusual. As he saw it, an illegitimate request was being made and he was standing up for himself. He felt that moving furniture was beneath his dignity and that it was demeaning to be seen doing manual labour in front of other staff. Yet the extraordinary thing is that the IT manager and I, who were both senior to him, were already tackling the very same task. We didn't feel demeaned, or that manual labour was "*beneath us*", but he did.

Even when this irony was pointed out, he still did not alter his view. Unsurprisingly, that young man did not get through his probationary period. I parted with him later that week, because of his appalling attitude. I then got a phone call from his Dad, taking his side and remonstrating with me, even when I explained what had happened. He too felt that his son had done nothing wrong and "*should not have been asked to do manual work*". He pointed out that it was "*not in the job description*" and that it was "*wrong for him to be asked to do it.*"

I told him that moving furniture wasn't in the IT manager's job description either - or mine for that matter. But that argument did not cut any ice with him, any more that it had with his son. So far as he was concerned, his son was being "*taken advantage of*". This story illustrates the extent to which the culture of entitlement is creating a generation of pampered prima donnas or '*snowflakes*' as they are now called. However, it is by no means confined to the workplace.

It has radiated out across many other areas of British society. That is why I have spent so much time focusing upon this issue of human rights, or rights-based thinking, which some might regard as an obscure subject. It has now become for us a major new aspect of worldly thinking, which past generations never had to deal with. Thus, it is worth making the effort to understand what this new philosophy is, where it comes from, and how we can avoid adopting such misguided beliefs, or being influenced by them.

Most important of all, we need to ensure that the culture of rights, or even the language of rights, does not creep into our churches or our theology. It is not consistent with our being called to a life of *servanthood* and, even more so, to the need for us to '*die to self*', '*pick up our cross daily*', and '*crucify our flesh nature*'. No disciple can achieve any of those things, all of which we are commanded to do, if we confer upon ourselves a wide range of imaginary rights which God has never given us.