

Insisting on Your Rights is Not Always a Good Thing

Have you ever heard the name Eleanor of Aquitaine? She was the queen of France in the 12th century, and she is considered one of the most powerful women. Ever. When her husband, King Louis VII, returned from fighting the crusades, he walked into the castle clean shaven. My wife would've liked that (I look seriously pathetic with a beard), but not Eleanor. She thought her clean-shaven husband looked hideous, and she insisted he grow back his beard.



Being the sort of husband he was, Louis refused. Eleanor responded by divorcing him. Things were obviously not going well for the couple—but it only got worse when Eleanor turned around and married the king of England. The squabble in their now-defunct marriage led to a squabble between two countries that lasted almost 120 years—the Hundred Years' War. The pettiness over a beard led to political alliances that led to war, which led to the deaths of 3.5 million people.

If only Louis VII had set aside his preference—and set aside his Bic razor.

We can shake our self-righteous heads at the pettiness and unnecessary tragedy of this event, but we do the same thing.

- We get irritated with the driver in front of us, because her slow driving is interfering with our right to get to church so we can worship.
- We get mad at a supervisor who needs us to finish a project because he is stepping on our right to get home ten minutes earlier than usual.

- We fire off a biting email to the cable company because their on-and-off relationship with a certain network interferes with our right to watch “The Bachelor.”

I’m all for standing up for ourselves, and I am certainly in favor of standing up for others, but far too often our focus and insistence on “our rights” crosses a line and blinds us to the critical importance of following Jesus and living like Him. We lose sight of the call to “do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3-4).

I’ve already made some of you mad because you think I’m telling you to lay aside your civil rights or your rights as an American. No, I’m asking you to set aside what you think is your right, a selfish mindset of insisting on having things your way.

The greatest detriment to the church's witness in the world is how we treat each other. **So let me challenge you, follower of Christ, to do your part. Quit insisting on having things your way.** Be willing to let go of your preferences and “rights,” and just trust the One in whom you claim to follow.