

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD + -

THE GENESIS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

This segment comes from **EPISODE 2: RIGHTS + WRONGS**.

Modern Westerners take it for granted that every life is valuable. But ideas like equality before the law and the importance of caring for the vulnerable are by no means self-evident. So where did they come from? Why are we so attached to the idea of “inalienable human rights”? These segments look at how Christian teachings such as the idea of universal human dignity were foundational in the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

THEME QUESTION

Place a mark on the line for where you think the church falls between restricting and promoting human rights for all.



ENGAGE

1. Make a list of five human rights that you think every person should have.

| |
|----|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

2. On 3 May 2011, an international online design competition to create a universal logo for human rights was launched. From the more than 15,300 suggestions from over 190 countries, the winning logo was selected. It was designed by Predrag Stakić from Serbia.

Look at the logo, and discuss what you think it is trying to represent and why you think it won the competition.



3. Read the following quotes about human rights. Which one most resonates with you, and why?



4. Watch [this TED-Ed video \(cpx.video/udhr\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpx.video/udhr) for an introduction to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and write down one thing you learnt.

UNDERSTAND AND EVALUATE



WATCH the segment: “The genesis of human rights” ([cpx.video/humanrights](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpx.video/humanrights))

1. The segment references five Articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Draw or find an image to represent each of these Articles.
- All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
 - Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.
 - No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.
 - Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
 - Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

2. In the late fourth century, in Caesarea, Basil argued that the poor had an inherent claim - a *right* - to the goods of the rich. How did this contradict traditional Greek and Roman thought?
3. How did Godfrey of Fontaines in the eleventh century contribute to the development of the idea of “inalienable rights”?
4. Draw arrows to match up each of the natural rights that had been recognised by the 1300s, with a similar article in the UDHR.

| 1300s | UDHR |
|--|---|
| The right of the poor to the necessities of life | Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property. |
| The right of self-preservation | Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him. |
| Rights to property | Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. |
| The right of self-defence | Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. |
| The right to a fair trial | No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks. |

5. In the segment, Nicholas Wolterstorff comments that many people have forgotten the largely Christian history of human rights. Why do you think this is?

6. Read the following quote from Samuel Moyn, and answer the questions below:

**“I DON’T DOUBT THAT JESUS CHRIST IN PARTICULAR BROUGHT ABOUT
A REVOLUTION IN THINKING OF PEOPLE AS EQUAL IN THE SIGHT OF
GOD ... LATER THIS IDEA OF MORAL EQUALITY BECAME AN IDEAL OF
POLITICAL EQUALITY, AND THERE’S NO DOUBT THAT THAT’S CAUSED THE
WORLD TO CHANGE DRASTICALLY.”**
SAMUEL MOYN

- a. What is your reaction to this statement?
- b. List three examples mentioned in the video of how Christians contributed to the development of moral and political equality for all.



BIBLE FOCUS

READ Proverbs 31:8-9.

1. What do these verses say we should do?
2. What do they reveal about the inherent existence of rights for the most vulnerable in society?

READ Galatians 3:26-29.

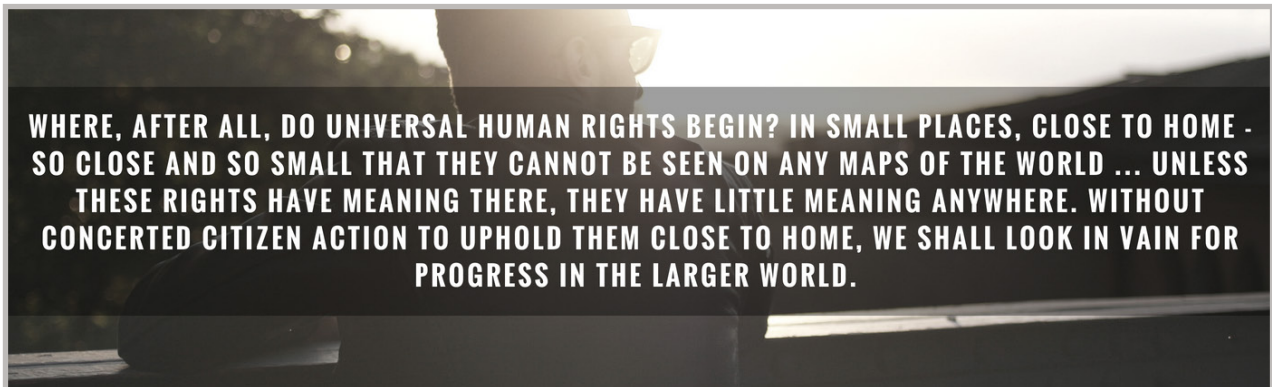
3. What do these verses teach about the fundamental equality of human beings?



APPLY

1. Human Rights Day is held on 10 December every year. Imagine your school is holding a Human Rights Day event. Make a poster for the event, using either or both of the Proverbs and Galatians Bible verses.
2. What bases could there be for human rights *other than* the biblical idea of humans being made in the “image of God” and therefore having inherent dignity and rights?

3. Read this quote from Eleanor Roosevelt, the chair of the drafting committee of the UDHR.



- a. List some ways that you think your community or Australia as a whole could improve in upholding universal human rights.
- b. Brainstorm ways that you personally could help to promote universal human rights in your community.

EXTEND

1. Choose one of Jacques Maritain or Charles Malik to research. Find information about their life, teaching, and/or written works, and answer:
 - a. How were they involved in the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
 - b. How might their Christian faith have played a role in their work on human rights?