

## DO YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO YOUR OPINION?

We occasionally hear people say, “everyone is entitled to their opinion.” People usually make this remark after someone says something to which they disagree. Now if we define “opinion” to mean “a view or judgment formed about something that is not necessarily based on fact,” then it would be true to say that everyone is entitled to their opinion. Then you can say whatever you like. However, if we define “opinion” as “a view or judgement formed about something that is based on fact or knowledge,” then we are not entitled to our opinion. Then only people with knowledge about a subject are entitled to an opinion. For example, a doctor is entitled to an opinion about medical concerns. He might say, “I am not sure what is wrong, but based upon what I have seen, I think it might be this.” On the other hand, someone without medical skills does not have the right to an opinion about what ails the patient. If your light switch doesn’t work, you don’t ask an accountant how to fix it. The accountant’s opinion would be worthless. Instead, you call an electrician. In a similar way, when studying the Bible or considering the moral implications of certain actions, you don’t consult a TV news anchor or a movie star. You ask a priest who is trained in theology and the scriptures. People can say whatever they like, but that doesn’t mean what they say is true, makes sense or is even worth considering. This is not to say that the opinion of a non-expert is worthless. However, it is to say that the less experience someone has with the subject matter, the less value their opinion has. So, when someone says, “I feel this or that ...” remember that an opinion not based on fact, especially if it concerns an important issue can be quite harmful. The resulting nonsense coming from the idea that men can become women and vice-versa is just one example. So, make sure that when you offer opinions about important matters you do so only when you know something about the subject.