

Juror, Judge, or Witness?

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Have you ever been in a courtroom? When I had jury duty, each participant had his own unique role. As a juror, mine was to observe and then make a choice to convict or not. The prosecutor presented evidence and tried to convict. The defense tried to demonstrate innocence. The witnesses shared what they knew about the case based on what they'd seen or heard. And the judge ruled from the bench. There was no blurring of the lines or blending of responsibilities.

As I look back on my efforts to introduce others to Christ, I recognize that I often complicated what God asked of me; I blurred my responsibilities. And I know I'm not alone.

This is what I mean. When the apostles were sent out, Jesus said in [Acts 1:8](#):

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Their role and ours? To be witnesses. We're to share what we've experienced and what we know about Jesus. As men who want to bring other men to know Christ, that's the job.

Yet I've shied away because I've frequently thought I needed to "close the deal" too. I mistakenly believed that it was also my job to convict others of their sin and to convince them of all truth. In other words, I believed I needed to play judge and jury, too.

Do you ever feel this way when it comes to reaching and discipling men? What about when men don't seem to be growing, adjusting, or understanding quickly enough? Or more specifically, when men are choosing to continue in sin?

In [Psalm 37:1](#), King David writes:

Do not fret because of those who are evil or be envious of those who do wrong...

It's difficult to focus on our role as being a witness to Christ when we're presented with wrongdoing, unrepentance, or apathy. But I think King David understood the difficulty, too. In fact, a few verses later, he felt the need to repeat and expand upon the advice above:

Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret—it leads only to evil. (v.8)

Typically, when we hear the word, “fret,” the idea of worry or anxiety comes to mind. However, the Hebrew word David chose in this Psalm (*charah*) means “to burn or be kindled with anger.”

In other words, when we see others doing wrong, we shouldn't let it get under our skin and let anger fester there. As David clearly states, doing so only leads *us* into evil.

But does that mean we can't do anything when we encounter it? Not at all. In fact, between Verses 1 and 8, David gives us these better alternatives:

- Trust in the Lord and do good. (v.3)
- Take delight in the Lord. (v.4)
- Commit your way to the Lord. (v.5)
- Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for Him. (v.7)

What's to be our response to the wrongdoing we encounter? It's **FIRST** to turn our attention to God. We're to trust Him and do the good we can. We're to continue to be thankful for the things He has provided. We're to come before Him with a calmed, quiet heart, and patiently wait for Him to bring about justice. After we've done all that, He **MAY** give us some specific way in which to respond to the person or wrongdoing. But in our anger or frustration, that shouldn't be our first response.

Men, we're not God. We're only His representatives. Only God can convict the heart of guilt and sin ([John 16:8](#)). And only God can judge the heart of man ([James 4:12](#)).

In the Lord's court, we are witnesses only. Don't complicate your role. In God's perfect timing, it will bear fruit.

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds that you plant." – Robert Louis Stevenson

THE BIG IDEA: *In the Lord's court, we are witnesses only. Don't complicate your role when it comes to reaching men.*

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