

IN THE MARGINS: Finding truth in a world of lies – a Christian's perspective on jury duty

By Tony Martin

Editor

I just wrapped up two months of federal jury duty, and it was one of the most intense experiences of my life. It sure wasn't like county jury service! I was part of a federal case that had everything: murder-for-hire plots, drug deals that seemed straight out of a movie, double crosses, informants who were being paid to testify, missing video evidence, and even questions about whether law enforcement had handled things properly. It was the kind of case that makes you question what's real, who's telling the truth, and how in the world you can come to a fair decision.

Serving on a jury is part of our civic duty, and as Christians, that means it's also part of our Christian obligation. When we're asked to serve, we step up. But let me tell you, it's no small thing to sit there and try to decide whether someone's guilty or innocent. How do we, as believers, arrive at the truth in such complicated situations?

Seeking Truth in a Complex World

Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life"* (John 14:6). As followers of Christ, we believe in absolute truth, even when the world tries to muddy it up. In the courtroom, everyone has their version of events, their angles, and their motives. As a juror, I had to sift through mountains of testimony, conflicting stories, and evidence that didn't always line up.

It's a reminder that truth isn't always easily visible. Sometimes it's buried under layers of lies, deception, or even just human error. But God sees all. He knows the truth because He is the truth. In those moments of uncertainty, I had to lean into prayer and trust that God would give me wisdom and discernment. James 1:5 tells us, *"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him."*

So, if you find yourself in a place where the truth feels elusive – whether it's in a jury box or a personal situation – remember that we can always ask God for clarity. He may not give us all the answers right away, but He'll guide us to where we need to be.

Judging Without Being Judged

One of the things that came to mind often during this trial was how we, as Christians, are often judged by others. The world has its own opinions, and they're not always favorable to believers. Some might think our faith makes us biased or that we can't be impartial.

Here's the thing: As Christians, we are called to be fair and just. Micah 6:8 says, *"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"* Our faith doesn't hinder our ability to judge rightly – it enhances it.

We're not called to ignore our beliefs in these moments but to apply them in ways that honor God. That means approaching our decisions with humility, love for our neighbor, and a desire for justice. Jesus Himself was judged and misunderstood, and He told us that we should expect the same. In John 15:18, He said, *"If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you."* But even when we are judged unfairly, our response should be one of grace.

The Ultimate Judge

At the end of the day, sitting in judgment of someone else reminded me of something profound: I'm not the final judge, and neither are you. Sure, I had a role to play in this trial, and I took it seriously, but ultimately, God is the one who will judge all things perfectly. We're all flawed human beings, prone to mistakes, biases, and sins. But God is perfect in His judgments.

Hebrews 4:13 says, *"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."* That means that even when we don't know all the facts, God does. Even when evidence goes missing, God sees it. And when we feel like we're not equipped to make a decision, He's already judged with perfect justice.

So whether it's in a courtroom or in our everyday lives, we can rest in the knowledge that God will make all things right in the end.

A Civic and Christian Duty

Serving on a jury isn't always easy, but it's necessary. It's one of the ways we contribute to society, ensuring that justice is served. And for us as Christians, it's more than just a civic responsibility – it's a way to live out our faith. We're called to love our neighbors, and part of that is ensuring that they're treated fairly under the law.

If you ever find yourself called for jury duty, don't shy away from it. Pray for wisdom, trust that God will guide you to the truth, and remember that you're not there by accident. You're there to be a light in what can sometimes be a very dark place.

And above all, know that whatever judgments we're called to make here on earth, the ultimate Judge has the final say – and His justice is always perfect.