

A Valid Answer When Your Faith is Questioned

I've never had to testify in court (traffic court doesn't count), but I've seen enough TV to convince myself I could easily be an attorney for someone in court. That's assuming, of course, that everything is scripted for me like it is for TV attorneys.



The prosecution or defense in a criminal trial is dependent on witnesses, but not all witnesses are the same.

1. **Expert witnesses.** These witnesses can offer something beyond the normal knowledge of the jury. They will first have to explain to the jury why they are qualified and should be considered experts. They are trained and experienced in specialized fields like forensics, handwriting, medicine, or engineering. (My father, a mechanical engineer, was once an expert witness because of his knowledge of a particular piece of equipment.)
2. **Character witnesses.** Based on their relationship with the person on trial, these witnesses attest to either the good or bad character of the person.
3. **Eyewitnesses.** These witnesses can only testify to what they directly saw or heard. No hearsay. No opinions. They can only offer the facts of what they experienced firsthand. These are the most important witnesses. It matters little how many character witnesses testify to the calm and polite nature of the defendant if someone says, "I was there and I saw what he did with my own eyes." (Of course, character witnesses could be called to testify about the character of the eyewitness, but that's another matter.)

Followers of Christ are called to testify about Jesus.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and **you will be my witnesses**

in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Too many believers think they don't know enough to be witnesses. *What if someone asks me a question I can't answer?* They read Jesus' call to be His witnesses as a call to be expert witnesses. Nope. We are called to be eyewitnesses. That's how the apostle John saw himself.

"What we have seen and heard we also declare to you" (1 John 1:1).

There is a place for expert witnesses. The church needs those who can "get into the weeds" of answering the skeptics or those with deep or philosophical questions. I count two such expert witnesses among my friends. Mary Jo Sharp and Jeremiah J. Johnston are gifted and especially adept at tackling the questions when the rest of us draw a blank.

But your role as a witness—an eyewitness—is far more critical to those around you. They can hear *about* Jesus from a variety of sources, but in you, they get to *see* Jesus. They know you, and they have a front-row seat to the transforming power of Christ in your life. You don't have to know every nuance of theology or philosophy. You don't have to be able to argue the existence of God from the teleological view, but you can talk about what you know.

- Who you were before Christ
- How you met Christ
- How Christ has changed your life

You are an eyewitness to all these things, and no one can refute that!

"In your hearts regard Christ the Lord as holy, ready at any time to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15).