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## INTENTIONAL WITNESSES ?

Ever been a witness? It's simply someone who **gives testimony** of what he has seen and heard. Maybe you've served as a witness for a contract between parties, or signed official documents to affirm identities of persons involved. Maybe you've been a testifier in another legal sense - required to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, about a matter before a court.

What does it mean to be a Christian witness? The word most translated as witness or **testifier** in the Bible comes from the Greek word "**martyr**." That might have made your heart flutter. It soon became associated with those who gave their lives for Christ. It certainly brings deeper meaning to the reality of fellow Christians living in persecution today, such as throughout the Middle East in Muslim countries.

Maybe you don't want to read any further, because you don't want a guilt trip for not converting all your family, friends, and neighbors? That's not it - the Holy Spirit does that! In its simplest sense, being a Christian witness is - **simply telling others what you know** about how they too can know Christ.

And that's the job Jesus has given to every Christian. As He was ascending into heaven after His resurrection, it was part of the Great Commission to "**make disciples**." In Acts 1:8 Jesus said, "**You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses**."

"You **WILL**" - is a **promise**. Backed up with God's power! The life purpose of every believer is to make other disciples of Jesus. That's why you don't go immediately to heaven when you trust in Christ. He has a privileged purpose for you, a job for you to do here. Intentionally so.

Think about it. How did you become a Christian? Someone told you how to believe in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior - the One who created you and paid the penalty for your sins and gives you His own new resurrection life. As Romans 10:13 says "**Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord (Jesus) will be saved**." Then verse 14 says "**But how are they to call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard?**" Because God's plan is to bring ever more people into His kingdom, by grace through faith in Christ, He provides the power and the plan to do so. Verse 17 says "**So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ**."

God simply expects you, once you have received new life in Christ, to testify about Him. Simply telling others what you know about how they can know Christ. It's essential to growing in your faith. Philemon 1:6 says "**I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ**." The more you tell others, the better you understand how to trust in Christ and all the blessings that come with believing in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

How do you start? Right where you are right now. Where you live, work, go to school, shop and play. Trusting in the power of Christ within you to shine His light for all to see, and acknowledging Jesus as Lord, through your thoughts, deeds, and especially your words. Living life under His Lordship will be different from those around you, and they will want to know why. 1 Peter 3:15 says "**in your hearts honor the Lord as holy, always being prepared to give a reason for the hope that is in you, with gentleness and respect**." That's intentional living, always ready to be a willing witness for Jesus.

And there's more. The rest of Acts 1:8 says "**you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth**." Fascinating! Jesus says, "you're a missionary right here. Start telling others about Me right in your home town, your school district, then county, state, nation - and the whole world!" That's why churches spread the Gospel in their own region, plus support and cooperate with missionary partners around the world. We aim to plant new churches, both nearby and far away.

The rest of the book of Acts chronicles how the disciples worked to do just as Jesus commands. It has 28 chapters. The last verse says the Apostle Paul was "**proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance**." Since Jesus gave you the same task, you get to write "chapter 29" as YOU share Christ with those around you. Let's get intentional about it, before we are hindered. We have His power and His promise. Let's witness!