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You've been accused of a crime that you didn't commit. As you sit in the court room listening to the evidence continuously pile against you, your hope begins to quickly fade. Your only hope is that the jurors vote in your favor, but the likelihood of that is slim to none. This same situation is presented in the movie and novel *Twelve Angry Men* written by Reginald Rose and directed by Sidney Lumet. The movie *Twelve Angry men* portrays the reality of our modern-day justice system. Everyone has heard or even witnessed the corruption of our justice system. In cases like this, the fate of a person's entire life is left in the hands of our jurors. However, Jurors sometimes fail to conduct a fair and reasonable examination of a trial due to biases, stereotypes, media representation, and plain ignorance.

The United States Bill of Rights gives us the right to a fair trial, right to counsel, right to a speedy and public trial, and right to be free from unlawfully made confessions and seized evidence. The movie *twelve angry men* gives us many examples in where some of these basic rights were violated. The jurors entered the court room without a doubt in mind. They didn't feel the need to look over the evidence because they were convinced he was guilty. Juror number eight states this is somebody's life. We can't decide in 5 minutes". The jurors didn't take his case seriously because of their thoughts of people like him. This was highly influenced by the fact that the defendant was Hispanic, a minority who was perceived as inferior to them. This automatically sets up the defendant for failure and violates his rights immediately off the bat. Their negative connotation of the boy just based off of his skin color is only going to be amplified when he's accused of something as terrible as murder. Juror number ten states "I've lived among them my whole life You can't believe a word they say. You know what I mean

they're born liars." The fact that some of the jurors didn't even want to consider evidence that proved beyond reasonable doubt just because of the boy's appearance and background screams unfairness. "Due process of law requires that the proceedings shall be fair, but fairness is a relative, not an absolute concept." (Cornell Law School, Legal Constitution Institute). Our justice system can't guarantee a fair and speedy trial when people such as juror number ten get called to jury duty. This happens in real life not just the movies. Ignorance leads to prejudice which causes people to believe in stereotypes and nothing but that.

The judge reminds the jurors "You are faced with a grave responsibility". This statement only stuck with one juror. This juror decided to put aside all prejudices and discrimination to actually "separate the facts from the fancy" as the judge put it. If it weren't for him, his fate of being tied to the electric chair would've been a result of bunch of ignorant white men's refusal to put their pride aside and actually seek the truth. The setting of the story also plays a huge role in understanding the context. The story takes place in the 1950s, peak time for racism. In current times there are more ways to prove innocence than there were in the 50's. The Jurys decision and unreliable evidence were the only things sealing one's fate during earlier time periods. When this is mixed with racial inequality the odds are that hundreds of Hispanics, blacks, and other minorities could've been falsely incarcerated. DNA testing is a recent development in technology which is extremely crucial in determine one's innocence. "An analysis of the 297 DNA exonerations reveals minorities make up approximately 70% of those proven innocents through DNA testing. Similarly, African-Americans represent the vast majority of these exonerations – 63% of those exonerated by DNA testing." (Edward Grimsley, Innocence project). This study that a lot of minorities who are accused and even

convicted are not even criminals. This goes against juror number four when he says “Listen to me they’re no good. There’s not one of them who’s any good.”

Racism, prejudice, and stereotypes are something that existed back then and haven’t gone away to this day. We must learn to ask God for Wisdom and guidance so that we may not end up believing or acting out upon any hateful beliefs such as the jurors in the beginning of the movie. We can be followers like the 11 jurors or a leader like the one who stood up for what was right. It may be scary but in a case like this it can lead to life or death, especially since any one of us can be called to jury duty and may have to make similar decisions. As you can see, Jurors sometimes fail to conduct a fair and reasonable examination of a trial due to biases, stereotypes, media representation, and plain ignorance. Through grace and wisdom, we can be just and fair, just like the Lord.