

MAXIMIZING THE POWER OF CLOSED LIPS

By Chris Simpson

A few years ago, I was in a high-stakes meeting with senior executives from multiple sectors – an audience not easily impressed. We were discussing integrity in leadership, and I had just finished speaking when I ended with a pointed challenge: *“What would it cost you to do what’s right when no one’s watching?”* Then I stopped talking. No clever close. No pivot to the next slide. Just silence.

I looked; I made eye contact. Five seconds, *then 10*. At first, people shifted in their chairs, waiting for me to finish the script they had written in their heads. But as the silence stretched, the atmosphere changed. They leaned in. The weight of the question didn’t fade – it deepened. The silence gave it room to breathe.

That is what wise silence does. It does not retreat from responsibility or signal weakness. It magnifies meaning. It invites reflection. And for the Christian leader, it reveals something greater: a deep confidence in God’s sovereignty and in the faithful trajectory you have already set.

We are conditioned to think good leadership is about having the sharpest answer, the strongest voice, or the most decisive action. But kingdom leadership also includes the discipline of discerned silence, especially when you know you have led with righteousness, planned with godly intention, and can now rest in it. Jesus stood before Pilate, accused, pressured, and misunderstood: *“But He gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.”* (Matthew 27:14).

Let that settle in. The Son of God, fully able to dismantle every lie with a word, chose silence. This was not passivity. This was power under perfect control. It was leadership grounded not in image, but in obedience. Not in performance, but in purpose. Jesus’ silence was not uncertainty; it was unshakable trust in the God the Father’s plan. It said, *“I don’t need to defend myself. The mission is already in motion.”* That is the posture we need in the marketplace: set your course, lead with righteousness, plan with godly intention, and then rest. You do not have to fill every pause with self-defense or scramble for consensus when you are anchored in God’s direction.

In today’s marketplace, noise is currency – strategy sessions, rapid-fire messages, constant “personal branding.” We are told to always speak, always weigh in, always stay visible. But what if your most formative leadership move this week is not what you say – but what you choose not to say?

When utilized well, silence can:

- Give space for wisdom to emerge – from you or from others.
- Shift focus from self-justification to truth-examination.
- Model emotional intelligence and spiritual maturity.
- Demonstrate a non-anxious presence – someone who doesn’t need to dominate the room to lead it.
- Invite reflection on what’s eternal, not just what’s tactical.

A well-placed pause in a meeting can become a doorway. It’s not manipulation, it’s ministry. It allows the biblical worldview you carry to echo louder than any pitch can. And when you have already set a faithful trajectory, silence becomes less about hesitation and more about steady, God-trusting leadership. In a culture of reactive leadership, the Christian who pauses, listens deeply, speaks sparingly, and embraces holy stillness, leads from a different source. Such leadership doesn’t just get results; it shapes souls.

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Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. When have you experienced a moment in your professional life in which silence spoke louder than words? How did it impact the outcome of the conversation or meeting, and what did it communicate about your leadership?
2. What does “setting a faithful trajectory” look like in your current role or business environment? How can intentional planning with godly motives give you the confidence to lead without always having to defend or explain yourself?
3. In a culture where “noise is currency,” what practical steps can you take to resist the pressure to always speak, post, or promote? How might those choices influence the spiritual climate of your workplace?
4. Jesus’ silence before Pilate was rooted in His trust in the Father’s plan. In what situations at work do you find it most difficult to remain silent, and how could trusting God’s sovereignty change your approach?

NOTE: If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Proverbs 10:19,32, 11:12, 12:14, 13:3, 15:2,4,7,23, 17:28, 18:21; Ephesians 4:29

Challenge for This Week

Set your course. Trust that you have led with righteousness and planned with godly intention, then rest in it. You do not need to hustle for the last word or fight to fill the silence. The confidence of a faithful trajectory lets you stand still without backing down, and it preaches louder than panic ever could.

This week, resolve not to just fill the air with words that come to mind. Steward your silence. Because sometimes, the loudest act of faith in the marketplace is the choice – the choice not to speak. You might find it helpful to discuss this with someone else, receiving and giving encouragement, and praying for God’s wisdom regarding when to speak. And when not to speak.