

Seven Places To Stay Silent At All Costs
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The title of our lesson is: "Seven Places To Stay Silent At All Costs."

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I don't mean ... places like ... in worship services ... in the library "locations."

I mean places in time ... "instances."

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By silent ... I mean no words. Keep quiet. Keep your mouth shut.

No sound. No mumbling. No grunts or groans.

No overt body language.

Silence. Fight the urge to speak. Fight it, and win the fight.

Remain silent.

Like mom and dad would say ... "I don't want to hear a peep out of you."

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There are times ... places in our lives ... when speaking must be avoided at all costs.

To please God and bring Him glory without fail ... we must not speak under any circumstances.

In Psalm 18:14 we read ... "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord my Rock and my Redeemer."

When our hearts are led by the Spirit, the words of our mouths will be pleasing to God.

When our Spirit-led hearts know that the time has come ... when we must be silent ... then our silence will please God.

Our culture ... and our human nature ... tells us that we need to be speaking out.

But do we realize ... that "silence" is a form of speech?

I heard someone once ask ... "What makes music? Is it the notes? Or is it the space between the notes? It's both.

What makes speech that pleases God? Is it the words or the silence between the words?

It's both.

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Habakkuk 2:20 reads, "But the LORD is in His holy temple ..."

If I remember right, this occurs when the people thought God had done too little to correct a situation. And then when He took action, they thought He had gone too far.

In a sense, this passage is saying ... "Enough!" That's enough!" "Quiet." "Gods got it!!"

“But the Lord is in His Holy Temple ... Let all the earth keep silent before Him.”

This morning we'll identify seven places where we need to be hearing God ... while we “Keep Silent.”

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Remember how James and John were called the Sons of Thunder? They tended to get heated up with a lot of “mouth action.”

Solomon wrote ... in Ecclesiastes 3:7 ... “There is a time to be silent and a time to speak.”

David said, in Psalm 109:1, “O God of my praise, Do not be silent.” Speak Lord, I'm listening.

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Seven Places To Stay Silent At All Costs

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One: Be silent if you don't know the full story.

Proverbs 18:13 says, He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.

It's best not to get ahead of ourselves. Or as people used to say ... don't go off half-cocked.

We think we're ready to enter into a conversation, when in fact, we only know the half of the situation.

We're armed with misinformation.

We do more harm than good.

We judge without facts.

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James 1:18-19 says, that since God brought us forth out of darkness into the light by the Word of Truth ... “let everyone be quick to hear ... slow to speak ... and slow to anger.”

This is the nature of God ... and it must be our nature as well.

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Speaking out with a partial story ... is not the same as asking for more information.

It is rushing to judgement. It is setting something into action ... something irreversible ... that ought not to have been started.

Perception is in play. Opinions, not truth reign.

You never know, you may do more harm to others than good. False accusations may weaken trust.

Let the facts speak for themselves, rather than you speaking for the facts.

Saul/Paul persecuted Christians based on half-truths. Peter opened his mouth on the Mount of Transfiguration before he had all the story. False teachers deny the need for baptism.

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Two: Be silent when you feel too emotional.

We must admit that our emotions can become twisted and even destructive at times, leading us to do or say things that are harmful to others and ourselves.

We must rely on Christ to fill our hearts with the attitudes and wisdom that please God and bring Him glory.

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Sometimes people may say to you ... "You're too emotional ... "You need to learn to be more like other people ... who don't show their feelings.

Is it sinful to be emotional as long as it doesn't lead to hurting others?

No, it is not. Not as long as emotions don't override Spirit-led reason.

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James 1:20 says that "the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God." We'll see James 1:18-20 show up in multiple places where we need to keep our silence.

Anger is an emotion. Keep silent while this emotion seeks to control you.

Colossians 3:15 tells us to be led by peace in making decisions. Unless that is the case ... keep silent.

Emotions are an important part of human makeup. Yet they are not to take the place of reason.

Christians are to use reason tempered with emotion, not emotion tempered with reason.

God is just, yet His justice is tempered with love, compassion, and mercy. And while His justice is tempered, it is never superseded.

If our emotions are not in check. We need to keep silent until they are.

Elijah felt all alone when Jezebel was hunting him down. But God reasoned with Him. "I have 7,000 in Israel who have not bowed a knee to Baal.

Deuteronomy 31:8, "It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; He will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.

Moses felt afraid. What if they don't believe me? Gideon felt he was too weak. Jeremiah felt he was too immature.

Proverbs 3:5 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding."

We must not let our emotions take the driver's seat of our speech.

Keep silent until we allow God to be control of our hearts and mouths.

Ephesians 4:31-32 provides a list of emotions that must be controlled before we speak ... bitterness, wrath, anger clamor, slander ...

And at the same time the passage provides a list of characteristics ... that when engaged ... will make it safe to open our mouths ... kindness, tender-heartedness, forgiveness ...

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Three: Be silent in the heat of anger.

We've talked all around this ... especially through the passage in James 1:18-20.

Ecclesiastes 7:9 says, "Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools."

In Proverbs 29:11 we read, "Fools give full vent to their rage ... but a wise man keeps himself under control. (Fools bring calamity in the end.

Proverbs 15:18 is a good one." A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict ... but the one who is patient calms a quarrel.

If you are the patient, calming one ... you may speak. But if you are the hot-headed one ... keep silent.

Here's dire warning. Proverbs 22:24-25, "Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared."

Who puts this harmful behavior into play?

You do, by NOT keeping silent.

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Four: Be silent if your words can offend a person.

Let there be no blame on your lips. Help rather than accuse.

Being offended is a strong emotional reaction. It can happen when someone's beliefs, values, or boundaries are violated.

Some people are easily offended, and they may have a history of being mistreated.

Sometimes we have trouble distinguishing between intentional and unintentional behavior.

Play it as safe as you know how. Learn from experience.

If you're not sure if what you're about to say may offend someone, keep silent.

It's far easier to fill a silence later on than to try to un-fill one.

Be empathetic, try not to take things personally, be patient.

Never withhold kindness. Never. A slip-up here can be unrecoverable.

Job 6:14 says "Anyone who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty."

Does a person have to be a close friend to qualify for your kindness? Or is this something you extend to all your fellow man?

Proverbs 16:28 says that "A perverse person stirs up conflict, and a gossip separates close friends." Gossip separates ... you from another ... you from God.

Never let your speech be filled with unforgiveness. Matthew 6:15 says "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

Matthew 18:7 tells us, "For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!"

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Five: Be silent if your words can destroy a friendship.

Is it sinful to be emotional as long as that doesn't lead to hurting others? That depends, right?

What is controlling your heart ... and hence, your mouth?

Pay close attention to good friendships.

Proverbs 18:24 tells us, that while some friendships may not last ... some do. And the ones that do, are golden. They are precious. They reward you for a lifetime.

These friends are more loyal than a brother (or sister).

1 Thessalonians 5:11 is good advice for friendships. "Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another ..."

Colossians 3:13 encourages us to "bear with one another, and forgive each other. And whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you."

This is how friends are to regard and treat one another.

If your speech is going to be inconsistent with these precepts ... keep silent.

Destroying a friendship has far-reaching effect ... way beyond the two parties involved.

Colossians 3:14 reminds us ... commands us actually ... "And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity."

Good friendship is unity in action.

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Six: Be silent if you can't talk without yelling.

When you yell, you're too loud to hear.

The only thing a person can hear when you yell ... is that you want to hurt them ... or make them afraid. It's just loud noise, scary noise.

You hear people say ... "I could just scream."

If you feel that way ... you'd better put a choke hold on that urge until the struggle ~~inside you to yell~~ quiets down.

Proverbs 19:12 says, "The king's wrath is like the roaring of a lion ... "

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The following is part of King David's story. We recall that David had family problems ... due to his lax oversight of his children.

Absalom, David's son, had revolted against his father.

Shimei ... a Benjamite ... cursed and stoned King David while David's fled from Jerusalem during Absalom's rebellion.

Shimei was a member of Saul's family. He mocked and cursed David and his officials as David fled from Jerusalem. "Get out," he had yelled, "get out, you murderer, you scoundrel!"

After Absalom's defeat, Shimei begged David for forgiveness, bringing with him a thousand Benjamite tribesmen. David forgave Shimei, but in his dying charge to Solomon, David told him to avenge the insult.

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The following is an article written by a young woman ...

“From a young age, I learned that male temper was a scary thing.

It was common enough for me to hear my father swearing at the top of his lungs while he worked in the garage that I got used to it. Yelling was his response to any indiscretion or frustration, no matter how trivial, and his children were no exception. Being yelled at always reduced me to tears as a child. It made me feel anxious and attacked.

I internalized this more than I realized. As I matured, I was less and less surprised when men seemed unable to control their anger—or, as most would say, when men “had a temper.”

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Yelling is the opposite of respect and kindness.

Being yelled at by someone can make your entire body tense up. It’s even worse if that person claims to care about you.

If the person is big ... is a male ... or has authority over you, your pulse can quicken ... your hands can start to shake.

Yelling is a way to shut the other person down. It’s a way to belittle another. It’s like putting hands on them through your speech.

It’s controlling. It’s threatening.

A parent won’t allow a child to yell at their brother or sister. God doesn’t allow any one of us to shout down another of His creation.

I can think of many times when God was stern and frank with someone ... even angry. But I can’t think of a time when He “yelled” at someone.

2 Timothy 2:24 says, “A servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome, but kind and gentle to all.”

And Ephesians 4:29 says that our speech must never corrupt another. Instead, it must build up and encourage.

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Seven: Be silent if your silence can preserve a bond.

There are bonds of friendship. Bonds of marriage. Bonds to Christ. Many more.

Bonds are important. Unity and bonds go hand-in-hand.

Bonds are sacred. Sometimes in the human sense. Often in the spiritual sense.

Proverbs 13: 3 teaches that we need to be silent whenever the bonds that give meaning to earthly and spiritual life hang in the balance.

Ephesians 4:29 says “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.”

Proverbs 21:23 says “Whoever keeps his mouth and his tongue ... keeps himself out of trouble.

A line in the Hymn “Love One Another (Angry Words) says “Friendships are far too sacred to risk. Brightest links of life can be broken by a single angry word.”

There are some things you can't take back ... they can't be unsaid. It would be like trying to unfry an egg.

The offended person may be too stressed to forgive ... and may have a very hard time being able to forget (does this make them sin)?

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I'm sure you may have many verses and examples I did not think of. Keeping silent is a rich topic for learning.

Christ said, "Let your yea be yea and your nay be nay." While a little bit out of context here maybe, it's always pretty good advice. It's always easier to add more words ... wisely ... than to subtract hasty, hurtful, foolish words.

Being silent before God in meditation is always a great place to be.

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Conclusion

James 1:26 says, "If anyone thinks he is religious ... and does not bridle his tongue, deceiving his own heart ... this person's religion is worthless."

James says that the tongue has great power to do good or to do evil.

Many studies focus on "how" to use the tongue.

This lesson approaches the topic by learning when "NOT" to use the tongue. When to keep silent.

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Be silent ... if you don't know the full story.

Be silent ... when you feel too emotional.

Be silent ... in the heat of anger.

Be silent ... if your words can offend a person.

Be silent ... if your words can destroy a friendship.

Be silent ... if you can't talk without yelling.

Be silent ... if your silence can preserve a bond.

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Dear Heavenly Father in your Son's name ... please grant us the wisdom to know when to bite our tongue.

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