

THE WISDOM OF CHOOSING YOUR BATTLES

By Erenia Mendoza

In the professional world, conflict is part of the journey. Sometimes it involves unfair criticism, other times a misunderstanding or a harsh word. The temptation to fight back can be strong – after all, who does not want to have the last word? But is it really worth it? Does every argument deserve our attention? More often than not, the true mark of strength is not winning a verbal battle, but having the discernment to know when silence is the wisest response.

Jesus gave us a powerful example. Standing before Pilate, unjustly accused, He did not defend Himself. He remained silent – not out of weakness, but because He knew His mission was greater than that moment of confrontation. “But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed” (Mark 15:5). Jesus understood that the truth doesn't need to be shouted to be recognized. It stands on its own.

Centuries later, businessman Henry Ford faced a similar situation but in a very different context. After being called ignorant by a newspaper, he took the matter to court. During the trial, the lawyers tried to humiliate him with complicated questions about history and geography. Ford calmly responded: “If I want the answer to any of those questions, I can press a button and call someone who knows it. So why should I clutter my mind with information that isn't essential to my purpose?”

His answer completely disarmed the attack. Ford did not lose focus or allow himself to be shaken. He knew who he was, what he was doing, and where he wanted to go – a valuable lesson for all of us.

As Christian business and professional people, we are called to seek that same kind of wisdom. The Bible reminds us: “Even fools are thought wise if they keep silent, and discerning if they hold their tongues” (Proverbs 17:28). Not every battle is worth fighting. And even when it is, sometimes the best choice is to wait for the right moment. I learned from my father that a strategic retreat is also wisdom.

Before entering into an argument, pause and ask yourself: “What is the purpose of this?” or “Where do I want this conversation to lead?” If your answer is “to prove I'm right,” or “to satisfy my ego,” it may be time to step back. Some battles just drain us. They do not help us grow; they do not build bridges – they wear us out. When we stay focused on what God has called us to do, we avoid unnecessary distractions and demonstrate maturity. Here are some suggestions on how to apply this wisdom in our lives:

- **Discern before reacting.** Not every provocation deserves a response. Before you speak, ask: “Is this worth my peace?” Remember: “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1).

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- **Stay focused on your purpose.** Don't waste energy trying to convince those who do not want to listen. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters" (Colossians 3:23).
- **Silence can speak volumes.** Sometimes moving forward without replying is the strongest thing to do. "Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you yourself will be just like him" (Proverbs 26:4).
- **Pray before acting.** If you need to respond, let your words be guided by God. "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" (James 1:5).

© 2026. Erenia Mendoza is the National Director of CBMC Brazil and a member of CBMC International's Global Leadership Team. She also serves on CBMC's Executive Committee for Latin America. Born in Nicaragua and raised in Brazil, Erenia built her career in the entertainment industry, specializing in distribution and marketing for films and series. She has worked with and for major studios, including Sony and Walt Disney, across Latin America.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. When confronted by conflict or criticism, what is your typical response? Do you quickly seek to defend yourself? Are you determined not to let the other person get in the last word? Explain your answer.
2. How difficult is it to remain silent when you become the subject of unjust criticism or accusation? Can you think of any examples you have observed of people who have been able to do that?
3. The writer of this Monday Manna states that not every battle is worth fighting. Do you agree with her? How can we determine which battles should be fought, and which should be avoided?
4. In what ways can faith in Jesus Christ aid us in finding the necessary wisdom for determining which verbal battles are not worth the time or energy they would require of us?

Challenge for This Week

This week, let your intelligence shine more through your actions than through your arguments. Choose your battles with wisdom. And at the end of your journey, may you echo the apostle Paul's words: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

His was the legacy of someone who fought the right battles – and won – even when he chose to stay silent. Discuss this with someone you trust, inviting his or her feedback on how well you are doing in this area.

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages: Proverbs 10:19-21,32, 12:18, 13:3, 14:16-17, 18:21, 21:23; Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:5-6

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