

# Was I wrong for not speaking up for Jesus and the church?

 [bulldogcatholic.org/2022/11/03/was-i-wrong-for-not-speaking-up-for-jesus-and-the-church](https://bulldogcatholic.org/2022/11/03/was-i-wrong-for-not-speaking-up-for-jesus-and-the-church)

November 3, 2022



**Q: I was talking with a friend the other day, and she started saying negative things about Jesus and the church. I knew that what she was saying wasn't true. I didn't say anything but feel like I should have. I just feel so badly for not speaking up. Was that wrong?**

A: I am so glad that you are asking about this. It demonstrates that you actually care and that you want to defend the truth about God and the church. Rather than looking at your question ("Was that wrong?"), I think it might be more productive to ask what was going on in your mind and heart at that moment.

There are at least four possible reasons you didn't say something. There might be more, but I have found that these are typically the four reasons why we fail to speak when something like this happens. (Note that these can also be the reasons we don't speak up when someone is being gossiped about or otherwise maligned.)

The first reason could be a lack of wisdom: You simply didn't know what to say. This is common. Someone might be talking about something they heard on a podcast or watched on YouTube somewhere. Maybe it is something along the lines of, "Did you know that the story of Jesus is based off of the ancient Egyptian story of Horus?" They can sound so certain and authoritative. They could possibly even make references to stories you have never heard of. How does a person engage these claims without having studied the fact that the "connection" between Jesus and Horus was completely fabricated in the 19th century by an English poet who was interested in Egyptology? If one were to read the actual myth of Horus, it is plain to see there is absolutely no connection between this myth and the factual and historical events of the life of Jesus. But if you have never encountered this claim, how could you know?

In those cases, it would not be wrong not to speak up. Your silence simply means that you lack the wisdom to engage.

The second reason could be a lack of courage: You knew how to respond but were afraid. This can also happen quite often. It might be possible that we have a great deal of respect (or fear) for the person speaking. Because of this, we may shrink back from challenging them for fear of what they might think. This could be connected to vanity. Vanity is not limited to the kind of person who checks themselves out in a mirror often. The sin of vanity is much more ubiquitous: an inordinate preoccupation with what others might think. Because of this, I may not speak up because of what an individual might think of me.

Or maybe this happened in the context of a group. In that case, I may not say anything because I am not willing to appear different from the rest of the people involved. In Minnesota, we have this issue in spades. We are known for "Minnesota Nice." We will often defer to "fitting in" rather than rise to the occasion and be willing to disagree with others publicly.

In this case, it might be wrong to remain silent. But knowing that the reason is a lack of courage is helpful, because it reveals the way forward: There is a need for greater courage.

The third reason could be a lack of love: You didn't care enough to speak. This could come from our postmodern sense of indifference. In some circles, it is "not cool to care." The kind of person who gets riled up enough to contradict someone could merely be contentious. But they could also be the kind of person who cares about the truth enough to become uncomfortable. They could be the kind of person who cares about the other people involved enough to know that they can't just leave them alone in their ignorance. But too often, our lack of love for others (or the truth) can leave us silent when we should speak.

In this case, it might be wrong to not say anything. This should rouse us to ask the God of love to move our hearts with a real and genuine concern for the truth and the people in our lives.

The fourth reason could be that you discerned that this moment was simply not the right moment. There can be a time and a place for correction. It might be possible that you read the situation and figured that engaging the person in conversation or debate would not be helpful. I've been in this scenario far too often; the person is highly emotional (or highly intoxicated or in "on stage" mode) and it just seems clear that this would not be the right time. That could have been the case for you as well.

If that is what happened, then we have to make sure that, some time in the future, we have the wisdom, the courage, and the love to reach out and offer that word of truth if the situation calls for it.