LIFE Group Discussion Guide

October 4, 2026

Matthew 5:33-37

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?
- What Scripture has been shaping you recently?
- Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?
- What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?
- What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?
- What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?
- What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

OPENING

What makes you trust someone when they give you their word?

Think about how often we use phrases like, "I promise," "I swear," or "Trust me." Sometimes we use those words because we want people to believe what we're saying.

In Matthew 5:33–37, Jesus teaches that His followers should be people whose words can be trusted without needing extra promises. Our character should be so honest that when we say "yes," people know we mean yes.

Today we'll learn that followers of Jesus should be people of integrity whose words can be trusted because their lives reflect the truth of Christ.

SCRIPTURE

Read **Matthew 5:33–37** together.

Ask students to listen for:

- What Jesus says about promises and oaths.
- Why our words should be trustworthy.
- What Jesus means by letting our "yes" be "yes" and our "no" be "no."

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Jesus continues teaching in the Sermon on the Mount by addressing the importance of truthfulness.

People in Jesus' day sometimes used promises or oaths to make their statements sound more trustworthy. The problem was that some people treated certain promises as more serious than others.

Jesus goes deeper than simply asking whether someone technically kept a promise. He wants His followers to be people of integrity**.**

That means:

- Telling the truth.
- Keeping our word.
- Taking responsibility when we make mistakes.
- Not exaggerating to make ourselves look better.
- Not using words to manipulate people.
- Following through on our commitments.

Jesus calls His followers to live with such honesty and integrity that their words can be trusted without needing extra promises.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why do you think people sometimes say, "I promise," when they want someone to believe them?

They may want to convince someone that they are telling the truth or make what they are saying sound more serious or believable.

What does Jesus mean when He says, "Let your yes mean yes, and your no mean no"?

We should mean what we say. Our words should be honest and dependable rather than requiring extra promises to convince people to trust us.

What are some ways students can be dishonest without actually telling an obvious lie?
Exaggerating, leaving out important information, making excuses, spreading rumors, using half-truths, or saying something in a misleading way.

Why can exaggeration be a problem?
Exaggeration can make us look better than we really are and cause people to believe something that isn't completely true.

How can your words affect the way people see your faith?
When our words are honest and dependable, people can see Christlike character in us. When we're dishonest, our credibility and witness can be damaged.

Why is it sometimes difficult to tell the truth?
We may be afraid of getting in trouble, disappointing someone, looking bad, or facing consequences for something we've done.

What should you do when you realize you've lied or broken a promise?
Admit what happened, tell the truth, apologize, accept responsibility, and make things right when possible.

APPLICATION

Are there situations where you're tempted to exaggerate, hide the truth, or make yourself look better?
What would honesty look like instead?

Are there commitments you've made that you need to take more seriously?
What could you do to follow through?

What is one practical way you can show greater integrity this week?
Examples:

- Tell the truth even when it's uncomfortable.
- Admit when you're wrong.
- Keep a promise you've made.
- Stop exaggerating.
- Refuse to participate in gossip.
- Follow through on something you've committed to doing.

DIG DEEPER

Why does trust take a long time to build but can be damaged quickly?

How can social media make it easier to exaggerate or present a false version of ourselves?

Why is admitting that you are wrong actually a sign of strength and maturity?

How does God's faithfulness give us an example to follow?

How can our student LIFE Group become a place where honesty, grace, and accountability are encouraged?

CLOSING THOUGHT

Jesus wants us to be people others can trust. That doesn't mean we'll never make mistakes. We will. But when we make mistakes, people should know that we'll tell the truth, take responsibility, and try to make things right.

Your integrity is being shaped by the choices you make every day. When you say yes, mean yes. When you say no, mean no. And when you mess up, be honest about it.

Ask yourself:

- Can people trust what I say?
- Do my actions match my words?
- Am I honest when telling the truth is difficult?
- Is there something I need to make right?

Challenge:
This week, intentionally practice being completely honest and following through on your commitments - even when it is difficult or inconvenient.

When Jesus changes our hearts, our words and actions should become more trustworthy.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next week we will discuss **Matthew 5:38-42** as we continue the series, *The Greatest Sermon Ever Preached: The Sermon on the Mount.*

PRAYER FOCUS

Pray together:

- Thank God that He is completely trustworthy and faithful.
- Ask Him to help students become people of honesty and integrity.
- Pray for courage to tell the truth even when it is difficult.
- Ask God to help students keep their commitments and take responsibility when they fail.
- Pray that students' words would encourage others and reflect Christ.
- Pray that the student LIFE Group would be a community where honesty, grace, accountability, and encouragement are practiced.

- Pray specifically for the invitation portion of our worship services—that hearts will be open, the Spirit will move powerfully, and people will respond in obedience to Christ.

COMMENTARY

Matthew 5:33-37

Jesus addresses how people used clever, indirect oaths and substitutions to deceive others without technically breaking a vow or invoking God's name.

Background on Oaths

- Binding Vows: Oaths made directly to God were considered serious and binding under Old Testament law.
- Religious Loopholes: People avoided using God's personal name by swearing by heaven, the earth, Jerusalem, or their own heads.
- Dishonest Gain: Religious individuals used these substitutes as technical loopholes to lie or manipulate while making it seem like they were telling the truth.

Jesus' Command

- No More Oaths: Jesus tells his followers not to swear oaths by heaven, earth, or even their own heads, noting that people do not even control their own hair.
- Simple Honesty: He instructs disciples to let their "yes" mean "yes" and their "no" mean "no".
- The Root of Deception: Anything beyond honest, plain speech comes from evil and dishonest hearts.