FBC SUMMIT

LIFE Group Discussion Guide

October 11, 2026

Matthew 5:38-42

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 is your natural reaction when someone treats you unfairly?

When someone hurts us, our natural response is often to defend ourselves, get even, or make sure the other person experiences the same kind of pain they caused us.

In Matthew 5:38–42, Jesus challenges that natural response. He teaches His followers not to live according to a pattern of retaliation but to respond to mistreatment with humility, generosity, and grace.

Jesus isn't calling us to pretend that injustice doesn't matter. Instead, He calls us to refuse the cycle of revenge and to respond to difficult people in a way that reflects God's character.

Today we'll explore how followers of Jesus should refuse to live by retaliation and instead respond to wrong with grace, wisdom, and sacrificial love.

SCRIPTURE READING

Read **Matthew 5:38–42** together.

Ask the group to listen for:

- What Jesus says about retaliation.
- How Jesus responds to the principle of "eye for eye."
- What kinds of responses He calls His followers to make.
- What these teachings reveal about the character of a disciple.

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Jesus continues His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount by addressing retaliation and how His followers should respond when they are mistreated.

The Old Testament principle of "eye for eye and tooth for tooth" was given as a principle of justice. It limited punishment so that retaliation would not become excessive. It was never intended to encourage personal revenge.

Jesus now teaches His followers to go beyond merely limiting retaliation. He gives several examples:

- Turning the other cheek.
- Giving more than what is demanded.
- Going the extra mile.
- Giving generously to someone who asks.

These examples challenge our desire to protect our rights and get even.
Jesus is not teaching that Christians should ignore abuse, enable wrongdoing, or refuse legitimate protection or justice. Scripture gives other examples of confronting wrongdoing appropriately. The focus here is on our personal response when we are wronged.

The heart of Jesus' teaching is that His followers should not allow another person's wrongdoing to determine their character. We don't have to retaliate simply because

someone has hurt us. Instead, we can choose a different response because we belong to Christ.

Jesus calls His followers to break the cycle of retaliation by responding to mistreatment with grace, generosity, humility, and love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What is our natural tendency when someone wrongs us?
We often want to defend ourselves, retaliate, prove that we're right, or make the other person experience what they did to us.

What was the purpose of the "eye for eye" principle in the Old Testament?
It established proportional justice and prevented punishment from becoming excessive. It placed limits on retaliation rather than encouraging personal revenge.

What is Jesus challenging in the way people normally respond to being wronged?
Jesus challenges our desire for revenge and our insistence on getting even. He calls His followers to respond differently because we are under God's rule.

What does "turn the other cheek" mean in the context of Jesus' teaching?
It describes refusing to retaliate when personally insulted or mistreated. Jesus calls His followers to resist the instinct to strike back or seek revenge.

Why is "going the extra mile" such a powerful picture of Christian character?
It means willingly doing more than what is required. Instead of simply doing the minimum, Christians can demonstrate a spirit of generosity and service.

Does Jesus' teaching mean Christians should never confront injustice or protect themselves or others?
No. Jesus is addressing personal retaliation. Christians can appropriately seek justice, establish healthy boundaries, protect others, and confront wrongdoing while refusing to respond with personal vengeance.

How can responding with grace demonstrate the gospel to others?
Grace breaks the normal cycle of retaliation. When we respond to wrong with patience, forgiveness, generosity, and love, we demonstrate something different from the world's pattern of revenge.

APPLICATION

Is there someone who has wronged you whom you are tempted to "get even" with?
What would it look like to surrender that desire for revenge to God?

When you are treated unfairly, what is your typical response? Do you tend to retaliate, withdraw, complain, defend yourself, or seek reconciliation?

Where might God be calling you to "go the extra mile"?
Consider your marriage, family, workplace, church, friendships, or neighbors.

DIG DEEPER

Read *Romans 12:17–21****. How does Paul's teaching connect with Jesus' words?***

Read *1 Peter 2:21–23****. How did Jesus respond when He was mistreated?***

What is the difference between forgiveness and allowing someone to continue harming you?

Why is revenge so appealing to us?

How does trusting God's justice make it possible for us to let go of personal revenge?

How can a LIFE Group help people respond to conflict in a Christlike way?

CLOSING THOUGHT

Jesus calls His followers to live differently from the world around them.

The world says: "Get even."

Jesus says: "Respond differently."

That doesn't mean pretending wrong doesn't matter. It doesn't mean refusing appropriate justice. It doesn't mean allowing people to continually harm us. It means refusing to let someone else's sin determine how we respond.

Jesus Himself is our greatest example. He was mistreated and rejected, yet He entrusted Himself to the Father and ultimately gave His life for sinners.

Because we have experienced the grace of Christ, we can extend grace to others.

Ask yourself:
Am I holding onto a desire for revenge?

Is there someone I need to forgive?

Am I more concerned with proving myself right than reflecting Christ?

Where is God calling me to respond with unusual grace?

This week identify one situation where you are tempted to retaliate and intentionally choose a response that reflects the character of Christ rather than your natural desire to get even.

Christ changes the way we respond when we are wronged. We don't have to get even because we can trust God and respond with grace.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next week we will discuss **Matthew 5:43-48** as we continue the series, *The Greatest Sermon Ever Preached: The Sermon on the Mount.*

PRAYER FOCUS

- Thank God for the grace and forgiveness He has shown us through Christ.
- Ask God to help us resist the desire for revenge and retaliation.
- Pray for wisdom to respond appropriately when we experience injustice or mistreatment.
- Ask God to help us forgive those who have wronged us.
- Pray for courage to establish healthy boundaries while still responding with grace.
- Pray that our LIFE Groups would be communities where conflict is handled with humility, forgiveness, truth, and love.
- 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 5:38-42

Matthew 5:38–42 is Jesus's direct teaching against personal retaliation, urging his followers to reject revenge and respond to mistreatment with radical grace and generosity.

Core Meaning of the Passage

- **No Personal Vengeance:** Jesus quotes the old law of "an eye for an eye," which was originally a civil limit for judges to keep punishments fair, but people were misusing it to justify personal payback.

- **Turning the Other Cheek:** A backhand slap to the right cheek was an insult rather than a life-threatening blow; turning the other cheek refuses escalation.

- **Surrendering Rights:** Giving up your cloak when sued for a shirt or going an extra mile when forced by a soldier means choosing voluntary surrender over bitter conflict.

- **Radical Generosity:** Verse 42 finishes the thought by prohibiting selfishness, telling disciples to give to those who ask or want to borrow rather than holding onto grudges or material possessions