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 first reaction when someone treats you unfairly?

When someone hurts us, our first instinct can be to hurt them back. Maybe we want to get even, say something back, embarrass them, or make sure they know how we feel. Jesus gives His followers a different way to respond.

In Matthew 5:38–42, Jesus teaches us not to live by revenge. Instead, He calls us to respond to difficult situations with grace, generosity, humility, and love.

This morning we'll learn that following Jesus means choosing grace instead of revenge when we are wronged.

SCRIPTURE

Read **Matthew 5:38–42** together.

Ask students to listen for:

- What Jesus says about getting even.
- The examples Jesus gives.
- How His teaching is different from our natural response.
- What Jesus' teaching reveals about following Him.

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Jesus is continuing His teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.

He says: "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth."

This principle from the Old Testament was actually intended to **limit** retaliation and establish proportional justice. It wasn't permission for people to take revenge.

Jesus takes the teaching further.

He gives examples of what it can look like to refuse personal retaliation:

- Turning the other cheek.
- Giving more than what is demanded.
- Going the extra mile.
- Being generous toward someone who asks.

Jesus is challenging His followers to respond differently from the world around them. That doesn't mean Christians should allow people to abuse them, ignore serious wrongdoing, or refuse to seek appropriate help or justice.
Instead, Jesus is teaching us not to let someone else's wrongdoing control our response.

When someone hurts us, we don't have to automatically hurt them back. Because we belong to Jesus, we can choose a different response.

The main point is: Jesus calls His followers to break the cycle of revenge by responding to wrong with grace, wisdom, humility, and love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What is your natural reaction when someone hurts or embarrasses you?
We may want to get even, say something back, ignore them, embarrass them, or make them feel the way they made us feel.

What was the purpose of the "eye for eye" principle in the Old Testament?
It limited retaliation and made sure that punishment was not excessive. It established a principle of proportional justice.

What is Jesus challenging when He tells His followers not to retaliate?
He is challenging our desire for revenge and our instinct to get even when someone wrongs us.

What do you think Jesus means by "turn the other cheek"?
He is teaching His followers not to respond to personal insults or mistreatment with revenge. Instead of automatically striking back, we can choose a different response.

What does it mean to "go the extra mile" today?
It means willingly doing more than what is required. Instead of doing only the minimum, we choose to serve and help others with a willing attitude.

Does Jesus mean that Christians should never stand up for themselves or someone else?
No. Christians can seek help, establish healthy boundaries, protect others, and pursue appropriate justice. Jesus is teaching us not to respond to personal wrongs with revenge.

How can responding with grace make a difference in someone's life?
It can break the cycle of anger and revenge. A gracious response can show people that following Jesus changes the way we respond to difficult situations.

APPLICATION

Is there someone who has hurt or wronged you that you are tempted to get even with?
What would it look like to give that situation to God?

When someone treats you unfairly, what is your typical response?
Do you tend to fight back, say something hurtful, ignore the person, complain about them, or try to work things out?

Where is God giving you an opportunity to "go the extra mile"?
Think about your family, friends, classmates, teammates, or LIFE Group.

DIG DEEPER

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

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 treating you badly?

Why is revenge so tempting?

How does trusting God help us let go of the desire to get even?

How can our LIFE Group help us handle conflict in a Christlike way?

CLOSING THOUGHT

Jesus calls us to respond differently when people hurt us.

The world often says: "Get even."

Jesus says: "Respond differently."

That doesn't mean we ignore serious problems or allow people to mistreat us. It means we don't have to respond to someone's sin with more sin.

When someone is rude to us, we don't have to be rude back. When someone embarrasses us, we don't have to embarrass them.

When someone hurts us, we can choose grace instead of revenge.

Jesus showed us what this looks like. He was mistreated and rejected, yet He trusted His Father and responded with love.

Ask yourself:
Do I have a habit of getting even?

Is there someone I need to forgive?

Am I more interested in being right than showing Christ?

Where is Jesus asking me to respond with grace?

Challenge:
Think of one situation where you are tempted to get even. This week, intentionally choose a response that reflects Jesus instead of your natural reaction.

Following Jesus means we don't have to get even. 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

Pray together:

- Thank God for the grace and forgiveness He has shown us through Jesus.
- Ask God to help students resist the desire for revenge.
- Pray for wisdom when dealing with conflict, bullying, insults, or unfair treatment.
- Ask God to help students forgive people who have hurt them.
- Pray for courage to seek help and establish healthy boundaries when necessary.
- Pray that students would respond to difficult people with grace, humility, and love.
- Pray that the student LIFE Group would be a place where students learn to handle conflict in a Christlike way.
- 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