



# LIFE Group Discussion Guide

August 23, 2026

**Matthew 5:1-2**

## 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

***Who is someone you really respect and listen to? What makes you want to listen to what they have to say?***

Matthew 5 begins one of the most important teaching sections in the Bible—the Sermon on the Mount.

Over the next few chapters, Jesus teaches His followers what it looks like to live as people who belong to God's kingdom.

Before we get into everything Jesus teaches, we need to understand something important: Jesus wants us to listen to Him.

Today we'll learn that following Jesus means listening to His teaching and allowing His Word to shape the way we live.

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## SCRIPTURE

Read **Matthew 5:1–2** together.

Ask students to listen for:

- Who Jesus sees.
- Where Jesus goes.
- Who comes to Him.
- What Jesus begins to do.

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## PASSAGE SUMMARY

Matthew 5 begins the Sermon on the Mount, which continues through Matthew 7.

Jesus has already begun His ministry and is announcing that God's kingdom is near. Now He begins teaching His disciples what it means to live as people who belong to that kingdom.

Matthew says that Jesus saw the crowds, but His disciples came to Him. A disciple isn't simply someone who knows about Jesus. A disciple is someone who follows Jesus.

Jesus is about to teach His followers about almost every part of everyday life:

- How we treat people
- How we handle anger
- How we think
- How we use our words
- How we pray
- How we handle money
- How we deal with worry
- How we treat our enemies
- How we make decisions
- How we obey God

Some of Jesus' teachings will be encouraging. Others will challenge us. But Jesus isn't giving these teachings simply so we can know more information. He wants His followers to live differently because they belong to Him.

The main point is: the Sermon on the Mount teaches us what it looks like to follow Jesus in everyday life.

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

***What stands out to you about the way Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount?***

Jesus sees the crowds, but His disciples come to Him to learn. Jesus is intentionally teaching those who are following Him.

***Why is it important that Jesus is the one doing the teaching?***

Jesus isn't simply giving us another person's opinion. He is the Son of God, so His teaching carries God's authority.

***What's the difference between knowing about Jesus and actually following Jesus?***

Knowing about Jesus means having information about Him. Following Jesus means trusting Him, obeying Him, and allowing Him to change the way we live.

***Why do you think Jesus taught His disciples before giving them specific instructions about how to live?***

Jesus wants to change our hearts, not simply our behavior. What we do should flow from who we are becoming as followers of Jesus.

***What are some things that can keep students from really listening to Jesus?***

Distractions, pride, peer pressure, wanting to fit in, thinking we already know everything, or not wanting Jesus to change something in our lives.

***What does it look like for a student to have a teachable heart?***

Being willing to listen, admitting when we're wrong, allowing God's Word to challenge us, asking questions, and being willing to obey what Jesus teaches.

***Why do you think the Sermon on the Mount is important for students today?***

Jesus talks about real-life issues that students face—relationships, anger, words, temptation, worry, prayer, priorities, and how we treat others.

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## **APPLICATION**

***When you read something Jesus teaches in the Bible, do you usually think about how you should change, or do you simply try to understand what it means? Why is it important to do both?***

***Is there something Jesus has taught you that you've struggled to obey? What makes it difficult?***

***As we begin studying the Sermon on the Mount, what is one area where you want Jesus to help you grow?***

Examples:

- Your friendships
- Your attitude
- Your words
- Your thoughts
- Your relationship with your parents
- Your prayer life
- Your priorities
- Your faith at school

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Read Matthew 7:24-27. *What does Jesus say about people who hear His words and put them into practice?*

*Why is it possible to know a lot about Jesus without actually following Him?*

*How can your friends tell whether you're actually following Jesus?*

*What would change at your school if more students actually lived out Jesus' teaching?*

*How can our student LIFE Group help each other move from simply knowing the Bible to actually living it?*

## CLOSING THOUGHT

Over the next several weeks, we're going to hear Jesus teach about some really important areas of life.

He's going to talk about:

- Anger
- Relationships
- Purity
- Honesty
- Prayer
- Money
- Worry
- How we treat other people

Some of what Jesus says will be easy to hear. Some of it may challenge us. That's okay. Jesus isn't trying to make us comfortable. He's trying to make us more like Him. The question isn't simply: "Do I know what Jesus said?" The better question is: "Am I willing to do what Jesus says?"

Ask yourself:

- Am I really listening to Jesus?
- Am I willing to let God's Word challenge me?
- What is one area where I need to move from hearing to obeying?

### Challenge:

As we begin studying the Sermon on the Mount, come each week ready to ask one question: "What does Jesus want me to do with what I'm learning?"

Remember: a disciple doesn't simply know what Jesus says—a disciple listens to Jesus and follows Him.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Next week we will discuss **Matthew 5:13-15** as we continue the series, *The Greatest Sermon Ever Preached: The Sermon on the Mount*.

## PRAYER FOCUS

Pray together:

- Thank Jesus for teaching us what it means to follow Him.
- Ask God to give students humble and teachable hearts.
- Pray that students would be willing to obey God's Word even when it is difficult.
- Ask God to use the Sermon on the Mount to transform students' attitudes, relationships, choices, and priorities.
- Pray that students would live out their faith at home, at school, with friends, and wherever God places them.
- Pray that the student LIFE Group would be a place where students encourage one another not just to know God's Word but to live it.
- 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 5:1-2

In Matthew 5:1-2, Jesus sees the crowds, goes up a mountain, sits down to teach, and addresses His disciples with profound authority. This opening sets the stage for the Sermon on the Mount, presenting Jesus as the new, greater lawgiver and authoritative teacher.

### Setting and Posture

- **The Mountain:** Jesus goes up on a mountain, reminiscent of Moses receiving the law on Mount Sinai, framing Jesus's words as foundational covenant teaching.
- **Sitting Down:** Jesus sits down, which was the standard, formal posture for a Jewish rabbi or teacher delivering authoritative instruction.
- **The Audience:** While crowds are present, He specifically addresses His disciples, indicating that the core ethics of the kingdom are meant for those who are truly committed followers.

### The Act of Teaching

- **Coming to Him:** The disciples draw near to listen, showing an active posture of discipleship.

- **Opening His Mouth:** This phrase signals a solemn, weighty, and momentous declaration—transitioning from general ministry and healing into direct, life-defining verbal instruction starting with the Beatitudes.