



LIFE Group Discussion Guide

September 6, 2026

Matthew 5:17-20

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

Have you ever misunderstood someone's intentions, only to later realize they were actually trying to accomplish something much greater? What happened?

During Jesus' ministry, many people misunderstood why He had come. Some thought He was replacing or ignoring God's Law. In Matthew 5:17–20, Jesus makes it clear that He did not come to abolish God's Word but to fulfill it. He also challenges His followers

to pursue a righteousness that comes from a transformed heart, not merely outward religious actions.

Today we'll explore how Jesus perfectly fulfilled God's Word and calls His followers to live lives of genuine righteousness that flow from a transformed heart.

SCRIPTURE READING

Read **Matthew 5:17–20** together.

Ask the group to listen for:

- What Jesus says about the Old Testament
- What it means for Jesus to fulfill the Law
- What Jesus teaches about righteousness

PASSAGE SUMMARY

These verses are part of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

After describing the character of His followers and calling them to be salt and light, Jesus addresses an important question: What is His relationship to God's Law?

Jesus makes several important points:

- He did not come to eliminate God's Word.
- He came to fulfill everything God had promised through the Law and the Prophets.
- God's Word remains trustworthy and authoritative.
- True righteousness is more than external rule-keeping.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day focused heavily on outward obedience while often neglecting the condition of their hearts.

Jesus teaches that God's desire has always been wholehearted obedience that flows from a genuine relationship with Him.

The main point is: Following Jesus means trusting Him as the fulfillment of God's plan and allowing Him to transform our hearts so that our obedience reflects our love for God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why do you think Jesus wanted to make it clear that He did not come to abolish the Law?

Many people assumed Jesus was rejecting the Old Testament. Instead, He explains that He fulfills God's promises and brings God's redemptive plan to completion.

What does it mean that Jesus "fulfilled" the Law and the Prophets?

Jesus perfectly obeyed God's Law, fulfilled Old Testament prophecies, completed God's plan of redemption, and accomplished what the Law ultimately pointed toward.

What does verse 18 teach us about the importance of God's Word?

God's Word is trustworthy, enduring, and authoritative. Every part of Scripture has lasting significance because it reflects God's truth.

Why does Jesus emphasize both doing and teaching God's commands?

Faithful disciples not only obey God's Word themselves but also encourage and help others to follow it.

What did Jesus mean when He said our righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees?

Jesus was not calling for more rule-keeping than the Pharisees. He was calling for a righteousness that comes from a transformed heart rather than merely outward religious performance.

How can believers avoid becoming focused only on outward appearances?

By regularly examining our hearts, depending on God's grace, pursuing a genuine relationship with Christ, and obeying Him out of love rather than obligation.

How does understanding that Jesus fulfilled the Law deepen your appreciation for the gospel?

Because none of us could perfectly keep God's Law, Jesus accomplished what we could not. Through faith in Him, we receive forgiveness and His righteousness.

APPLICATION**Are there areas where your faith has become more about outward actions than a growing relationship with Christ?**

Take time for honest reflection.

How can you demonstrate a deeper love for God's Word this week?

Examples:

- Spend intentional time reading Scripture.
- Memorize a verse.
- Study a passage more deeply.
- Apply one biblical truth in a specific situation.

What is one area where God is calling you to greater heart-level obedience rather than simply outward compliance?

Consider attitudes, priorities, relationships, forgiveness, generosity, or integrity.

DIG DEEPER

Why is it important to understand the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament?

How does Jesus fulfill the sacrificial system and the promises of the Old Testament?

What is the difference between legalism and joyful obedience?

How does the gospel motivate obedience differently than fear or obligation?

How can our LIFE Groups encourage one another toward genuine heart transformation rather than outward appearances?

CLOSING THOUGHT

Jesus did not lower God's standards. He revealed their true purpose. God has always desired more than outward obedience. He desires hearts that love Him, trust Him, and joyfully follow Him.

Because Jesus perfectly fulfilled God's Law, we can experience forgiveness, new life, and the power to live differently.

Ask yourself:

Am I simply going through the motions, or is my relationship with Christ growing?

Is my obedience flowing from love for Jesus?

How can I honor God's Word more faithfully this week?

Challenge your LIFE group members this week to choose one area where obedience can move beyond routine and become a genuine expression of our love for Christ.

Remember:

Jesus fulfilled God's Word perfectly so that, through Him, our hearts can be transformed to joyfully obey God.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next week we will discuss **Matthew 5:21-26** as we continue the series, *The Greatest Sermon Ever Preached: The Sermon on the Mount*.

PRAYER FOCUS

- Thank God for sending Jesus to fulfill His perfect plan of redemption.
- Praise Him for the truth, authority, and reliability of His Word.
- Ask God to transform our hearts so that our obedience flows from love rather than obligation.
- Pray for a deeper hunger to know, understand, and apply Scripture.
- Pray that our LIFE Groups would faithfully encourage one another toward Christ-centered obedience.
- 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 5:17-20

In Matthew 5:17–20, Jesus defends His relationship to the Old Testament, explaining that He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets, that God's word remains permanently binding, and that true kingdom righteousness must exceed that of the religious elite.

Fulfilling the Law (v. 17–18)

- Jesus states He did not come to abolish (destroy or undo) the Old Testament writings, but to bring them to their intended goal, completion, and realization.
- Every single detail and prophetic promise of the Law and the Prophets remains vital and valid until everything is fully accomplished through His life, death, and resurrection.

Practicing and Teaching the Commands (v. 19)

- Jesus emphasizes that a person's value in the kingdom of heaven is connected to how seriously they take God's commands.
- Relaxing or teaching others to ignore even the seemingly minor instructions of God places a person in the lowest rank of the kingdom, whereas practicing and teaching them marks one as great.

Surpassing Pharisaic Righteousness (v. 20)

- The scribes and Pharisees followed an external, meticulous, and legalistic adherence to rules.
- Jesus shocks His listeners by declaring that entry into the kingdom of heaven requires a deeper, heart-level righteousness that completely surpasses theirs—pointing forward to the radical internal obedience He unpacks throughout the rest of the Sermon on the Mount.