



LIFE Group Discussion Guide

September 13, 2026

Matthew 5:21-26

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

Think about a time when a misunderstanding or unresolved conflict affected one of your relationships. **What made reconciliation difficult?**

Most people believe they are doing well if they simply avoid major sins like murder. But in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reveals that God's concern goes much deeper than our outward actions. He cares about the condition of our hearts.

In Matthew 5:21–26, Jesus teaches that anger, bitterness, and broken relationships matter to God. Rather than simply avoiding wrongdoing, His followers are called to pursue reconciliation and peace.

Today we'll explore how followers of Jesus pursue reconciliation because transformed hearts seek peace, forgiveness, and restored relationships.

SCRIPTURE READING

Read **Matthew 5:21–26** together.

Ask the group to listen for:

- How Jesus moves from outward actions to heart attitudes.
- Why reconciliation is important.
- What Jesus teaches about relationships.
- What actions Jesus calls His followers to take.

PASSAGE SUMMARY

In this passage, Jesus begins a series of teachings in which He says, "You have heard... but I tell you..."

He is not changing God's Law. Instead, He is explaining its true meaning. While the Law prohibited murder, Jesus reveals that sinful anger, contempt, and hatred are also serious because they originate in the heart.

Jesus emphasizes that worship and relationships cannot be separated. If we knowingly allow broken relationships to remain unresolved when reconciliation is possible, we are ignoring something God deeply values.

This does not mean every relationship will always be restored, but followers of Christ should take the initiative to pursue peace whenever possible.

The main point is: Jesus calls His followers to deal with sinful anger quickly and actively pursue reconciliation because transformed hearts reflect God's love and grace.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why does Jesus move beyond the command, "Do not murder," to address anger?

Jesus shows that sinful actions begin in the heart. Anger, bitterness, and contempt can lead to broken relationships and other sinful actions if left unchecked.

What does this passage teach us about how seriously God views our relationships?

God cares deeply about how we treat others. Healthy relationships and reconciliation are important expressions of genuine faith.

Why do you think Jesus says reconciliation should come before presenting an offering?

Jesus emphasizes that worship involves more than religious activity. God desires hearts that seek peace and obedience, including making things right with others whenever possible.

What are some common causes of unresolved conflict?

Pride, misunderstandings, selfishness, poor communication, un-forgiveness, assumptions, and unwillingness to admit wrong.

What makes reconciliation difficult?

Fear of rejection, pride, lingering hurt, lack of humility, and uncertainty about how the other person will respond.

What does it look like to pursue reconciliation in a Christ-like way?

Taking the initiative, speaking truth with love, listening carefully, admitting our own wrongs, offering forgiveness, and seeking peace with humility.

How does remembering God's forgiveness toward us help us forgive others?

Recognizing how much Christ has forgiven us produces humility, gratitude, and a willingness to extend grace to others.

APPLICATION

Is there a relationship where you've allowed anger, bitterness, or resentment to remain? What first step might God be calling you to take?

Are there any conversations you've been avoiding that could lead to greater peace or understanding? How could you approach that conversation with humility and grace?

What is one practical way you can become a peacemaker this week?

Examples:

- Offer forgiveness.
- Ask for forgiveness.
- Initiate a difficult conversation.
- Pray for someone you've struggled with.
- Refuse to gossip or speak negatively about others.
- Encourage reconciliation between others when appropriate.

DIG DEEPER

What is the difference between righteous anger and sinful anger?

How can bitterness affect our spiritual growth?

**Why is humility essential for reconciliation?
How does the gospel motivate believers to forgive?**

How can our LIFE Group become known as a community that values reconciliation and peace?

CLOSING THOUGHT

Jesus reminds us that following Him is not simply about avoiding obvious sins. It is about allowing Him to transform our hearts.

Anger, resentment, and broken relationships can quietly damage our fellowship with others and hinder our spiritual growth.

Jesus calls us to become people who pursue peace because we have experienced His peace.

Ask yourself:

Is there someone I need to forgive?

Is there someone I need to ask forgiveness from?

Have I allowed anger or resentment to take root?

What step can I take toward reconciliation this week?

This week, challenge your LIFE group members to prayerfully identify one relationship where they can take the first step toward reconciliation. Remind them to trust God to help them respond with humility, grace, and love.

A transformed heart is demonstrated not only by how we worship God, but also by how we pursue peace with others.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next week we will discuss **Matthew 5:27-30** as we continue the series, *The Greatest Sermon Ever Preached: The Sermon on the Mount*.

PRAYER FOCUS

- Thank God for His forgiveness through Jesus Christ.
- Ask Him to reveal any anger, bitterness, or un-forgiveness in our hearts.
- Pray for humility and courage to pursue reconciliation where possible.
- Pray that our relationships would reflect Christ's love, grace, and forgiveness.
- Pray that our LIFE Groups would be places of peace, honesty, and biblical encouragement.

- 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 5:21-26

In Matthew 5:21–26, Jesus teaches that murder begins in the heart, explaining that internal anger, insults, and reconciliation are vital kingdom matters.

The Heart Intent Behind the Law

- **The Traditional View:** Jesus notes that the ancestors were told not to murder under penalty of human judgment.
- **The Radical Standard:** He reveals that harboring unrighteous anger, calling someone an insult, or saying "You fool!" places a person in danger of moral accountability, the local council, or fiery judgment.
- **The Root Issue:** God evaluates the internal attitudes, bitterness, and thoughts that lead to physical violence.

The Urgency of Reconciliation

- **Priority over Worship:** If you are at the altar offering a gift and remember a brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift, go make peace first, and then return to worship.
- **Swift Resolution:** Settle matters quickly with an accuser or adversary before it leads to severe legal and physical imprisonment.
- **The Peacemaker Call:** Kingdom life requires active restitution, dropping desires for revenge, and emulating God's reconciling love.