



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

Have you ever had a disagreement with a friend that lasted longer than it should have? What made it hard to make things right?

Most people think that if they avoid doing something really bad, they're doing okay. But Jesus teaches that God cares about much more than our actions—He cares about our hearts.

In Matthew 5:21–26, Jesus explains that anger, bitterness, insults, and broken relationships are serious because they affect both our relationship with others and our relationship with God. Instead of holding on to anger, Jesus calls His followers to become people who pursue peace and reconciliation.

Today we'll learn that followers of Jesus honor God by dealing with anger quickly and pursuing peace in their relationships.

SCRIPTURE

Read **Matthew 5:21–26** together.

Ask students to listen for:

- What Jesus says about anger.
- Why relationships matter to God.
- What Jesus tells His followers to do when conflict happens.

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Jesus is teaching that sin begins long before someone commits a harmful action. Murder begins with anger. Cruel words begin with bitterness. Broken relationships often begin when people refuse to deal with hurt, pride, or un-forgiveness.

Jesus isn't saying that every feeling of anger is sinful. There are times when we are upset because something is wrong or unjust. Instead, He warns against sinful anger that leads us to hate others, insult them, or refuse to forgive.

Jesus also teaches that relationships matter to God. When possible, His followers should take the initiative to make things right instead of allowing conflict to continue.

The main point is: Jesus wants His followers to deal with conflict in a way that reflects His love, grace, and forgiveness.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What do you think Jesus was teaching when He connected anger with the command not to murder?

Jesus was showing that sin starts in the heart. Uncontrolled anger and hatred can damage relationships and lead to sinful actions.

Why do you think God cares so much about how we treat other people?

Every person is created in God's image, and loving others reflects our love for God.

Why is it sometimes difficult to forgive someone or try to make peace?

Pride, hurt feelings, fear of rejection, embarrassment, or wanting the other person to make the first move can make reconciliation difficult.

What are some unhealthy ways students often deal with conflict?

Ignoring the problem, gossiping, posting hurtful things online, holding grudges, getting even, spreading rumors, or refusing to talk to someone.

What are some Christ-like ways to respond when someone hurts you?

Pray before reacting, speak respectfully, forgive, listen carefully, apologize when necessary, and seek peace whenever possible.

How can anger affect your friendships, family, and relationship with God?

Uncontrolled anger can damage trust, create division, hurt others, and distract us from growing closer to God.

How can remembering God's forgiveness help us forgive others?

When we remember how much Jesus has forgiven us, it becomes easier to extend grace and forgiveness to other people.

APPLICATION

Is there someone you're angry with or avoiding right now? What would it look like to begin moving toward peace?

Have your words, texts, social media posts, or actions recently helped build relationships or damaged them? What needs to change?

What is one practical step you can take this week to become a peacemaker?

Examples:

- Apologize to someone.
- Forgive someone who hurt you.
- Stop participating in gossip.
- Encourage someone you've been upset with.
- Pray for someone you've struggled to love.
- Have an honest conversation instead of avoiding the problem.

DIG DEEPER

What's the difference between feeling angry and responding in a sinful way?

Why do words have so much power to hurt or heal?

How can social media make conflict worse?

What does it look like to be a peacemaker at school?

How can our student LIFE Group become known for showing grace and forgiveness?

CLOSING THOUGHT

Everyone experiences conflict. The difference is how we respond.

Jesus calls His followers to be known by grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation instead of anger and resentment.

Being a peacemaker doesn't mean pretending nothing is wrong. It means choosing to respond in a way that honors Christ and reflects His love.

Ask yourself:

Is there someone I need to forgive?

Is there someone I need to apologize to?

Are my words building others up or tearing them down?

How can I reflect Jesus the next time conflict happens?

Challenge:

This week, ask God to help you become a peacemaker. Take one intentional step toward restoring a relationship or showing Christ's love to someone you've been struggling with.

Remember:

When Jesus changes our hearts, He also changes the way we treat people.

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

Pray together:

- Thank God for His forgiveness and grace through Jesus.
- Ask Him to help students recognize and deal with anger before it becomes bitterness.
- Pray for humility to apologize, forgive, and seek reconciliation.
- Pray that students would use their words to encourage and build others up.
- Pray that the student LIFE Group would be known for showing Christ's love, grace, and peace.
- 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.