



LIFE Group Discussion Guide

September 20, 2026

Matthew 5:27-30

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 something valuable that you try to protect? Why is it worth protecting?

We protect things that matter. We lock our cars, use passwords on our phones, and take care of things we value.

Jesus teaches that one of the most important things we should protect is our hearts. In Matthew 5:27–30, He explains that sin doesn't just begin with our actions—it begins with our thoughts and desires. Because of that, following Jesus means guarding our hearts and making wise choices about what influences us.

Today we'll learn that followers of Jesus honor God by guarding their hearts and choosing what leads them closer to Him.

SCRIPTURE

Read **Matthew 5:27–30** together.

Ask students to listen for:

- Where Jesus says sin begins.
- Why Jesus talks about the heart.
- Why Jesus uses such strong language.
- What Jesus wants His followers to do.

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Jesus is teaching that our hearts matter just as much as our actions.

The religious leaders often focused on what people did on the outside. Jesus explains that God also cares about what is happening on the inside—our thoughts, attitudes, and desires.

When Jesus talks about lust, He is warning against choosing to entertain sinful desires and viewing people as objects instead of individuals created in God's image and worthy of dignity and respect.

Jesus also uses very strong language about removing an eye or a hand. He is not telling people to harm themselves. Instead, He is using an unforgettable picture to show that sin is serious and that we should remove anything from our lives that continually pulls us away from God.

Every day students make choices about:

- What they watch.
- What they listen to.
- What they look at online.
- Who influences them.
- How they treat other people.

Those choices shape our hearts.

The main point is: Jesus calls us to guard our hearts by making choices that honor God and help us grow closer to Him.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What does Jesus teach about where sin begins?

Jesus teaches that sin begins in the heart. Our thoughts and desires influence the choices we make.

Why do you think Jesus cares about our thoughts as well as our actions?

Because our thoughts shape our attitudes, our decisions, and eventually our actions. God wants to transform us from the inside out.

Why did Jesus use such strong language about removing an eye or a hand?

Jesus was showing how serious sin is. He wasn't telling people to hurt themselves. He was teaching that we should be willing to remove anything that regularly leads us away from God.

What are some influences students face today that can shape their hearts in unhealthy ways?

Social media, entertainment, online content, peer pressure, unhealthy conversations, and messages that don't reflect God's truth.

What are some practical ways students can guard their hearts?

Reading God's Word, praying daily, choosing good friends, making wise media choices, setting healthy boundaries, and asking trusted Christian adults for encouragement and accountability.

Why is it important to remember that every person is made in God's image?

It reminds us to treat others with dignity, respect, and love instead of using or objectifying them.

How does God's grace help us when we struggle or make mistakes?

When we confess our sins, God forgives us through Jesus, helps us grow, and gives us strength to make better choices. His grace encourages us to keep following Him instead of giving up.

APPLICATION

What influences in your life are helping you grow closer to Jesus?

How can you spend more time with those influences?

Are there any influences that may be pulling your heart away from God?

What changes might you need to make?

What is one practical step you can take this week to better guard your heart?

Examples:

- Spend time reading the Bible every day.
- Limit content that doesn't honor God.
- Talk with a parent, youth leader, or trusted Christian adult.
- Memorize a Bible verse.
- Choose friends who encourage your faith.
- Spend more time praying.

DIG DEEPER

Why is it easier to change our behavior than to change our hearts?

How do the things we watch, read, and listen to shape the way we think?

What does it mean to honor God with both your thoughts and your actions?

Why is accountability important in following Jesus?

How can our student LIFE Group encourage one another to make wise choices without judging one another?

CLOSING THOUGHT

Jesus wants more than outward obedience. He wants hearts that love Him. Every choice we make shapes who we are becoming. That's why guarding our hearts is so important. When we fill our minds with God's truth and choose influences that point us toward Him, our lives begin to reflect His character. And when we fail, we don't have to hide in shame. Jesus offers forgiveness, grace, and the strength to keep growing.

Ask yourself:

What is shaping my heart right now?

Are my daily choices helping me grow closer to Jesus?

Is there something I need to remove so I can follow Him more faithfully?

This week, identify one influence that helps you grow spiritually and one influence that distracts you from Christ. Commit to spending more time with the first and creating healthy boundaries around the second.

Remember: A heart that is focused on Jesus will lead to a life that honors Him.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next week we will discuss **Matthew 5:31-32** as we continue the series, *The Greatest Sermon Ever Preached: The Sermon on the Mount*.

PRAYER FOCUS

Pray together:

- Thank God for His love, grace, and forgiveness through Jesus.
- Ask Him to help students guard their hearts and minds.
- Pray for wisdom to make choices that honor God in every area of life.

- Pray for courage to set healthy boundaries and resist temptation.
- Pray that students would treat every person with dignity, respect, and Christ-like love.
- Pray that the student LIFE Group would encourage one another to pursue holiness with grace and truth.
- 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 5:27-30

In Matthew 5:27-30, Jesus addresses the seventh commandment. He moves past outward legalism to explain that lustful intent breaks the law in the heart, and commands radical, decisive action against sin to avoid eternal destruction.

The Heart Intent (Verses 27-28)

- **External vs. Internal:** Jesus contrasts traditional teaching with God's true standard. The religious teachers of the day only limited the law to the physical act of adultery.
- **Adultery of the Heart:** Jesus teaches that intentionally gazing at someone to arouse illicit sexual desire means a person has already committed adultery inwardly. Righteousness requires purity of the inner mind and attitude, not just external conformity.

Radical Action Against Sin (Verses 29-30)

- **Hyperbolic Language:** The commands to tear out the right eye or cut off the right hand use vivid imagery. Commentators generally agree this is extreme hyperbole rather than literal self-mutilation.
- **Severity of Sin:** The graphic language emphasizes that believers must take ruthless, painful, and uncompromising steps to sever ties with anything that leads them into persistent temptation.
- **Eternal Stakes:** Removing or abandoning the source of temptation—no matter how valued it feels—is far better than letting unrepentant sin destroy the whole body and soul in hell.