



LIFE Group Discussion Guide

September 27, 2026

Matthew 5:31-32

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 qualities make someone a trustworthy friend?

Relationships are a big part of life. Friendships, family relationships, dating relationships, and eventually marriage all require trust, honesty, commitment, and respect.

In Matthew 5:31–32, Jesus teaches about marriage and divorce. His words remind us that relationships and promises matter to God. Even though most students aren't married, this passage gives us important principles for how we should think about commitment, faithfulness, and treating others.

Today we'll learn that God wants us to treat relationships seriously, keep our commitments, and show others the faithfulness and love of Christ.

SCRIPTURE

Read **Matthew 5:31–32** together.

Ask students to listen for:

- What Jesus says about marriage.
- Why commitment matters.
- What this passage teaches us about faithfulness.

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Some people in Jesus' day had begun treating divorce as something that could happen for almost any reason. Jesus challenges this shallow understanding and points people back toward God's design for marriage.

Marriage is a covenant—a serious promise of faithfulness and commitment. Jesus' teaching reminds us that relationships aren't simply about what we can get from another person. They involve responsibility, sacrifice, love, and faithfulness. Students can begin learning these principles now.

They apply to:

- Friendships
- Family relationships
- Dating relationships
- Future marriage
- Our relationship with God

It's also important to remember that divorce can involve deep hurt and complicated circumstances. This passage should never be used to shame someone who has experienced divorce. God's Word calls us to both biblical truth and compassion toward people who have experienced broken relationships.

The main point is:

God wants us to develop relationships marked by faithfulness, honesty, commitment, and love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What does Jesus' teaching show us about how seriously God takes marriage?

Marriage is a serious covenant commitment. God designed marriage to involve faithfulness, love, and lifelong commitment.

Why do you think Jesus cared about the way people treated marriage?

Marriage is part of God's design, and the way people treat their commitments reflects their character and their understanding of God's plan.

What does it mean to be faithful in a friendship?

Being trustworthy, keeping your word, being there for someone during difficult times, refusing to gossip, and treating the person with respect.

Why can keeping commitments be difficult sometimes?

We may become frustrated, change our minds, feel uncomfortable, or decide that keeping our promise is no longer convenient.

What are some ways students can practice faithfulness right now?

Keeping promises, telling the truth, being dependable, respecting boundaries, treating people with kindness, and following through on responsibilities.

How can the way we treat people now prepare us for future relationships?

The habits we develop now—honesty, communication, forgiveness, respect, and commitment—help shape the kind of person we become in future relationships.

How should Christians respond when someone's family has experienced divorce?

With compassion, kindness, and grace. Divorce can involve significant pain and complicated circumstances. Christians should avoid gossip or judgment and instead offer support, prayer, and care.

APPLICATION

Are there relationships in your life where you need to become more trustworthy or faithful?

Think about:

- Friends
- Family
- Teammates
- Classmates
- Your LIFE Group

Do you tend to keep your commitments even when it becomes difficult?

What could help you become more dependable?

What is one practical step you can take this week to strengthen an important relationship?

Examples:

- Keep a promise you've made.
- Apologize for letting someone down.
- Encourage a friend.
- Stop participating in gossip.
- Spend intentional time with your family.
- Pray for someone going through a difficult situation.

DIG DEEPER

Why does trust take so long to build but only a short time to damage?

How does social media make it easier to break trust or damage relationships?

Why are honesty and faithfulness important qualities in a future spouse?

How can Christians show grace to families experiencing divorce?

How does God's faithfulness toward us provide an example for how we should treat others?

CLOSING THOUGHT

Jesus reminds us that relationships matter to God.

Even though most of you aren't thinking about marriage right now, you are already developing the character and habits that will shape your future relationships. Every time you keep your word, tell the truth, forgive someone, show respect, or choose faithfulness when it is difficult, you are becoming the kind of person God wants you to be.

Ask yourself:

- Can people trust me?
- Do my actions match my words?
- Do I treat people with respect?
- Is there a relationship where I need to make things right?

Challenge:

This week, choose one relationship and intentionally demonstrate faithfulness through your words, actions, or commitment.

Remember: Following Jesus means becoming a person others can trust—someone who reflects God's faithfulness and love.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next week we will discuss **Matthew 5:33-37** as we continue the series, *The Greatest Sermon Ever Preached: The Sermon on the Mount*.

PRAYER FOCUS

Pray together:

- Thank God for His faithfulness and love.

- Ask Him to help students become trustworthy and faithful people.
- Pray for wisdom in friendships, family relationships, and future dating relationships.
- Pray for students whose families have experienced divorce or difficult relationships.
- Ask God to help students respond to broken relationships with grace, compassion, and truth.
- Pray that the student LIFE Group would be a place where students experience trustworthy friendships and Christ-like 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 5:31-32

In Matthew 5:31-32, Jesus corrects the loose divorce practices of His day. He states that divorces for trivial reasons, outside of sexual immorality, break God's intent for permanent marriage and cause unjust social harm.

The Context of the Law

- **Old background:** [Deuteronomy 24:1] require a written notice to protect women from sudden, informal abandonment.
- **Abused custom:** Religious teachers in Jesus' time twisted this rule to allow men to divorce wives for almost any minor reason.

Jesus' Correction

- **Higher standard:** Jesus shifts focus from legal loopholes to the sacred value of the marriage covenant.
- **The exception:** The phrase "except in a case of sexual immorality" points to marital unfaithfulness as the sole valid ground mentioned here.
- **Protecting the vulnerable:** Christ targets a culture where powerful men discarded wives easily, leaving women socially exposed and impoverished.