



## Discussion Guide

Date: 3/1/2026

Sermon Title: Can I change my mind?

Scripture: Matthew 5:17-18, 21-22

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

### OPENING PRAYER

*Gracious God, You are the same yesterday, today, and forever, yet you continue to shape us, teach us, and lead us deeper into truth. In this time together, quiet the voices of fear and pride. Give us courage to listen, humility to learn, and grace to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. By your Spirit, help us seek not what is comfortable, but what is faithful. Amen.*

### OPENING QUESTION:

1. Share about a time when you changed your mind about something important. What prompted that change? Did it feel like weakness or strength?

### EXPLORING THE TEXT:

Read Matthew 5:17-18, 21-22 (NRSV). slowly and notice where Jesus deepens; not dismisses; the faith of Israel.

1. When Jesus says, "You have heard it said... but I say to you...", what stands out to you?
2. How is Jesus deepening the commandment rather than rejecting it?
3. What does this tell us about how God works overtime in our understanding of faith?
4. The world and culture suggest that we often bond our beliefs to our identities. Where have you seen this happen in the church, culture, or even yourself?
5. Why do you think changing our minds can feel threatening to our sense of self or faith? How might separating identity in Christ from opinions or interpretations be freeing?
6. How does this passage invite us to take our inner lives (anger, resentment, reconciliation) as seriously as our outward actions?

Read Matthew 5:27-48. Pay attention to the other norms of the day and how Jesus challenges these in his teaching.

7. Jesus shifts the focus from outward actions to inward intentions and love. What does this reveal about the heart of God, and how does it challenge the way faith was understood in Jesus' time, and the way we often practice it today?
8. In teachings on lust, retaliation, and loving enemies, Jesus confronts deeply rooted cultural assumptions about power, justice, and righteousness. Which of these teachings feels most disruptive to you, and what might Jesus be inviting us to unlearn to live more fully into God's kingdom?

9. Jesus calls his followers to “be perfect” by reflecting God’s radical, self-giving love. How does understanding perfection as growth in love (as emphasized by John Wesley) reshape how you hear this passage, and where do you sense God inviting you to deeper faithfulness rather than rigid certainty?

**CULTURAL LIES vs TRUTH:**

10. Culture often tells us things like:

- a. “If you change your mind, you’re weak.”
- b. “Faith means never questioning.”
- c. “Certainty equals faithfulness.”

How do these messages show up in religious spaces? How does Jesus challenge those assumptions in this passage?

11. What lies might Jesus be confronting today when he says, “But I say to you...”?

**Theological Reflection:**

In the Wesleyan tradition, faith is not static but dynamic. We are shaped by Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. John Wesley famously emphasized “*going on to perfection*” not as flawlessness, but as continual growth in love.

12. How does the idea of Christian perfection as growth in love help us think differently about changing our minds?
13. Can you name a time when your understanding of God, Scripture, or faith matured over time? How might God be inviting you to deeper clarity rather than rigid certainty?

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:2; Philipians 1:9–10; Micah 6:8

**SERMON QUESTIONS:**

1. Pastor Clayton reminds us that in our text Jesus’ teaching that fulfilling the law is about internal transformation rather than external compliance challenge your understanding of what it means to live a faithful life?
2. The sermon talks about integrity is a way of life. How does one build integrity in their lives?
3. In the sermon, we hear about the tradition of using scripture, tradition, experience, and reason as tools for faith. How do these help you think through difficult spiritual questions?
4. Pastor Clayton said, "I feel closer to Christ today than I ever have" after changing his mind on several topics. When have you experienced a significant change of mind about a spiritual matter, and how did that transformation bring you closer to Christ?
5. This week we celebrate Holy Communion. How does participating in communion as an act of remembrance and transformation invite you to examine whether you are living a way of life shaped by Christ's love rather than just following religious obligations?

**APPLYING IT ALL:**

1. Is it possible to shift views and still be faithful to Christ? Why or why not?
2. What practices help us remain grounded in Christ while remaining open to growth?



3. In what areas of your spiritual life have you found yourself focusing more on following rules than cultivating the right heart and spirit behind those rules?
4. How can we practically live out Jesus's command to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us in today's polarized world?

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

*Faithful God, You meet us not where we pretend to be, but where we truly are. Thank you for loving us enough to teach us, challenge us, and lead us deeper into truth. Give us courage to grow, grace to listen, and humility to follow Jesus wherever he leads. As we continue this Lenten journey, shape our minds, soften our hearts, and anchor our lives in your steadfast love. We pray in the name of Christ, who fulfills the law through love. Amen.*

**WAYS TO RESPOND:**

Choose ONE of the following practices to focus on this week:

Option 1: Address Internal Anger

- Identify someone you're harboring resentment toward
- Pray for that person daily
- If appropriate, take a step toward reconciliation

Option 2: Practice Integrity

- Let your "yes be yes and no be no"
- Be completely honest in all interactions, even small ones
- Reflect on how this feels different

Option 3: Love an "Enemy"

- Identify someone who opposes you or whom you naturally dislike
- Pray for them by name each day
- Look for one practical way to show kindness to them

Option 4: Examine Your Heart

- Journal about areas where you might be "technically right" but missing the heart of God's desire
- Ask God to reveal where external compliance has replaced internal transformation

**LEADER TIP:**

Create a safe space where people can be honest about struggles with anger, resentment, or difficulty loving enemies. Model vulnerability by sharing your own challenges with internal transformation.