

Matthew: For Temptations to Sin

Discussion Guide for May 30 and 31, 2026

Summary

In Matthew 18:5-14, Jesus addresses His disciples on the topic of sin. He shows us two things: how God feels about sin, and how God feels about sinners. First, Jesus gives a serious warning about being a stumbling block – using our influence in ways that pull other people into sin. Then He uses some pretty extreme word pictures (cut off your hand, tear out your eye) to show how seriously we need to take fighting sin in our own lives. But Jesus doesn't end there. He tells the story of the lost sheep to show us that God's heart toward people who fall into sin is to chase after them with love. Yes, sin is a big deal – it separates us from God. But our God is a Good Shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to go find the one who wandered off. This passage challenges us to take sin seriously, while showing the same kind of grace to others that God has shown to us.

Ice Breaker

What's something you've worked really hard to cut out of your life – a habit, a food, a distraction, a phone app? How did it go?

Key Verses

1. Matthew 18:5-14
2. Romans 3:23
3. Romans 6:23
4. Galatians 6:1

Discussion Questions

1. In the sermon, sin is described as "rebellion against God" – not just doing bad things, but basically telling God, "You don't get to tell me how to live." Does thinking about sin that way change anything for you?
2. Jesus said it would be better to drown than to cause someone else to sin. When you think about your friends, family, and coworkers – could any of your choices be making it harder for them to follow God?
3. CS Lewis said, "Your liberty ends where your brother's temptation begins." Is there something you're free to do, but maybe should give up because of how it affects someone close to you?

4. Jesus used some shocking language — cut off your hand, tear out your eye — to show how serious we should be about fighting sin. What would going "all in" look like for a sin you're wrestling with right now?

5. Jesus tells us not to look down on "little ones" who mess up. Have you ever been hurt by a church or Christian who made you feel like your sin made you unwelcome? Or have you ever made someone else feel that way?

Life Application

Get serious about one sin — Pick one thing you've been struggling with and take one real, practical step this week to fight it. Put a filter on your computer. Hand someone your password. Stop watching a show. Don't just promise to try harder — actually change something.

Key Takeaways

1. Sin is rebellion against God, and we're all guilty of it. The first step is just being honest — we're sinners who need a Savior.
2. Your influence matters more than you think. The way you live affects the people around you, so be careful not to be the reason someone else stumbles.
3. Fighting sin takes real effort. Jesus' shocking word pictures remind us we can't be passive about this. If something keeps tripping you up, do whatever it takes to remove it.
4. Sin has real consequences — including eternal ones. But the good news is that Jesus already paid the price for our sin and offers us forgiveness.
5. No one is too far gone. There's no sin too big, no pit too deep, and no past too messy for God's love to reach.