

**Home Group Study Material for w/c 6<sup>th</sup> June 2011**  
**Finding our true self – Matthew 16:21-28**

**Suggested questions for discussion** – as usual please modify them as appropriate for your group

*The aim of the study is to understand how we can find out who we were designed to be – our true self. The problem is that the solution is profoundly counter-cultural and even provocative, because Jesus says that to find the answer we need to 'die'. In his teaching, Jesus explains the paradoxical nature of discipleship and the importance of doing things for his sake (v24 "for me"). This study may feel like harder work than some but then Jesus' words here are uncomfortable. And don't forget the encouragement of the promise in verse 27.*

1. 'Intro' question: If you could choose to be any other human being, who would that be and why?

**Please read Matthew 16:21-28**

2. Why are humans so interested in questions such as: Why are we here? Where do we come from?
3. In verse 22 Peter tries to contradict Jesus' teaching (in verse 21) about the inevitability of his future suffering "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!" (v 21) Why did Peter say this? And why was Jesus' reaction so strong?
4. "The essence of Christian immaturity is to say that Jesus died for me so that not only will I not have to suffer bad things, but that I won't ever do bad things."  
Do you agree or disagree with this? Why? Why do some people think that becoming a Christian means that God will make sure that they never have to suffer?
5. Why does having a strong identity in Jesus help us to stand up to the "knocks and shocks of life"?
6. How do people in our culture try to "gain the world"? What is the price of doing this? Why does this matter? What is the solution?
7. Having Godly purpose in our lives will not only help us have a strong identity, it will almost certainly also lead to weakness and suffering. If you can, share a time when you have suffered for Jesus' sake, however small it might have been. Why did it happen? How did you feel?  
(Note: if you can't share something from your own experience, share a time when you have seen someone else doing it.)
8. Encourage each other by sharing ways in which you intend to build a stronger identity in Jesus in the future, by following Jesus' words in verse 24. Don't forget the incentive in verse 27!

Issued by Jeremy Bamber  
3/6/11