

Next Steps

These questions are designed to extend the impact of the weekend message. Use them to go deeper in your personal study time, with your family and/or with a group.

No one stumbles into discipleship or accidentally begins to follow Jesus better. NEXT STEPS outlines the priorities and strategies of The Hills Church to help make and grow followers of Jesus. What's your next step?

1 Jesus started his preaching ministry with this message: **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”** (Matthew 4:17) How would you explain what the kingdom of heaven is to someone who had never heard of it? Why would this statement from Jesus matter in our day and age?

2 I'm called to live different than the old me. Read **Matthew 10:39**. Jesus says something that sounds backwards here. What do you think Jesus means when he talks about losing your life?

3 Read **Matthew 16:24** (compare to Luke 9:23 for extra credit). Jesus invites us into daily self-denial. What does it mean to take up our cross? How does that connect with following Jesus?

4 Following Jesus inevitably means my life will be **different than the world around me**. Read **Matthew 7:13-14**. Where in your world do you see “broad road” living? What attitudes or actions are commonplace in society that differ from God's desires?

5 Read **1 Peter 2:12**. Our world is growing less and less accepting of certain Christian teachings. How do you navigate following Jesus in settings like school or work? How can your example be used by God in those places?

6 Read **Matthew 5:10**. Jesus doesn't shy away from talking about spiritual persecution (being treated badly because we follow Jesus). What should our approach be to times when we are mocked or mistreated because of our faith?

7 All of us live with a desire to be accepted. As we encounter a world that may not accept us because of who we follow and what we believe, how do we keep our focus on God's acceptance and approval above anyone else's?

