

Help!

This introduction will help you understand how to use the material you have in your hands right now.

There are 3 important things you must know about "T.F.Z.":

1. T.F.Z. is designed to be used either alone or in a small group. You can walk through the sessions at your own pace, but it was designed so groups could gather for one discussion each week.
2. It is meant to be used after watching The File Zero. You can watch the series for free at www.thefilezero.net.
3. Each session has 4 sections:
 - **First things first** tells you what episodes you need to watch.
 - **A look at the story** offers a brief summary of the episodes referenced during the session.
 - **A second look** challenges you to a deeper reflection on the story. You'll get much more out of this section if you can discuss it in a small group.
 - **T.F.Z.** will help you put into practice what you are learning. We are going to challenge you for a weekly mission based on three actions:
 - Think differently
 - Follow the Good Man
 - Start from Zero

And now that you're ready... go for it!

1. **First things first**

Watch episodes 1 and 2 of File Zero.

2. **A look at the story**

In these episodes, the Elder establishes a strong dictatorship over the population. The key to his power is his ability to erase the memory of life prior to the destruction of the earth. He does this by encrypting all remaining copies of the historical files which had been sent into space with them. But a group of brave hackers is determined to fight against the Elder's system and is looking for The File Zero, which corresponds to the year zero of the old era. It is a file that could help them restore historical knowledge and recover the meaning, reason, and purpose of their lives.

3. **A second look**

The story of File Zero can be more real than we may think. In a way, it is an analogy of today's world. We are also living in a world controlled by a System. Our version doesn't have a name, but it affects us in the same way the System affects the hackers.

We want you to take a test that may help you realize if you are experiencing some of the effects of living under today's "system." Mark any of the sentences below that reflect something you have experienced.

THE SYSTEM

TEST

The system distorts our self-image and self-esteem:

- I've felt fear, anxiety and/or mistrust about who I am and what I can achieve.
- Sometimes I'm not comfortable with my body or personality. I look at myself in the mirror and don't like what I see.
- It's hard to forgive myself.
- I want to improve and grow as a person, but I get discouraged easily and convinced myself this is just the way I am and it's impossible to change.

The system frustrates our relationships with others:

- Sometimes it's hard for me to forgive others or to ask for forgiveness.
- Pride has sometimes moved me away from those I love.
- I've been hurt and have not been able to recover; to heal from the wound.
- Sometimes I can't accept opinions that are different from mine.
- It's often difficult for me to do what is best for others when it means I have to sacrifice my own comfort.
- I have broken my word or have not been entirely truthful with the people I love more than once.

The system moves us away from the Good Man

- It's hard to talk with Jesus like I talk with my friends.
- I sometimes feel guilty and think that Jesus must be mad at me.
- Sometimes I wish I didn't know anything about the Good Man so I could do whatever I wanted.
- I often think that Jesus has nothing to do with my real life.

You have probably marked more than one of these descriptions. That shows how you – how all of us really – are affected by the System.

4. T.F.Z.

Don't get discouraged! There's a way to get out of the system and fight against its effects. You can start doing so by: Thinking differently, Following the Good Man, and starting from Zero when things get messed up.

That's what "T.F.Z." – The File Zero – is all about. Remembering these letters will help you remember what it means to fight against the System. Each week, we will give you and the hackers that gather with you a mission which includes an action to go with each of these letters.

WEEKLY MISSION

Think differently:

This week don't be resigned to the reality that surrounds you. If you're experiencing some of the effects of the System, don't just accept them as part of life, fight against them! Start thinking differently by believing it is possible to change.

Follow the Good Man:

Pick one of the sentences from the test that you marked above. This week, choose something you can do to fight against that sentence; you could claim some truth internally, say something to those whom you love, or talk with Jesus about something through prayer.

Start from Zero:

Too often we're not able to start from zero—to give ourselves a second chance—because we are unable to forgive ourselves. During this week, find a quiet place where nobody will disturb you and write down the things you've done that you're not able to forgive yourself for. Pray through what you have written asking God to forgive you and enable you to accept Jesus' death as payment for these specific things. Afterwards, destroy the paper as a symbol that you can start again from zero.

THE SYSTEM

1. First things first

Watch episode 3 of File Zero.

2. A look at the story

In this episode, Ergo and Cyro are inside File Zero looking for Ghora. There they discover a world that looks very different from the one in which they live. In a small village they encounter a mysterious character, the Good Man. Even though it should be impossible for anyone in the file to see them, Ergo is certain that this man has looked directly at him. He convinces Cyro that they should follow him in order to learn more. They end up at a house where they overhear the man explaining why he acts the way he does.

3. A second look

The Good Man is asking Matthew to follow him. Ergo and Cyro have entered The File Zero just as Jesus is calling Matthew to become one of his followers. You can read this passage in the gospels: Luke 5:27-32, Matthew 9:9-13 and Mark 2:13-17.

Matthew was a tax collector for Herod Antipas, the king that the Romans put in charge of Israel. Due to the common practices of his job—dishonesty, intimidation of his neighbors, use of force, and collaborating with an invading army—he was hated by his people. We don't know when or why Matthew chose this lifestyle, but we do know where it had taken him: betrayal of himself, his family, his nation and his God. But Jesus, the Good Man, challenged Matthew to follow him; to begin a new lifestyle, to change course and stop living just for himself.

Matthew accepted this risky challenge. He walked away from his old lifestyle and organized a party so all his friends could get to know the Good Man; the one who had saved his life. He invited all kinds of men and women that religious people wouldn't hang out with, and Jesus and his friends were having a good time there as well!

Then the Pharisees, the religious people who were enemies of Jesus, entered the scene looking for reasons to get rid of Jesus. They accused him of eating with people who had a bad reputation; people who were not worth the time of a good man.

But the true Good Man knew exactly why he acted the way he did. He told the Pharisees that he came especially for those people, because "it is the sick who need a doctor."

Discuss the following questions with your friends:

- Do you think was hard for Matthew to follow Jesus? Why or why not?
- How did Matthew benefit from his decision?
- In the first session we learned that we all experience—in one way or another—the effects of the system. We could say we're all sick! But the good news is that Jesus is the doctor and can heal us from our sickness. Why do you think Jesus acts the way he acts?

4. T.F.Z

We have a new weekly mission for you! Remember that "T.F.Z." will help you to fight against the system by putting into action what it means to follow the Good Man.

THE DOCTOR

WEEKLY MISSION

Think Differently:

The Good Man challenges us to treat others the way we would like to be treated. It is often difficult for us to follow the Good Man in this way because we judge others; what we think about them hinders us from giving them a chance. During this week, think about the people in your life. Are there people whom you are not treating as you should because you're judging? Think about how things might change if you're wrong about them. Try to do something that will show that you are thinking differently about them.

Follow the Good Man:

We tend to judge the people we don't know based on something as insignificant as their appearance. This week we challenge you to spend time with a homeless person. Just try to get to know him without judging; give him a chance!

Start from Zero:

Do you know what the word "grace" means? It means being treated well when we do not deserve it. This is how God treats us, and you can give yourself grace or extend it to someone that has done something wrong to you or others. During this week start each day spending a few minutes thinking about all the people you'll meet during the day and how you can show them grace by giving them the opportunity to start from zero too.

1. First things first

Watch episode 4 of File Zero.

2. A look at the story

In this episode, Ergo and Cyro woke up in the Mole's cave and Ergo tried to convince the rest of the hackers that the Good Man looked at him and led them to Ghora's tracer. Cyro thought Ergo was crazy and that they found Ghora's tracer just by luck. Nador was a little more skeptical; maybe Ergo believed that the man was looking at him but it was scientifically impossible for him to do so. Shadow, however, believed what Ergo said.

3. A second look

There are many followers of Jesus today who say that Jesus still talks to us through the words he spoke two thousand years ago. We even say that it's possible to become his friend and have a personal relationship with him. Just like in this episode, these claims produce three different reactions:

- The one who thinks it's crazy. This person believes it is impossible to become friends with someone who lived so long ago. Any situations where it may look this kind of friendship is possible are really only a matter of luck.
- The one who is skeptical. This person is not against the idea per se, but can't believe something is true unless it can be proved scientifically.
- The one who believes it by faith. Faith is the conviction of trusting something is real even if it can not be seen.

It has been said that faith is like a muscle; the more you exercise it the more it develops. Below are some thoughts that Jesus shared with his friends about life and faith. After you read each sentence, answer the following questions:

- What does this mean for me?
- How can I exercise my faith by putting these ideas into practice?

“Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. Have faith! God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.”

“Here's another old saying that deserves a second look: “Eye for eye, tooth for tooth.” Is that going to get us anywhere? Have faith! Don't hit back at all.”

“ Don't hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or – worse! – stolen by burglars. Have faith! Work for the things that are eternal.”

“Don't pick on people, jump on their failures and criticize their faults -unless, of course, you want the same treatment. Have faith! Treat others the way you would like to be treated.”

4. T.F.Z.

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WEEKLY MISSION

Think differently:

One of the most powerful weapons that the System uses to control us is consumerism; the false desire that makes us think we need something when we really don't. Consumerism is very dangerous because makes us feel like we don't have what we need and therefore makes us unhappy about life. This week we challenge you to think differently; to trust the Good Man when he says that he will provide all that we really need and that his way is better for us. When you feel like your life is worse than others because you don't have something they do... stop right there and remember the words of the Good Man.

Follow the Good Man:

To follow the Good Man means to be generous. This week give something to—or buy something for—someone who is not able to return the favour.

Start from Zero:

During this week take a walk alone. While you walk, talk with Jesus. Think of all the things you have and express your gratitude for them.

REACTIONS

1. First things first

Watch episode 5 of File Zero.

2. A look at the story

In this episode, Ergo and Shadow took Ghora out of the city so the lookers can't find them. Ghora told them one of the stories she heard from the Good Man. There was a young man who ran away from his father's home, stupidly spent all the money he took and, when he had nothing left, decided to go back home without knowing how his father would react when saw him again.

3. A second look

You can read the story that Ghora heard from Jesus in the gospel of Luke, chapter 15, verses 11 to 32. Read it carefully before going on and make sure you understand everything. In this story the father represents God and the younger son represents each one of us. This story depicts the four phase spiritual journey of every human being.

- Phase 1 - The younger son's decision to do whatever feels best to him with his life represents the phase when a person makes decisions by himself, ignoring or rejecting what God has to say about it. They decide what is right or wrong for themselves.
- Phase 2 - The younger son coming back to his senses represents the phase when someone is experiencing the effects of the system (remember session 1). This person is not happy with their life and finds that nothing is fulfilling for them. The decisions they've made have taken them to the edge; they have hit rock bottom and they realize that they can not continue living life as they have.
- Phase 3 - The younger son's decision to go back home represents the phase when a person decides to make a U-turn in how they have lived their life. Rather than living on their own they have chosen to start looking

for God.

- Phase 4 - The father running to the son and hugging him, giving him new clothes and organizing a party for him represents the phase in someone's life that has been reconciled with God the Father. This person has come to understand that God wants the best for them and has experienced forgiveness and unconditional love.

Think for a while about your own spiritual journey. Can you identify the phases listed above? What phase are you in right now?

If you are in phase 1, you have control of your life and you decide what is right and wrong. You see God as someone who is just going to put limits on your enjoyment of life. Have you ever thought that maybe what Jesus really wants is for you to experience a full life and that the best way to do so is in a relationship with him?

If you are in phase 2, you have hit rock bottom. You have learned that living according your own criteria is not as fun as you thought. Why don't you do something about it? The first step is often most difficult; put away your pride and recognize you need help.

If you are in phase 3, you want to go back to God but you don't know how. Jesus is the way that can lead you back to the Father's home. It's all about following him, recognizing that he is God himself; the perfect example of how to live life without spending it stupidly. In the same way that the father in the story did not mind losing his position to run towards his son, God did not mind losing his position

THE FATHER
THAT LOVES
AND FORGIVES

to become a man and give his life so we can go back home. Are you ready to follow Jesus? To live the life he offers?

If you are in phase 4: talk with God like the younger son from the story did, tell him how you feel and tell him you want to make a U-turn in your life. Remember, it is not about living a life without problems anymore. Life is often complicated and tough. But now Jesus is walking with you, he is available to help you to make the best decisions.

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THE FATHER
THAT LOVES
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WEEKLY MISSION

Think differently:

Pride is dangerous. It can prevent you from doing the things you really want to do. Pride can make you its slave faster than you think. The Good Man chooses the way of humility; it is through humility that you can find the freedom to be yourself without caring if others will think you're weak. To become a follower of Jesus means to become a servant. Make sure that during this week you spend some time thinking about this important issue, think about how pride is preventing you from doing the right things.

Follow the Good Man:

This week we challenge you to finish each day spending some time on your own. During this time, think about these two questions:

- What opportunities did I have to be humble today?
- How can I do better tomorrow?

Start from Zero:

This time we challenge you to start from zero with your family. Sometimes it's more difficult to give up pride with our family than with anyone else. To follow the Good Man is not easy and many times you'll have to be humble and respond with a servant's attitude even when you know you're right. If you need to ask your brother or sister or your parents for their forgiveness, be brave and take the first step.

THE FATHER
THAT LOVES
AND FORGIVES

1. First things first

Watch episodes 6 and 7 of File Zero.

2. A look at the story

In these episodes, Shadow and Ergo fight against the lookers and Shadow is injured. Everything seems lost when they find out the Good Man has been killed. They need a place to hide and Ghora suggests going to the Master's grave. Once there, they meet Silver; a friend of Shadow, a messenger who tells them that the Good Man is alive and that he is the key to defeating the System.

3. A second look

We told you in the first session that the story of The File Zero is more real than we may expect. We also are living in a world controlled by a System. Our "system" does not have a specific name, but it affects us just like the one's that the hackers experience. At that time, we asked you to take a test to see how you're experiencing our "system" in your everyday life.

But there is hope, and that's what The File Zero is trying to show you. The Good Man, Jesus, defeated death and through this powerful act he started to redeem all the works of the System; to remove distortion from your self-image and self-esteem, to restore the relationships with those whom you love and to build a personal relationship with himself.

We started with a test and we will finish with a test. This time it will help you to realize how Jesus is redeeming what the System has broken. Mark the sentences that reflect anything you have felt at least once.

HE LIVES

TEST

Jesus removes distortion from your self-image and self-esteem:

- I feel confident in who I am and what I can achieve.
- Although I don't want to neglect my health, I'm happy with my body and I don't want to try to look as someone else.
- I have accepted my personality and enjoy growing as a person.
- I am able to forgive myself.
- I've learned many things about myself and I want to be a better person.

Jesus restores my relationships with those whom I love most:

- I have been able to forgive someone who hurt me.
- I have been able to ask for forgiveness from someone I hurt.
- I've rejected pride and acted humbly with someone whom I love.
- I've been hurt and have been able to recover; to heal from the wound.
- I can accept opinions that are different from mine.
- I've been able to do something good for someone else even though it meant sacrificing my own comfort.
- I have kept my word and have been entirely sincere with the people I love more than once.

Jesus builds the relationship he invites me to have with himself:

- Sometimes it's easy to talk with Jesus like I do with my friends.
- I have experienced forgiveness and I am convinced that Jesus loves me the way I am.
- I feel free to live life fully and I don't feel guilty about it. I am certain I've made the best decision of my life and I took it based in the lifestyle Jesus suggests.

You have probably marked more than one of these sentences and this shows you that you are experiencing the redemption offered by Jesus. Enjoy the experience of following the Good Man and don't forget he calls you to join him in his work of redemption in the world.

4. T.F.Z.

This is your opportunity to work with the Good Man as he seeks to restore others lives. Open your eyes and you'll find many opportunities to help him and be part of his team to defeat the works of the System.

WEEKLY MISSION

Think differently:

The rules of society tell you that the more you look after yourself the better. To follow the Good Man means exactly the opposite. Open your eyes to the needs of others and you'll find real meaning in life. Before you leave home each morning this week, ask the Good Man to open your eyes to the needs of the people you'll meet during the day.

Follow the Good Man:

This week we ask you to do something extraordinary: share The File Zero with someone else, someone who needs to get to know the Good Man. You can share the link to view it online or you can even challenge them to meet with you weekly to go through this material.

Start from Zero:

Have you been hurt and been unable to heal from the wound that has caused? The first step of this healing process is to forgive, it's also the hardest and it can take time. It's not a matter of feelings, you don't need to feel good about the person that hurt you; it's a matter of the will, it's a decision, not a feeling. The sooner you make the decision to forgive, the sooner you'll really start to heal.

HE LIVES