



Discipleship Training Center
Facilitator's Guide

Chris Suitt

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"Taste and see that the LORD is good...every day, everywhere!"

How to Listen to and Follow Jesus in
Being & Making More & Healthy Disciples

By
Chris Suitt



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For further information on being and making more and healthier Jesus disciples, facilitating this material, receiving personal coaching or booking speaking engagements, please contact Chris Suitt at morethanasundayfaith@gmail.com.

Discipleship Training Center: A Facilitator's Guide
by Chris Suitt

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The Discipleship Training Center

Introduction



Discipleship: it is a word with many connotations, descriptions, and cultural layers added to its biblical meaning. This has made carrying out Jesus' command to "go make disciples of all the nations" more complicated than it needs to be.

I believe the definition of the Greek word for disciple, *mathetes* (Μαθητής), can be summed up in Jesus' statement in John 10:27, "My sheep hear My voice; I know them, and they follow Me." Why? Because *mathetes* means to become like the one we're following. This is why Jesus said do not call anybody rabbi, teacher, father, or Lord, except Him (Matthew 23:8-10). We are not to follow, be disciples of, or become like anyone other than Jesus (see *Discipleship: Copies of the Original* at morethanasundayfaith.com).

With this in mind, Jesus commanded us to be and to make healthy Jesus disciples as we go. We do this by getting better at listening to and following Him throughout our day, no matter where we're at during the day. This process allows the Spirit to make us more like Jesus by changing our lives.

Our changed life, now gives us the ability to authentically share Jesus (Acts 1:8) with people the Lord brings across our path through both our actions *and* our words. And when those people become followers of Christ, the Spirit will continue to use us, Jesus' disciples, in the discipleship process. How? By teaching the newest disciple to obey everything Jesus commanded us (Matthew 28:20), which is done by passing on the same biblical tools we learned to hear and follow Jesus for ourselves. It's that simple!

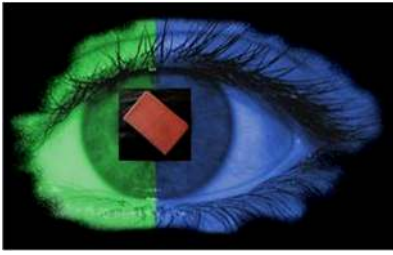
Based on this, the design of every *Discipleship Training Center (DTC)* course is to give each disciple, from the youngest student to the senior saint, the biblical tools to: discover biblical truths; declare what they believe; and then, demonstrate how they will add those truths to what I call a *biblical filter*.

This filter enables them to screen out all competing voices and distractions to only hear Jesus' voice. Then, through each Spirit empowered faith choice we make to follow Jesus, we will become more like Him, which enables us to declare what the Spirit leads us to share with others.

The *DTC* courses are designed not to tell them what to think, but to show the Jesus disciple how to think biblically. Biblical truths work in everyday life, not just on Sunday. And yet, if disciples are not taught how to hear only Jesus' voice using those truths, how can they hear and follow Him everywhere they go?

With this in mind, each class participant should come ready to share what they believe, not what they think the facilitator wants to hear or what the authors they read wrote. The facilitator can and should be ready to ask tough questions to get each participant thinking through and refining their beliefs. Therefore, the facilitator must do the work before each class as well.

The belief of the *DTC* is that *every disciple can be and make more and healthier disciples*. So let us show them how! Let us give each believer the biblical tools to taste and see that The Lord is good, every day, everywhere and share it with others!



Definition of a Healthy/Mature Faith

“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching
and to the fellowship,
and to the breaking of bread
and to prayers.”

Acts 2:42

Acts 2 opens when the Church began at Pentecost with the Holy Spirit indwelling every believer. It is here that we find Peter, empowered by the Spirit, sharing Jesus where “about three thousand souls” were added to the Church.

How did the Holy Spirit make healthy Jesus disciples of these new believers? Acts 2:42-47 gives us the **DNA** of a healthy/mature faith: **D**ivine Truth, **N**ourishing Relationships and **A**ccomplishing Jesus' Mission.

- **Divine Truth:** These new believers “devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching” (Acts 2:42-43). The apostles were passing on what they remembered Jesus taught them (John 16:12-14) and what the Spirit showed them in their study of Scripture (Acts 6:4) or *Divine Truth*. These new believers were shown how to listen to Jesus for themselves using Scripture (John 10:27; Ephesians 4:11-16). In this way, they could express their love for Jesus through their obedience to Him (John 14:23). *And so, healthy believers use Divine Truth to keep loving Jesus.*
- **Nourishing Relationships:** Their ability to love Jesus grew in the context of a community. These disciples also “devoted themselves to *the* fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayers” (Acts 2:42, 44-46). This commitment to community was not just to anyone, but to a specific group of people: The Church (a group of people getting closer to Jesus together). This community devoted themselves to helping and praying for each other to become more like Jesus (*Nourishing Relationships* - James 5:16-20) or making healthy Jesus disciples (Matthew 28:19). *For this reason, becoming like Jesus with other Jesus believers is another sign of a healthy faith.*
- **Accomplishing Jesus' Mission:** As believers become more like Jesus, they now have something to share with those around them - what Jesus has done in and for them (Acts 2:47). **Sharing Jesus, a further sign of a healthy faith, is what Jesus also asked His disciples to do - be His witnesses (Accomplishing Jesus' Mission - Acts 1:8).**

Hebrews 5:13-14 (cf. Phil. 1:9-11) describes the above in a slightly different way. Persons with healthy faith have “trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” Each disciple of Jesus needs to know the “what” of Scripture (i.e. knowledge of biblical truths) in order to hear Jesus in any given situation as to what should and should not be done (doing good verses doing evil).

Developing a healthy faith, however, does not stop with acquiring biblical knowledge! A mature faith practices “righteousness” as well. This means to *actually* use the knowledge acquired to follow Jesus in a given situation (Loving and Becoming Like Jesus). Therefore, healthy believers filter their daily decisions through Jesus, the Word of God, in order to walk with Jesus everywhere they go.

As this happens, believers will experience the abundant life Jesus promised, which gives them many things to witness about (Sharing Jesus). Mature believers are not the ones with the most biblical knowledge, but the ones whose lives have been changed the most using that knowledge.

The *Set Free Now* principles taught in the very first *Discipleship Training Center* course, *More Than a Sunday Faith*, gives the Jesus disciple the basic biblical tools to have a healthy mature faith. Each remaining course will give them additional biblical tools to get better at **Loving Jesus, Becoming Like Jesus**, and **Sharing Jesus** every day.



The Scripture and Science Behind Life Transformation

Jesus did not come to add new behaviors or Himself to us. He came to replace us with Himself. If we want to paint a house, we first must scrape the old paint off before adding the new. If not, the old paint will come off taking the new paint with it. The Bible states that we are to “be transformed by the renewing of our minds” (Romans 12:2), not by replacing old behaviors with new ones.

The biblical process of change begins inward - with what is stored in the mind and heart. This is seen in the Peace Offering/Sacrifice of Leviticus 3 where the fat, the kidneys and the liver (each filtering out toxins) are offered and burned on the altar before the LORD. This became a “*pleasing* aroma” to God. If we want to live in the daily peace of God, we must filter out the toxins that poison our decision making and then choose to follow Jesus.

I believe this offering to be the picture behind Romans 12:1-2. It is here the Spirit writes that we are to be “living *sacrifices*, holy and *pleasing* to God.” You can read more about this in my article, “*Living Each Day in the Peace of God - the Peace Offering*” (www.morethanasundayfaith.com/2013/07/living-each-day-in-the-peace-of-God-the-peace-offering-3/).

Being a living sacrifice means to continually offer up our minds, the reservoir of data used for making decisions, to God. Therefore, the disciple will become more like Jesus by renewing their minds with biblical truths and then living out those truths in Spirit empowered faith, not by acting like a “good Christian.” The word for “renew” means to make a complete renovation, the scraping off of the old paint and repainting it with the new. Producing Christlike character begins by exposing the imbedded lies put in the mind over time by the believer, others, and the sin nature and then exchanging them with truths given by Jesus in the Word of God.

This biblical process has been discovered through scientific research. The link has been made between our thoughts and our emotions with our physical and our mental well being, all factors that affect our choices. As we learn to filter our thoughts, those coming from outside and those already inside our brains, through our biblical filter, we can change the way we think. We can then, through the Spirit’s power, make daily choices (Romans 6:11-14) that lead to becoming more like Jesus.

Non-Christlike choices/decisions are triggered by lie-based thoughts stored in our brains. But there is hope! Our brains can be rewired with each choice we make. Each of us starts where we start, but we do not have to stay there because of what Christ has already done in and for us. In Christ, believers can change the way we think and live. We can learn how to filter each decision we make through Scripture; thus, being transformed by Christ as we follow Him through Spirit empowered choices. Therefore, it is important to understand how the mind works.

Succinctly stated, the “I” part of us receives information through our senses (sight, smell, hear, touch and taste) as well as for believers, through Spirit-given discernment. This information is translated into thoughts and emotions that are laid down as neurons on our brains and hearts as well as in our very cells. Our decisions and thus our behaviors, are based upon this stored information.

These thoughts (neurons) are reinforced with every choice we make to act on them, further ingraining them on our brains (imagine roots sinking into the soil). What’s more, they become resistant to change with each new choice to act on them. Therefore, we cannot change a behavior with another behavior, even a Christian one! No, becoming like Jesus starts by changing the way we think, a rewiring of our brains - the renewing of our minds.

**You become what you focus on and
what you focus on only becomes bigger.**

With each righteous choice we make, we reinforce and sink deeper into our brains those truth thoughts/neurons. This process causes the lie thoughts/neurons to slowly shrink and eventually be washed away entirely.



When this happens, a Christlike character quality has been produced in the believer. We will now respond as Christ would in that situation every time. This is building with the gold, silver and precious stones talked about in 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. It's the replacing of our old temporary character with His eternal character - true life transformation.

If you wish a further scientific explanation behind the "renewing your mind" process, read *Who Switched off My Brain?* by Dr. Coraline Leaf and *Escaping The Matrix* by Gregory A Boyd and Al Larson. Both are biblically based sources.

Life-change is a process, not only an event.

There are two scriptural ways God transforms a life.

1. **Miracles:** He can instantaneously change a life through a miraculous event (think of a weed and its entire root system pulled out in one yank), or the suspension of the physics God created. Miracles by definition, however, are not the norm. If miracles were the everyday method God used, they would no longer be called miracles, but the natural process God set up. Yes, God can use this method!
2. **The FREEdom Process:** What if God doesn't choose the miraculous route? He will then use the process He laid out in Scripture - the day to day **FREEdom process** of renewing our minds (*More Than a Sunday Faith*). Jesus said the truth will set us free. Jesus will give us the necessary truths to be stored in our minds, to be meditated on and then to be practiced in our daily choices (Phil. 4:8-9). As we do this, we will become more like Him and taste and see that The Lord is good every day, everywhere.



The **FREEdom** process is the biblical physics of life transformation in Romans 12:1-2. Yes, God can override this process at any time to make us more like Jesus right now. But, we can experience the peace with God if He chooses to use the **FREEdom** process instead (2 Corinthians 12:8-10)!

One last thing, "Neural-nets are networked with other neural-nets." In other words, our thoughts are interconnected. So, which thoughts/areas of our lives need to be worked on first? Leave that decision up to the Spirit. He is called the Spirit of Truth for a reason. Let Him tell the believer what needs to be changed right now while they experience God's grace and mercy in the areas He will deal with later. He searches our minds (Romans 8:27) and knows exactly where to start. He is God. I encourage you to let Him be.

Will you trust the Word of God and the Spirit of God to do their job?



Philosophy of Learning Used in the *Facilitator's Guide*

It's interesting to note that the Bible says knowledge puffs up (1 Cor. 8:1), but it never says this about understanding and wisdom (Prov. 4:7). A believer needs all three if they are to listen to and follow Jesus throughout their day.

Your role, then, is not one of being a teacher, but rather of being a facilitator. The *Discipleship Training Center* is not about *information dissemination alone, but information processing as well*. It is designed to show the believer how to think through their daily decisions using Scripture. The goal is to give the believer biblical information (knowledge), as well as to help them "get it" (understand) so they can use that information in their daily choices (wisdom). A believer hasn't "learned" anything until they can actually use it in the real world in which they live. Until then, they have only been exposed to the truth.

Based on this, the teaching methodology used in this *Facilitator's Guide* is based on a Hebrew model of learning - a dialogue between the participants and the facilitator and between the participants themselves. A biblical worldview is about how a believer processes daily life through Scripture, and the only way to discover if someone is understanding the process is through discussion. This is why it is highly

recommended that you keep your class sizes to about 10 people/class. Participation goes down as the class size goes up.

This is also the reason why the term “facilitator” is used rather than teacher. Please do not give an answer if they can learn it for themselves. Biblical decisions leading to life transformation start with their thinking. Thus, this material is based entirely upon stimulating their thinking and using group interaction to arrive at a Scripture based answer, rather than simply giving them your answer in a lecture.

Ask questions to stimulate their thinking to arrive at the biblical answer for themselves. This shows them how to think biblically. After each Scripture is read, a question should be asked that enables them to discover the truth from the passage. The purpose should be to show them how to draw out the truth from the passage while listening to Jesus, rather than relying upon you for the answer. Make them think! Yes it may “hurt” them temporarily, but it will also make them stronger. This is why the lecture method should be used **as little as possible**.

If the participant answers with a Scripture, ask them how it applies to their life. If they use “Christianeze” (well worn Christian phrases such as: “Lay it at the feet of Jesus,” “Give it all to Jesus,” “I just have to surrender to Jesus,” etc.), go deeper. Pat answers don’t work in the real world nor do they change lives. Make sure they can think through a verse to expose the lies in their thinking, exchange them with biblical truth, and then make Spirit empowered faith choices.

This is what discipleship is all about: Getting believers to critically think through life’s situations using and listening to the Word of God, Jesus. Because of this, the *DTC* emphasizes *how to think, not what to think*. This process gives them the biblical tools to screen out all noises and voices, including their own, to hear from and follow Jesus, the Word of God (Ephesians 4:11-16; Revelation 19:13).

Each lesson is designed to get each participant involved in the class by reading a passage or section in the *Participant Notes*, by answering questions, and by applying the principles to a real-life situation (discussed later) throughout the class time. The *Participant Notes* are designed with various learning styles in mind. It has pictures, discussions, chapter reviews and personal application questions where they begin to implement the principles taught each week. Homework assignments are included to help each disciple practice what they were shown in class. *Please*, strongly emphasize their need to do the homework. If they want a mature faith, they need to practice the *Set Free Nowww* principles in their daily life by using the truths from each course they take in the *DTC*. The assignments go a long way to make this happen.



Allow me an illustration. “JoJo” came to class all frustrated. I asked her why. After telling her story, she said she didn’t know how to handle a certain situation. I said, “JoJo, yes you do.” “No, I don’t,” she shot back with a little attitude to go with a very “unhappy” facial expression. I purposely let this banter go on for a few more seconds until she finally said, “Okay, how do I know?”

I replied, with a smile on my face, “You were shown the ‘how’ last week. All you needed to do was use it.” It was a great teachable moment. I waited for the entire group to show up and then used this real-life situation to show them how the **FREEdom** process works in their daily lives. You should have seen the lights go on and the peace wash over their hearts. The point is this: Western education emphasizes knowledge acquisition, not knowledge processing. We hear a lecture, take notes, spit it out on a test, and think we’re educated.

This faulty process has crept into the church. Yet, this process is the furthest from biblical truth. James 1:22 states, “Do not merely listen to the Word, and so deceive yourselves. DO what it says.” This is a take on Jesus’ statement in John 10:27, “My sheep hear My voice *and* follow Me.” Realize what you’re up against: most people have not been taught how to think. This is why each participant is asked to take the *More Than a Sunday Faith* course before taking the other courses and to have their own copy of the book *More Than A Sunday Faith*. They will be discovering how to learn and will need the book to reread sections in order to refresh their memory.

This is also why the ultimate homework assignment is to get involved in a **Bible Impact Group (BIG)**. Each person should have a **Bible Impact Card**. As you progress through each course, you can point to the Card and show them how this tool will help them keep practicing the **FREEdom** process and living out each newly discovered biblical truth. If needed, read *More Than A Sunday Faith* Chapter 16. This will help you be familiar with the Card and its contents.



Basic and Specialty Tools for Life Transformation

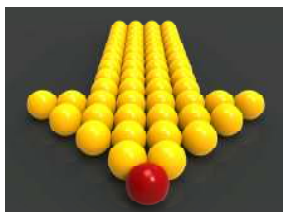
One of the metaphors the Bible uses for a Jesus disciple is a house (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). I live in Southern California where concrete is used as the foundation for almost every house. After laying this foundation, the construction workers will use different tools (skill saws, nail guns, measuring tapes, etc.), depending on the situation; and, use various materials (wood, drywall, clay roofing tiles, etc.) to produce a quality house.

It is the same with our walks with Jesus. Though we are not building from the ground up, the Spirit has a big remodeling job to do! Again, Jesus didn't come to add Himself or new behaviors to us. He came to replace us with Himself. When we put our faith in Jesus, one of the first things the Spirit did was to replace our old foundation with Jesus. At that point, He will use various life situations to tear down old sections of "our house" (Hebrews 12:1-11) and rebuild them with Jesus' eternal character/materials.

The believers' job in all of this is to pick up our biblical truth "tools" with Spirit empowered faith using the **FREEdom** process. As we do, we will become more like Jesus. Keep in mind, a construction worker has many tools, but they do not use them all on every job. It is same with biblical truths. Though all biblical truths are necessary, not all are needed in any given situation. The Jesus disciple needs everyday basic tools, as well as specialty tools in our toolbox to make choices to listen to and follow Jesus.

Based on this, the *Discipleship Training Center* has been divided into two parts: *Basic Tools* and *Specialty Tools*. The disciple must take the *Basics* before they can take the *Specialty*, which can be taken in any order. Each course has progressively less teaching and more facilitating. If you can ask a question rather than make a statement, the better the disciple can learn how to hear Jesus for themselves. Who do we want the class participants to follow, us or Jesus? Therefore, the more you can help them to think biblically and to arrive at the answer for themselves with Jesus, the more the student will love and become like Jesus, which is the definition of being and making more and healthy disciples.

Feel free to add classes, I am. I would highly encourage you, though, to keep the Hebrew learning method of asking questions and using dialogue as your teaching model. Healthy disciples not only know the truth but are trained how to use it in their daily decision making as well. I know I'm sounding like a broken record, but the goal is to help each disciple to listen and follow Jesus, their Shepherd, not us. This method of learning and wrestling with a truth to the point of understanding and applying it is highly effective in making this happen and is reinforced by the **FREEdom** process.



Class Preparation - Facilitator

At minimum you should have read *More Than A Sunday Faith* and be following the *MoreThanASundayFaith.com* blog. This allows you to ask questions, give comments and continue the dialogue on how to listen to and follow Jesus each day for yourself. Even better is to be in a **BIG** where you are personally practicing the principles you will be sharing (see Ezra 7:10).

This *Facilitator's Guide* is designed for a workshop lasting two hours for four weeks without breaks. (Two of the fifteen courses are five weeks.) Feel free to modify to your needs.

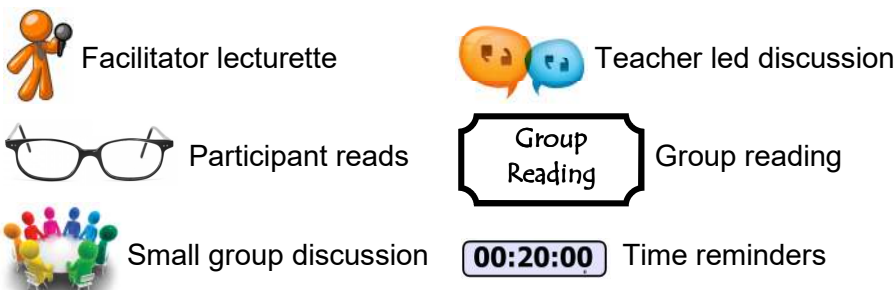
At the beginning of each class, remind your students they can use the restroom as needed during the class time. Because of the small class size, this material should be taught often enough to include

everyone in your congregation or sphere of influence. This material is designed so anyone can use it. Be a facilitators of facilitators!

Each disciple should be encouraged to purchase their own copy of the *Participant Notes*. The facilitator, however, can purchase it and make copies of the course notes available free of charge, along with a syllabus for each disciple taking the class. The facilitator may want to make copies of the various books needed for each class available for purchase on the first day of class. It is highly advised that **BIG** cards be available every week. It is a tool to practice the truths they are digging up. It is also recommended that the facilitator purchase a small hand-held strainer that will be used for illustration purposes throughout the *DTC*.



The facilitator notes are in outline form. The **bold print** signals that a new form of learning or subject change has taken place. The following icons are used:



It is important to cover all the material in the allotted time, which is why there are time reminders for each class. Your participants need the principles contained in this material, discussions and exercises in order to be able to understand and use the **FREE**dom process - *Set Free Nowwww* principles - in their daily decisions.

It is highly recommended that the facilitator practice their lecturettes, to keep the small group discussions on track, and to keep any open sharing by a participant on target and within time. The person's story is important and meaningful to them but can bore or lose others in the group. Do not let any one person control the material and/or time. If you are running low on time, reduce lecturettes while emphasizing the discussion groups and exercises. Remember, biblical decisions through renewing their minds can not take place until they know and understand how to use the material.

If anyone asks a question that is answered in another course or section of the class, politely let them know when and where it will be answered. This will keep you on track while letting them know you will cover their concerns. If they have questions that will not be covered in the class or another course, invite them to talk with you after class.

Finally, I can't over emphasize the need for talking with Jesus about all of this. More than likely, this material will present an entirely new way of thinking, making choices and living for most participants. Our enemy definitely does not want Jesus believers to listen to and follow Him every day, everywhere. Our adversary knows the damage it would cause his kingdom. His gates will come crashing down (Matthew 16:18) while Jesus' Kingdom will advance. Therefore, you should expect heavy spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-18) in your life and in the lives of your participants. Have people lifting you up before the Throne of God while you do the same for those taking the class.

Facilitator Notes

The *Facilitator's Guide* contains the *Facilitator Notes* (FN) for each course. The *Facilitator Notes* for *More Than a Sunday Faith* follow the chapters in the book of the same name. The facilitator can use the illustrations from the book. It will be more effective, though, if the facilitator makes this *Facilitator's Guide* their own by using illustrations from their participant's world.

The principles in the *Basic Tools* courses build upon each other. Thus, it should be strongly emphasized

to each disciple that they do the homework and attend each class. They will get the most out of the *DTC* by attending each session, coming prepared with finished homework, participating in class, and practicing the given truths with other believers in a **BIG**.

It's the same for the facilitator. You need to come to each class having done the assignments. Each disciple is encouraged to come ready to discuss what *they believe* the answers to the various discussion items are. Having done your work, you can ask good questions to cover material they may have missed or present other points of view to get them to think through their answers. This is where the "iron sharpening iron" principle comes into play (Proverbs 27:17). So, come prepared by doing YOUR HOMEWORK!



Class Preparation - Participant

Each participant should download a copy of the **Bible Impact Card** at MoreThanaSundayFaith.com and sign up to receive the blog. This will get them involved with the dialogue from the very beginning and continue to reinforce the biblical life-change process, *Set Free Nowwww*.

They should also have a Bible, a copy of the *Participant Notes*, a writing instrument, and any books necessary for the course. The homework due dates on the course syllabus should be given to each participant. The course syllabus, printed in the *Participant Notes*, contains the course description, weekly assignments and books the disciple will need to purchase before coming to the first class. The syllabus for each course is included in its section within this *Facilitator's Guide*.

Participant Notes

Each disciple is encouraged to purchase their own *Participant Notes*. The disciple will more than likely have more information than can be put into the provided blank spaces under each *Truth Discovery Question*, so it might be a good idea to three-hole punch their notes so these notes can be put into a binder. This way they can keep all their notes in one place.

It's highly recommended that the facilitator also purchase a copy of the *Participant Notes*. This way if any disciple taking the class is unable to afford them, the facilitator has purchased the right to copy the notes for any person needing them, as long as the facilitator does so free of charge.

If the facilitator can not afford to purchase a copy of the *Participant Notes*, they can make their own notes to give each disciple. Honestly, this will be difficult with the *More Than a Sunday Faith* course, but it can be done. Each course from *Amanology* through all the *Specialty Tools* is run exactly the same. The disciple is to answer the *Truth Discovery Questions* (knowledge) and then apply them to a number of *Life Situation Scenarios* to ascertain whether they understood the truth they have discovered. Then they are to answer the *Life Application Scenarios* as to how they will apply it in their life (wisdom).

Each *Specialty Tool* course has its own syllabus and *Truth Discovery Questions* that need to be answered each week. The facilitator will only have to type out the questions for each week, along with the *Life Situation and Application Scenarios* for each student. These scenarios are listed in the *Specialty Tools* section.



Let's Get Started!

Finally, know that the enemy definitely doesn't want you to do any this, let alone listen to and follow Jesus every day, everywhere. He knows the damage healthy believers will cause his kingdom. His gates will come crashing down (Matthew 16:18) while Jesus' Kingdom will advance! You should expect heavy spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-18). Therefore, it is

highly recommended that you have people lifting you up before the Throne of God while facilitating each course.

Don't let this worry you! Your enemy is already defeated. So, enjoy your journey to a stronger and healthier faith! You're life will never be the same. I know mine isn't. You can always contact me at *MoreThanASundayFaith@gmail.com* if you have any questions. Let us continue to make more and healthier disciples!

Loving Jesus through Serving You,

Chris



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