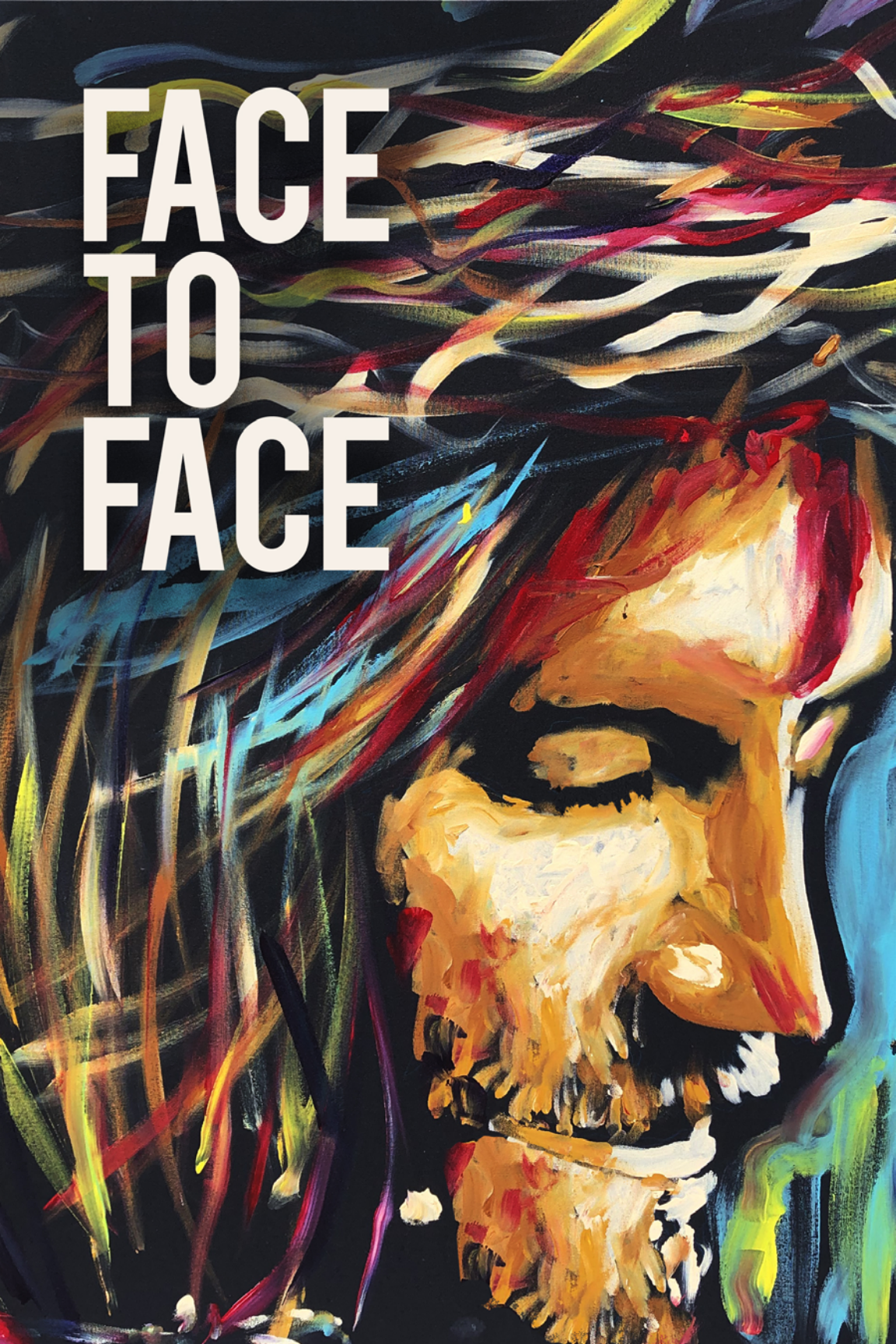


FACE TO FACE



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**THE FALLEN
CARPENTER**

If there is one thing history has taught us, it is this: One person's story can change the world. Throughout time, the simple stories of human beings have overthrown tyrants and inspired generals, they have established justice and struck down prejudice, they have encouraged compassion and restored hope. The stories we read in the Gospels are no different. Over two thousand years, they have reshaped lives and redirected eternities. When we read the Gospels, we are provided with a rare window into the lives of people who encountered Jesus face to face and were changed as a result.

That is why we want to try something a little unusual for this series. We want to take six stories from the Gospels—six stories of people who met Jesus and were transformed after meeting Him—and give each of them a completely fictional backstory. Our goal is simple: We want to see their humanity, up close, so that we can discover how we might encounter Jesus just as they did. We invite you to use your imagination along with us, to consider what their lives may have been like before they met Jesus and how their encounter with Him impacted their futures.

Through this study and discussion, we will turn our attention inward and examine the motivations of the human heart. We will identify the forces that can turn us away from the true life to which God calls us. We will share our lives with one another and pinpoint the values that lead us to become more like Christ. In so doing, we pray you will encounter Jesus face to face and uncover how He can change your life forever.

Play the *"Session One: The Fallen Carpenter"* video.

What stood out to you in the video?

Read Mark 2:1-12

1. Name one area in your life where you feel “stuck,” whether it’s a small matter or a major life decision. Why do you feel “stuck” in that part of your life? What is keeping you from getting “unstuck?”

2. After the man on the mat in this story received Jesus’ forgiveness and healing, he was free to begin a new life. If you suddenly received the same kind of freedom in your life, what would change? What would happen if you became “unstuck?” If you were given an opportunity for a new life, what would be your goal?

Read Psalm 103:1-14

3. Why do you think forgiveness means “the act of letting go?” What is “let go” when God forgives us? What do you “let go” when you forgive someone else?

4. Share about a time when you received forgiveness for a wrong you had committed. How did that forgiveness free you? How did it enable you to move forward in your life? How would your life be different today if that forgiveness had never been offered?

Read Matthew 18:15-35

5. What happens when we refuse to forgive someone who has committed a wrong against us? What are some reasons people refuse to forgive and hold onto their anger? How can we prevent others from becoming more like Christ by withholding forgiveness from them? On the other hand, how can our forgiveness actually bring them closer to Christ?

6. What is a wrong you are still holding onto? How are you bearing the weight of resentment from something that happened in the past? How could refusing to forgive someone hinder your spiritual journey with Christ? How could offering your forgiveness free you to become more like Christ?

DEEPER STUDY QUESTION

Read 1 John 1:5-2:6

7. What happens when someone avoids confessing their sins? Why might someone refuse to seek forgiveness for the wrongs they have committed? How can hiding a sin keep someone “stuck” in place? How does confession and forgiveness free us and empower us to become more like Christ?