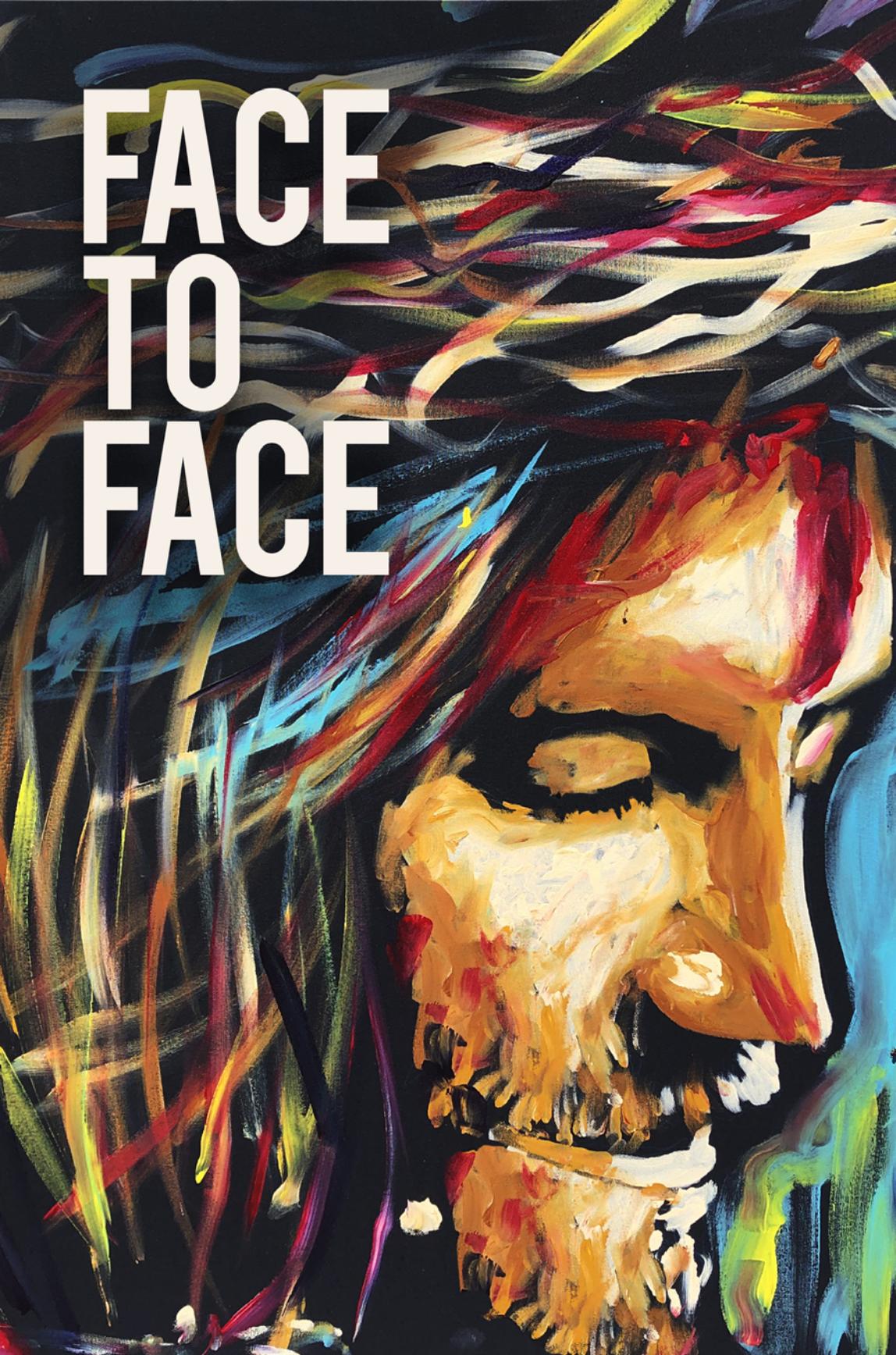


FACE TO FACE



5

**THE SHAKEN
BEDROCK**

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 Five: The Shaken Bedrock" video.

What stood out to you in the video?

Read John 18:1-27

1. Share about one person from your past whom you would call a rival or an opponent or even an enemy? How did they stand against you? Were you able to reconcile your differences with them? Why or why not?

2. Do you think Peter had good reason for believing that the temple guards and the servants of the high priest were his enemies? If you were in Peter's shoes in this story, how would you respond to the people asking if you were one of Jesus' disciples? What could potentially happen if you admitted to it?

Read Matthew 5:43-48 & Romans 12:14-21

3. How does the world teach us to treat our enemies? Why does Jesus teach us to love the people who hate us? What would happen in our world if everyone practiced what Jesus preached? What are some practical ways to love our enemies and see them as people who need Jesus?

4. How have the people who hurt us in the past actually hurt and mistreated themselves as well? How do people who choose to harm others only end up harming themselves? On the other hand, how does the love of Jesus bringing healing to others and to us?

Read John 21:1-19

5. In order to help Peter change his view of the world, Jesus gave him a purpose for his life. How does discovering our purpose in God's kingdom lead us to view others as beloved by God rather than enemies? On the other hand, how do we tend to view others if we do not have a purpose for our lives? Why should we always fight to find the meaning to which God has called us?

6. Who are the people whom Jesus has asked you to love and serve? If you were living within God's purpose for your life, then who would God be leading you to help? How will you take the first step this week toward the purpose to which God has called you?

DEEPER STUDY QUESTION

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

7. These verses are commonly recited at weddings. Imagine that instead of hearing this at a wedding, you heard these words on a battlefield, spoken between enemies on opposing sides. How would that backdrop change the way you read these words? How does the command to love others become even more difficult when we are asked to love those who may not love us in return?