

**FACE
TO
FACE**
STUDY GUIDE

1

**THE FALLEN
CARPENTER**

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

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.

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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?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

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?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

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?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

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?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

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?

2

THE NOTORIOUS
ROMANTIC

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Play the "Session Two: The Notorious Romantic" video.

What stood out to you in the video?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

Read John 4:1-18

1. Share a story from your life when you felt embarrassed, whether due to a small slip or a big mistake. What did it feel like when people looked at you? How did you feel about yourself in that moment? How do you view yourself today?

2. In this story, Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman with grace and love and without judgment. How can we speak with others about their sin while treating them with grace and respect? How could this approach help people open up about their struggles? How can we deal with our own sin without putting ourselves down or making ourselves feel ashamed?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

Read Psalm 69:1-21

3. The voice of shame tells us that we are not good and that God does not love us. From where does that voice come? How can that voice affect us? How does the voice of shame lie to us?

4. How can we replace the voice of shame with a voice of grace and love? How can we better listen to the voice of God, telling us how much He loves us? How can we improve our conversation with Him, so that we are consistently listening to nourishing and uplifting truth?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

Read John 4:19-26 & Revelation 7:9-17

5. At multiple points in this story, the Samaritan woman brings up the differences between Samaritans and Jews. Why does the voice of shame point out the differences between people? How can shame divide us? How does Jesus' message of love and grace bring us together?

6. In these verses, we see that worshipping God can bring down the barriers between people. How can worship bring people together? How can worshipping God in spirit and in truth heal the shame within us? How can developing a strong relationship with the Father allow us to see ourselves as His beloved children?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

DEEPER STUDY QUESTION

Read John 4:27-42

7. Imagine you are one of the disciples, seeing Jesus speaking with the Samaritan woman. What would have been your reaction to that sight? How would your view of the woman have changed after watching Jesus treat her with dignity and respect? How can treating people with dignity and respect encourage others to do the same? How can we show others their worth by sharing the gospel with them? In what ways is our world eager to hear the message of the gospel?

3

**THE WEARY
PRODIGY**

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Play the "Session Three: The Weary Prodigy" video.

What stood out to you in the video?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

Read Mark 5:21-43

1. Share a memory from your life when you had to reach out for help to solve a problem. Was it difficult to admit you couldn't handle the issue by yourself? Why or why not? What happened when you reached out for help?

2. The woman who had been subject to bleeding could not find a cure for her ailment until she reached out to God for help. How does this story give us a picture of how to have faith in God? Why does faith involve reaching out to God? How have you personally reached out to God in faith?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

Read Psalm 146:1-10

3. Why do we tend to put our trust in people who cannot help us or save us instead of reaching out to God? Why do we try to solve the problems of life on our own? Why do we value self-reliance over trust in God? Why do we trust human solutions over God's solutions?

4. What are some problems in our world that only God can solve? What are some troubles in our lives that require trust and dependence on God in order to overcome them? How can we develop a daily practice of reaching out to God for His healing and help?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

Read Hebrews 3:12-14 & 2 Timothy 3:10-17

5. Have you ever seen a fellow believer walk away from the faith? If so, why did they walk away? Why do people come to believe that having faith in God is useless to them? Why might they think that faith in God would lead to trouble for them?

6. We may be tempted to walk away from God during difficult seasons of life or due to hurt we have experienced. How have you maintained your faith in God during the struggles of your life? How has your faith actually transformed a difficult season of your life into strength and power for you? How have the trials of your life increased your faith in God?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

DEEPER STUDY QUESTION

Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-18

7. Why does faith require us to trust in the existence of something that is unseen? What happens to us if we place our faith in temporary things rather than the eternal truths of God? How do the words we say and the actions we take reveal where we have placed our faith? How does the spirit of faith move us to speak and act in this world?

4

**THE BAD
SAMARITAN**

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Play the "Session Four: The Bad Samaritan" video.

What stood out to you in the video?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

Read Luke 17:11-19

1. If you could go back in time and say “thank you” to one person from your past, who would it be and why? Why are you thankful for them? How did that person impact your life?

2. Why do you think the Samaritan leper returned to thank Jesus while the others did not? What blessing did the Samaritan receive that the other lepers did not receive? How can showing gratitude to others serve as a gift for us as well? How are we blessed when we get to bless others?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15 & Colossians 3:12-17

3. What happens to us when we are no longer thankful for what God has given us? What happens when we focus on the things we do not have rather than the things we do have? How can the good things we receive from God become harmful to us if we do not use them to bless others?

4. How does thankfulness lead us to a rich life? How does gratefulness guide us into a life of goodness and joy? How does gratitude inspire us to become generous? How can it turn us from selfishness to selflessness?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

Read Philippians 4:4-13

5. Why should we present our requests to God with thanksgiving? Why is it essential for us to be thankful for what we already have while asking for what we do not have? How can gratitude transform your prayer life and your relationship with God?

6. How can gratitude change the way we think? How does thankfulness guide our thoughts toward true and noble and praiseworthy things? How can gratefulness help us manage our anger or treat others with kindness and respect? How does gratitude empower us to think more like Christ?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

DEEPER STUDY QUESTION

Read Psalm 107:1-43

7. How does gratitude help us endure through difficult seasons? How can our gratitude to God in the present give us hope for a better future? How can a daily discipline of thankfulness to God keep us secure when life becomes confusing or challenging?

5

**THE SHAKEN
BEDROCK**

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Play the "Session Five: The Shaken Bedrock" video.

What stood out to you in the video?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

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?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

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?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

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?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

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?

6

THE LIFTED
LOWLIFE

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Play the "Session Six: The Lifted Lowlife" video.

What stood out to you in the video?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

Read Luke 23:26-43

1. Share about a time when you were given a second chance or another opportunity, perhaps after you made a small mistake or a big error. How did you feel when you received that second chance? What did you do with that opportunity?

2. Why did Jesus offer paradise to a criminal who had hurt many people and caused destruction to many lives? How did Jesus view that man differently from the rest of the world? What was the difference between him and the other criminal who was crucified with them? How can we view the people of this world in the same way Jesus sees them?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

Read Matthew 7:13-14

3. In what ways do the people of this world walk toward destruction instead of choosing the path to eternal life? Why might a person choose a road that leads to misery instead of a road that leads to paradise? How do we ensure we are walking on the narrow road that leads to eternal life?

4. How have you witnessed someone turn their lives around and walk toward paradise and toward Jesus? How did that decision change their demeanor and attitude? How did their outlook on life change after they chose to follow Jesus?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

Read Luke 15:11-32

5. In this story, both brothers made themselves miserable in different ways. How did those two brothers make their lives “hell” through their actions? What change did they need to make in their hearts to enter the “paradise” of their father’s feast?

6. Today, the Lord invites you to join His celebration and His paradise. What obstacle is preventing you from entering into a life of joy and well-being? If you could name one barrier standing between you and God right now, what would it be? How will you take the first step toward getting past it?

FACE TO FACE: ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS

DEEPER STUDY QUESTION

Read Revelation 2:1-7

7. In this letter, Jesus speaks to a church that had been faithfully following Him but then lost their way. What did Jesus mean when He said the church of Ephesus lost their “first love?” What are some ways Christians today might replace their love of Christ with the love of something else? How can Christians practice self-reflection and repentance to ensure Jesus remains their first love?