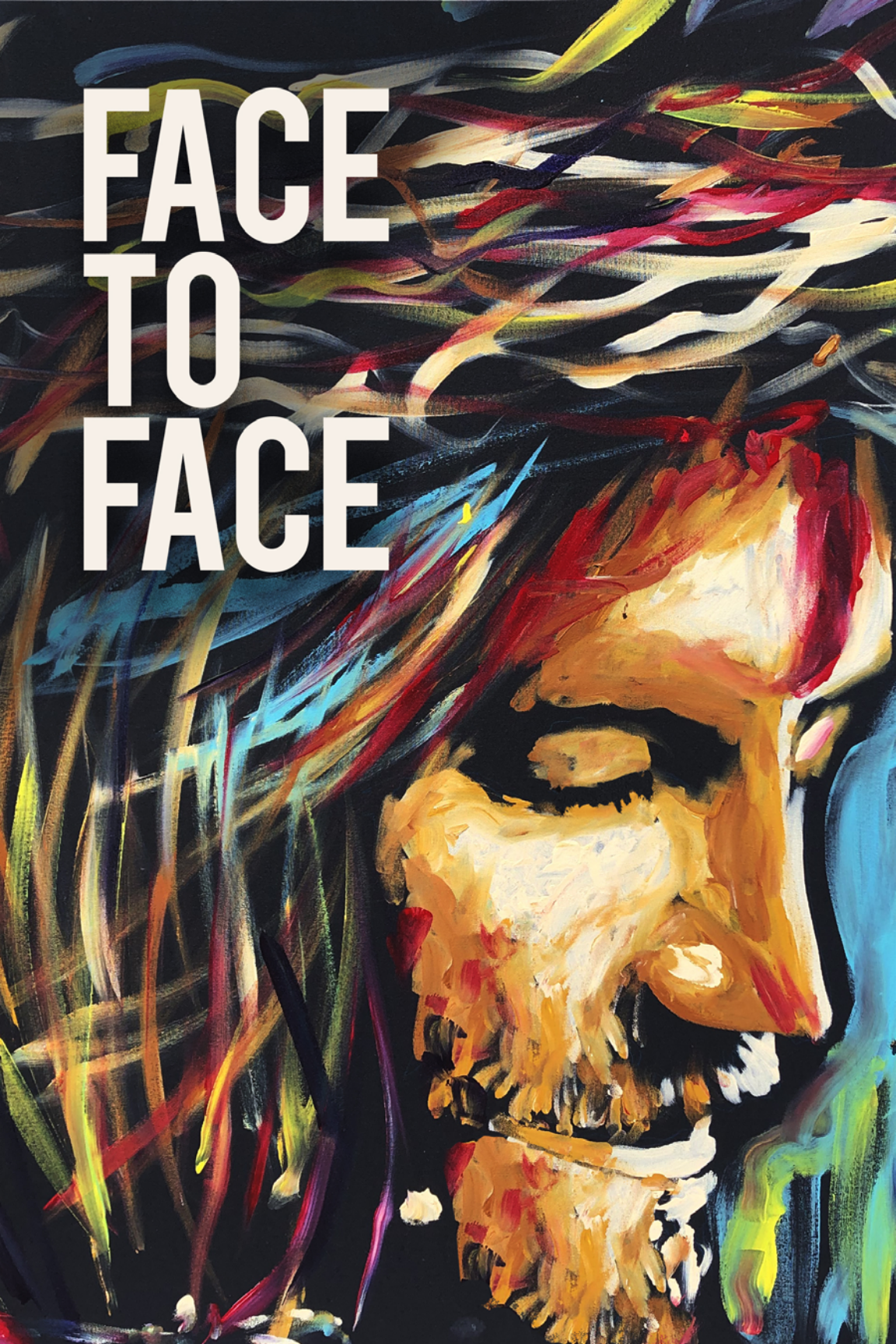


FACE TO FACE



2

**THE NOTORIOUS
ROMANTIC**

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 Two: The Notorious Romantic”* video.

What stood out to you in the video?

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?

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?

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?

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?