

READING AND DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

The Hidden Power of the Gospels

Four Questions, Four Paths,
One Journey

by

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This brief guide is provided to enhance your discussion of *The Hidden Power of the Gospels*. An eighteen-session study guide with comprehensive, in-depth questions for each chapter, fuller reflection on your spiritual journey, suggestions for groups, and resources is available for purchase as a pdf at www.quadros.com.

CHAPTER 1: THE STORY OF QUADRATOS

1. The author describes leaving the seminary as his “own home burning.” (pp. 5–6) Have there been decisions you made in your life which felt this way? Which ones?
2. In the past, have you noticed the inconsistencies among the gospel accounts of Jesus’s birth, teachings, death, resurrection, etc.? If so, what was your reaction to the inconsistencies?

CHAPTER 2: PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY OF QUADRATOS

1. In chapter 2, the author describes that point in history when the ancient pattern of the gospel reading sequence changed to a one-year cycle of 52 passages structured as a biography of Jesus. What, if anything was lost or gained in this transition? How does relying heavily on the biography of Jesus impact faith and spirituality in general?
2. After reading “The Great Map of Transformation” (pp. 24–30), how would you summarize The Journey of Quadratos? What feelings or thoughts arise as you begin to look at the gospels in this way?

CHAPTER 3: CLIMBING THE GREAT MOUNTAIN OF MATTHEW

1. Recall climbing a mountain. Was it high or low? Were you on foot or in a car? Describe the sensation, the feeling in your body.
2. As you read about the birthplace of the Gospel of Matthew, what insights did you gain?
3. What are the correlations you can draw between your own experiences and those of Matthew's community? Which of the three temptations—seeking pleasure first, avoidance of suffering, or elevation of self is currently most noticeable in your personal experience of the first path? Which is most noticeable in your community's experience of the first path?
4. After studying Chapter 3, what will you remember most about the Gospel of Matthew?

CHAPTER 4: CROSSING MARK'S STORMY SEA

1. When in your life have you felt that you were totally alone, lost, or struggling to have hope?
2. The author helps the reader understand Mark's use of both desert/wilderness and sea. Have you been in a wilderness with little water or in a storm at sea? What was it like and how long did it go on? Describe the sensory experience you had.

3. As you read about the birthplace of the Gospel of Mark, what insights did you gain?
4. Quadratos teaches us that intense inner and outer conflict and uncertainties are expected on the second path. The author says that “when deep change occurs, this is what the beginning of something new looks and feels like.” (p. 130) What thoughts and feelings arise when you read this? Can you think of a time when growth or transformation was preceded by conflict or uncertainty?
5. After studying Chapter 4, what will you remember most about the Gospel of Mark?

CHAPTER 5: RESTING IN JOHN’S GLORIOUS GARDEN

1. The author states that, “John’s gospel is a vision that is simultaneously unitive and illuminative—and there is absolutely nothing that can equal its inner experience. This feeling is precisely what poets and mystics try to describe... It is the pinnacle, the apogee, and the heart of it all.” (p. 153) Describe a time in your life when you felt this kind of epiphany, insight, or union. Are these words and experiences the same, similar, or different for you?
2. As you read about the birthplace of the Gospel of John, what insights did you gain?
3. What did you discover about the Prologue? What word or image (as suggested on page 170) was most insightful or moving as a substitution for “the Word”? Which one

- was the most difficult or challenging? How do these substitutions speak to your image of God?
4. The author believes that "...the entire story of Nicodemus is about overturning narrow vision and tribalism." (p. 182) In earlier times, tribalism was based on biology. Today, we may experience it based on ideology, political identity, religion, geography, etc. How do you think we experience tribalism today? Name times or experiences when a certain person or position has had privilege over another based on a category.
 5. When the group came for Jesus in the garden, they were met by Jesus with "unexpected strength and calm." (p. 201) When have you been able to meet a difficult situation with such strength and calm?
 6. After studying Chapter 5, what will you remember most about the Gospel of John?

CHAPTER 6: WALKING LUKE'S ROAD OF RICHES

1. As you read about the birthplace of the Gospel of Luke, what insights did you gain?
2. Just as the stable was an uncomfortable birthplace, the author suggests that the early community was also in an uncomfortable place and yet it was the "perfect, powerful, and perhaps even destined way that the Christ can be born in them." (p. 261) Where have you recently found yourself in uncomfortable or unexpected circumstances? Describe ways in which these circumstances

- may be “perfect and powerful” as you continue to understand the fourth path.
3. The stories of the sheep, the coins, and the prodigal son explore the cost of holding tightly to material things and ideologies. The author says that Luke “emphasizes the great value in putting material things at risk...” (p. 289) Have you ever put material things or ideologies at risk in order to pursue something more valuable? What was the result?
 4. In reflecting on the Last Supper, the author states that “Jesus excoriated the authority of the old ways and said that while all of them had gone through trials with him, the criterion for a true leader was not suffering, but service, citing himself as the exemplar.” (p. 295) How does this resonate with your own experiences of leadership?
 5. After studying Chapter 6, what will you remember most about the Gospel of Luke?

CHAPTERS 7 & 8:
THE EIGHT ESSENTIAL AND CONTINUING
PRACTICES OF THE FOURTH PATH
PARADIGMS AND PROMISES

1. The author says, “We would like to offer a suggestion to you now. Make the fourfold journey and its practices a part of your life and see what happens. We have complete confidence that, when you seriously engage this process, you will find your life in faith and your life in general revitalized.” How might you continue to engage and reflect on The Journey of Quadratos in your life?