



QUADRANT STUDY AID

A Method for Self or Group Study

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Introduction

An elderly woman had a home in which there was a great room and on one of the walls was a large picture window. Her whole life the woman loved this window, she loved to sit in her arm chair and look across the room and out the window. She was able to see the sunshine, rain, and the effects of the wind. It was magnificent.

One day a visitor came calling and as they sat in the chairs and looked out the window, the visitor asked, “Why do you sit here?” She replied, “I have always sat here because I love to see all of G_d’s craftsmanship!”

But the visitor was confused, “If you’d only move closer you could see the park where children are playing and the garden just across the street.”

The woman had never considered that she had been missing so much by sitting so far from the window.

Many of us have this experience with G_d and the Word. The view from where we have always sat is magnificent – so much so that we have never considered that we are missing out on what more G_d has to show us.

We hope you are as excited about *seeing* the Scriptures as we are! G_d’s Word is the lifeblood of creation. We hope to introduce you to some new ideas and methods for moving closer to the *window*. The hope and purpose for this study aid and tutorial is to encourage you along the way as you learn how to engage the Bible - and create a record of that journey as well. It is not intended to give you the answers; rather, we would prefer if you leave with fewer than you began! As you find your way through the Text and fill out the diagram, you will be creating a commentary – and it will be yours.

For too long the church has been filled and led by *answer* people, individuals with well-intentioned desires to give the People of G_d the proper formula for *knowing* (knowledge as opposed to intimacy) who G_d is. We would like to challenge you to begin to enter the Word with questions and wonder and leave with awe and fascination. We do not want to answer your questions but, G_d willing, help you to ask better ones!

We have a G_d of wonder, a G_d beyond understanding, a G_d whose Name is ineffable, yet we tend to read the Word as a means to reduce the mystery, in order to explain G-d, and to find a way to shout G-d's name from the mountaintop. We hope this process allows you to step closer to the window in order to see more of G_d and the Word.

Study Aid Tutorial

The Quadrant Study Aid (diagram) is specifically designed to help you navigate the Text in a different way than how you may have done in the past. It is a very simple process for which we have included short explanations on each section; this will hopefully be valuable as you begin to work through the process.

A note: we find the diagram works best when you use it with a chapter or short section of the Text, such as a Torah portion.

DIAGRAM OVERVIEW

The diagram is broken into five primary sections:

- Interesting
- Imagery/Emotions
- Theme
- Questions
- Connections

These sections are designed to help you with creative thinking while reading through the Scriptures. Hopefully each section will propel you through a varied pattern of *listening* to what it is that G_d is communicating to His people, both then and now.

The hope is that as you work through each of the five sections, you will find that they meld into one another. The lines on the page will fall away and you will discover that *imagery* cannot exist without the *questions* which cannot fully be expressed without finding *connections*, etc.

A quick note about the diagram: There is no *right* order to follow. You may find that you naturally gravitate to one over another. AWESOME! This is meant to be a tool to *help* you, not a program or system that sets limitations. So, jump in and be creative in your use. The following sections are explanations of how I (the author) use the diagram for study; most likely you are going to be *very* different from me and that is good!

INTERESTING

This is a great section to begin with if you are still trying to figure out what suits you best. It allows you to get your juices flowing. Like stretching before an athletic event, you will be limber and your mind will get working.

This section can also be the simplest: by just listing words, names, places, and events from the passage that you notice. Or, if you choose, it can also be much more sophisticated, similar to *Lectio Divina*, by taking a passage that you have read and focused on for a time and allowing for something to rise to the top like a well-frothed cappuccino. What is it that G_d may be saying to you through the Text? This is a perfect place to list those thoughts and phrases.

IMAGERY/EMOTIONS

This section is very important to the success of the diagram. Oftentimes when studying the Text, we become very critical - maybe even surgical. We pick apart the words and verses, separating them out to become an entity unto themselves. In doing so, **we lose the story**. All good stories are based in imagery and emotion, and the writers often use them to connect thoughts to earlier or later events and ideas.

Think about the Spirit of G_d hovering (like a bird) over the waters in Genesis 1. This imagery is repeated many times throughout the

Text, and often it is in a moment of a new creation taking place.

When we can begin to see imagery and emotions within the framework of Scripture, we begin to become aware of the subtle echoes throughout all of G_d's works. We begin to enter into the story of G_d.

THEME

This may be the simplest of the sections. This is for you to place the topic(s) within the passage you are working. Like a heading or a pericope within the Text (ie. The Fall - *Genesis 3*) or even the scriptural reference(s) itself (ie. *Genesis 1.1 – 6.8/B'reishit*). You, however, may find another way to use this section, and that is good.

CONNECTIONS

This is my favorite section. In my time of study and reflection of the Text, I am thrilled when I find similarities and connections between stories – whether it be from the people/places/things or from the emotions and imagery (such as the connections that can be made from the Spirit of G_d hovering over the waters in *Genesis 1*). As I mentioned above under "Imagery/Emotions," it is this interconnectedness that allows us to ensure we don't lose G_d's story. In particular, it allows us to understand what Jesus's audience would have heard during that time, as when Jesus mentioned a line of Torah, they would have made the connection to the broader story.

I tend to use this section for connections within the Text, but several people that use this diagram express their enjoyment of the connections that they make with their own life or with what is going on in the world or church around them. I had never considered looking at it in this way! This is why this guide is only a *guide*: you have complete ownership of how you'd like to use it.

QUESTIONS

Of all the sections, this is the one where I tend to quickly run out of room. You will find that initially you may not have very many questions, or you may feel you need to only ask "good" questions.

Let me put you at ease. Some of my favorite connections (see above section) came from my most basic and simplest questions, such as: how is this wording significant? And quantity doesn't matter. If you have one question or a hundred questions – you are doing well!

There truly is an art to asking questions, and you will find that as you go along in this study, the questions will just start pouring out of you! I would encourage you to be courageous in your questions: have fun asking anything and everything you can think of - there are NO wrong questions.

Final Thoughts

This way of approaching the Scriptures may not be what you are used to; most likely it is nothing like you've ever done before. Hopefully I have designed this in a way that it is accessible and fun. My goal is that this process is not overwhelming to you but instead feels liberating.

Studying is always best in community. Having a few trusted people to ask questions with and dialog about the stories/characters/settings is always enlightening and good. I would encourage you to be kind about the questions that others ask – don't try and answer each other's questions – rather see what other questions there are beyond the ones already asked. Being willing to get out of your box and your own understandings and listen to other's perspectives is healthy and good – we can all learn from one another.

Most of all, studying G_d's Word is good for you and for those that are around you. G_d blesses you [*through the Word*] in order for you to be a blessing to others. So be generous with grace (to yourself and others) and have fun gathering in the abundance of the Very Word of G_d.

The Quadrant Study Aid is on the next page. Make it a fillable PDF, print it out - whatever works best for you. I hope you will find it as helpful as I have.

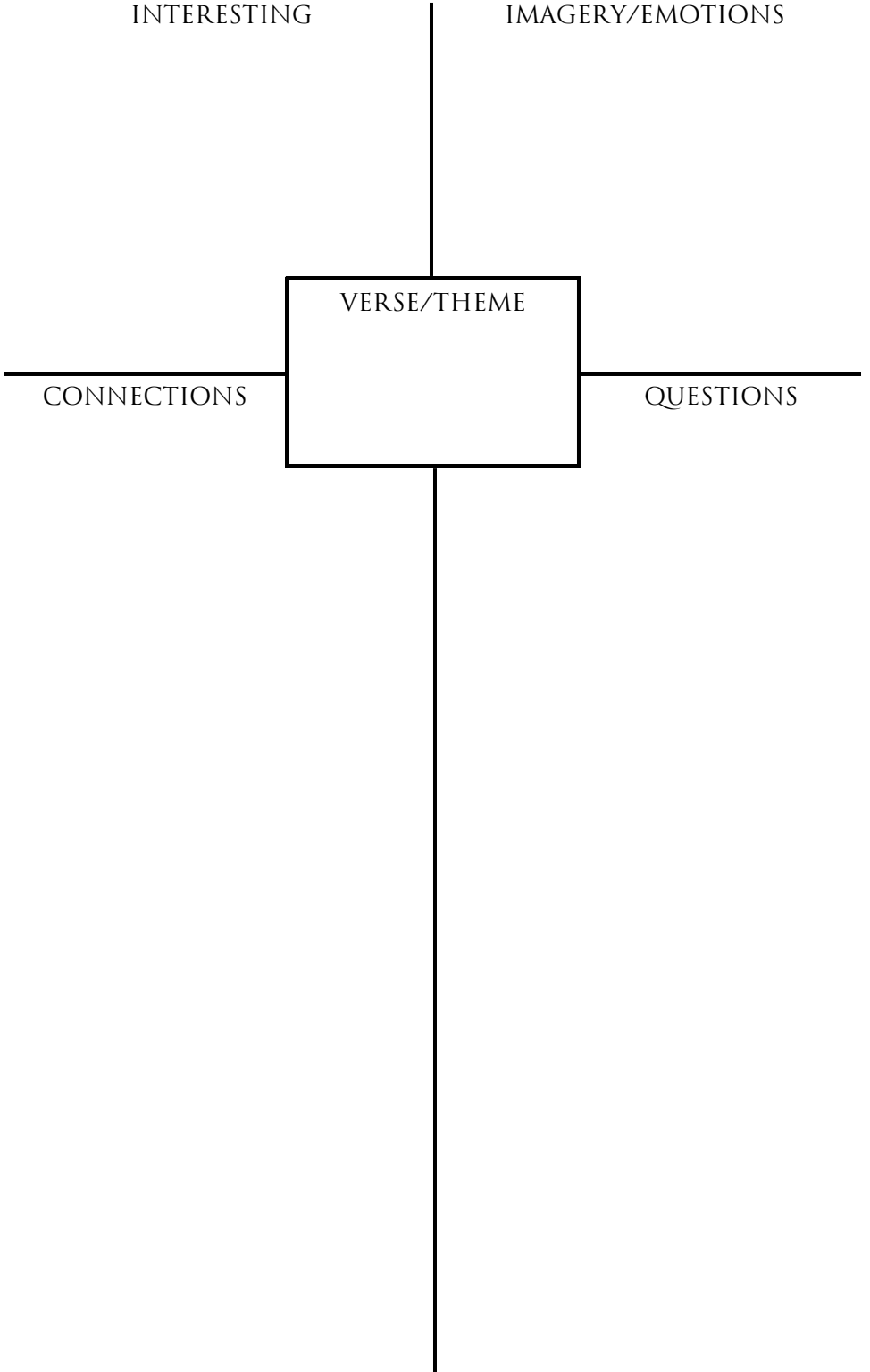
INTERESTING

IMAGERY/EMOTIONS

VERSE/THEME

CONNECTIONS

QUESTIONS



About the Author

Don Schiewer Jr. is the pastor of Dust Church in Toledo, Ohio, where he focuses his studies and teaching on second temple Judaism and Pre-Constantinian Christianity. He is one of the former hosts of the Evangebros podcast and the founder of Food for Thought in Toledo, a nonprofit focused on helping people out of food insecurity.

After spending 20 years developing tools for biblical study and teaching, Don decided to found Ancient Jesus/Future Faith as a way to more broadly share his resources, questions, and explorations with the world. Don is the driving force behind AJ/FF, and you can find him weekly on the podcast and hosting several nights a week on Twitch. He is also developing curriculum for our upcoming webinars and courses.

When not working at Dust or with AJ/FF, Don spends his time playing board games, riding his electric unicycle, or cheering on all the Cleveland sports teams, even when they break his heart.

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