

## Principles of Sound Bible Study Practice

(CIA — Comprehension, Interpretation, Application)

Pray that the Holy Spirit would give you understanding and discernment as you read.

Be prepared to spend time patiently studying, keeping in mind the purpose of study is to understand God through His Word.

Start from the perspective of the original audience by asking these initial questions:

- Who wrote this book?
- When was it written?
- To whom was it written?
- In what style (genre) was it written?
- Why was it written? (author's purpose)

You can find the answers to those questions in a good study Bible or by visiting [www.blueletterbible.com](http://www.blueletterbible.com), or [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).

After establishing the background information for a specific book, you can begin the process of **Comprehension**. A good way to do this is to read the entire book all the way through, a few times if possible, to begin to gain familiarity with the main ideas of the text, get a feel for the author's style of writing, and begin to identify repeated themes. This is also a great time to make a list of any words you are unsure of, perhaps using a dictionary to look up meanings, or jot questions to yourself for further study later.

After reading through the entire book a few times, you can break it down into smaller pieces, perhaps one chapter at a time. Here is where you are going to apply the steps of comprehension. Read your passage repeatedly and note the following:

- Repeated words or phrases, attributes of God, transition words, confusing words, questionable phrases
- Look up this passage in other translations, (not paraphrases; stick to ESV, CSB, NIV or NASB versions), to gain a wider meaning of some words.
- Try your hand at outlining or summarizing the passage you've read.

After exhausting this Comprehension step, the next step is **Interpretation**. Here is where you can look at those study notes you may have in your Bible and check the cross-references. Seeing the way some words are used in other passages can aid in your understanding and reading the comments of other Bible scholars (by using the study notes in your Bible) can offer great understanding.

The final step is that of **Application**. Here is where you will consider what to do with your new knowledge. For this step we can ask ourselves:

- What have I learned about the nature and character of God?
- How does this aspect of God's character change how I view myself?
- What should I do in response?