



**BAY AREA**  
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Principles and Practices for  
Studying a Biblical  
Book/Passage/Text

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# STUDYING A BOOK OF THE BIBLE

## Part 1 – Analyzing a Biblical Book

Objectives in Part 1 are:

- To get a sweeping overview of the entire biblical book.
- To break this entire book of Scripture into its major segments.
- To observe and list key words, phrases, or topics in each major segment.
- To assign a short theme to each major segment of this book.

Note: **Read just the Scripture text.** Use no outside helps or study Bibles, until later in your study.

### Action Steps:

1. Read the Book Repeatedly. Read the entire biblical book straight through at least two times to get a sweeping overview. Record the author, to whom the book is written, and major problems or persons referred to. Record on the top of Chart #1.
2. Look For Major Segments in the Book. Read the biblical book one or two more times. This time, designate where you think the major segments or breaks in the author's writing occur. Record the verse where these major segment divisions occur on Chart #1, column 1.
3. List Key Words. Read the biblical book again. This time list key words you are able to identify. Key words include those repeated words, phrases, or topics. You can list key words, one segment at a time, or as you read all the way through the book. Just list them and keep moving. Record on Chart #1, column 2.
4. Assign a Theme to Each Major Segment. Read just one major segment at a time (considering key words you have listed and other observations about that one segment). After you do this, assign the overall segment a simple theme. Keep it brief! Use just a few words (anywhere from a one to five word theme will do). Complete the following: This major segment is about \_\_\_\_\_. Then move on to the next segment and repeat the process. Record on Chart #1, column 3.

(Note: Leave Chart #1, column 4 blank until later)

## Part 1 – Analyzing a Biblical Book

<b>Major Segments</b> (record verses where major segments occur)	<b>Key Words</b> (list key words – i.e. repeated words, phrases, or topics )	<b>Segment Theme</b> (assign an overall theme to each major segment	<b>Segment Summary</b> (summarize each segment <u>after</u> doing the segment study in Part 2, Chart #2)

Biblical Book:

Author:

Written To whom:

Summary of Book (after completing chart #1):

## Part 2 – Studying a Segment of a Biblical Book

Objectives in Part 2 are:

- To break each major segment of the book down even further, and to assign sub-themes to these “thought blocks.”
- To do a word study of one or two key words in a segment of the book.
- To identify other related Scripture to the passage you are studying
- To summarize each major segment of the book

Action Steps:

1. READ ONE SEGMENT REPEATEDLY – Read one major segment three times.

1.1 Read straight through the entire segment twice. Before you start, review the theme you assigned this segment. Also, review the key words words, phrases, topics you listed.

1.2 Read through the entire segment a third time.

2. BREAK ONE SEGMENT DOWN – Read this one major segment through one more time. This time, break this major segment down even further into its main “thought blocks” and assign each one a sub-theme. Record these sub-themes on Chart #2, column 2.

2.1 Read the overall segment through and note any major “thought blocks” within this overall segment. Identify which verses begin and end each “thought block.”

2.2 Read each “thought block” through twice and write a brief sub theme for each “thought block.”

2.3 Write the verse references and sub-themes for each “thought block” on chart #2, column 2.

(Note: Once this is completed, you will have just finished outlining an overall segment. You should now have sub themes for each “thought block” to go under the overall theme for the segment you had already identified.

Helps:

Clues for identifying “thought blocks” include:

- looking for breaks & dominant ideas within the overall segment
- observe where the author’s topic starts, proceeds, and ends
- identifying a cluster of related words that center around a topic
- other pattern you observe that may comprise a “sub-theme”

3. DO WORD STUDIES – Discover the meaning of one or two key words or phrases you identified in this segment. See appendix for more details about how to do word studies. Record these word studies on Chart #2, column 3.

3.1 Select two key words or phrases from the ones you have listed already. Try to select words or phrases that you deem to be most important for unlocking this particular passage. Ask, will understanding this word or phrase open up this text, contribute to knowing God, His works, or His ways set forth of this segment of Scripture?

3.2 Do a word study on at least these two key words or phrases.

A mini word study can be done as follows:

1. Identify where this word is used elsewhere in Scripture. Use a concordance.

- (a) Locate where this key word occurs in the Bible. First observe its use elsewhere within the biblical book you are studying, observe how this word or phrase is used by the same author in other biblical book. Finally, observe how it is used by other authors in the rest of the Bible. Be aware that different authors may use the same word in different ways. Also, the same author may use the word in different ways in different contexts. This overview will help you get a range of this word's uses.
- (b) Compare this key word with other words. In each context you find the key word, observe how other words are compared to the word or phrase you are studying. What word(s) are used interchangeably with this word as a synonym? What words are used to contrast to the word you are studying (antonyms)? This will give you strong clues to its meaning. Give special attention to how the author of the book you are studying uses it in other places. This is important since some words occur too frequently to study all its appearances in the Bible.

2. List the range of meanings for your key word or phrase.
3. Select the meaning that best fits the context of the passage you are studying.
4. Check your findings against good word study books or commentaries.

4. COMPARE SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE - Compare portions or concepts from this segment to other related Bible passages or verses. Let Scripture shed light on Scripture. For future reference, list these Bible verses on Chart #2, column 4.

4.1 Analyze any use of this passage quoted elsewhere in Scripture. How and why is it quoted? How is it interpreted by one using it? What does that tell you about the proper interpretation?

4.2 Analyze this passage's relation to sound theology. To what related passage or doctrine(s) does this passage add light? What light is shed on this passage by other related biblical passages? How does the passage fit within the fuller system of truth contained in Christian theology?

5. SUMMARIZE ONE MAJOR SEGMENT – Summarize what the author is talking about in this overall major segment. Reflect on the sub-themes you assigned to the “thought blocks within this segment, and word studies. Record your summary of the overall segment on Chart #1, column 4.

5.1 Review. Review this segment's key words, phrases, topics. What are the sub themes you have designated for each “thought block.”

5.2 Read the segment one final time.

5.3 Summarize the Segment. Answer the question: What is the author saying in this overall segment? The theme gave you the basic subject of the segment, while this summary elaborates by describing what the author is saying about this overall theme.

5.4 Check your findings. Use a good technical commentary to check and revise your findings. Try to write your summary first, then revise it.

[illegible]



## Part 3 – Applying a Biblical Book

Objectives in Part 3 are:

- To ask God to give you insight from His Word as you reflect on it.
- To list a few “timeless principles” that come from a major segment you have studied.
- To respond to God and apply at least one timeless truth to your life.

### Action Steps:

1. Approach God Humbly. Pray and humbly ask the Lord to speak to you through His Word and teach you what He wants you to see.
2. Reflect and Record Timeless Principles – Record a few “timeless principles” that can be derived from your segment study as you do prayerful reflection. Allow God’s Spirit to help you see the timeless teaching about God and people that transcend time and cultures. Record on Chart #3, columns 2.
3. Apply at Least one Timeless Truth. Personally respond by applying at least one of these to your life. What response do you believe God is asking you to make? Record this on Chart #3, column 3.
4. Repeat the Process. Repeat this segment study and application process for each major segment of the book. This will help you gain a thorough grasp of God’s Word. More importantly, God’s Holy Spirit will be transforming you into the likeness of Jesus!

(Note: Bible study often surfaces question that can’t all be settled immediately. Questions or issues you would like to explore at a future time can be recorded on Chart #3, column 4).