

The COMMA Method

How to Encounter God Through His Word


Studying the Bible can feel daunting—you might wonder where to begin, how to make sense of what you're reading, or how to let ancient words shape your everyday life. The COMMA Method is a simple, step-by-step guide designed to help you move from curiosity to clarity, from insight to transformation. Its purpose is not just to gain knowledge, but to encounter the living God through His Word.

C — Context: Location, Location, Location

Context changes everything. Just like a house's value depends on its neighborhood, a verse's meaning depends on its surroundings. Misquoting Scripture out of context can lead to serious misunderstandings (e.g., "Judge not" in Matthew 7).

To study faithfully, ask: What did this mean when it was written? Read the surrounding chapters, the whole book, and pay attention to flow and argument. Use a solid translation, choose manageable sections, and always zoom out.

Key idea: God's Word isn't a collection of soundbites—it's a unified story of redemption.


Icon:  (window)

O — Observation: Be Curious

Observation is about slowing down and noticing what's there. Like scientists exploring the universe, we ask questions: Who? What? Where? Why? How?

Pay attention to repeated words, tone, mood, and imagery. Recognize genre—law, narrative, poetry, prophecy, or letters—because each communicates truth differently. Jesus Himself modeled curiosity (Luke 2:46), listening and asking questions.

Key idea: Be curious. Ask questions. See Jesus.

Icon:  (magnifying glass)

M — Meaning: Don't Get It Twisted

Meaning is not "what this passage means to me," but what the author, inspired by God, intended to communicate. Twisting Scripture—through proof-texting, time-traveling modern ideas back into ancient texts, or treasure hunting for secret codes—leads us astray.

Instead, respect the divine and human elements of the text. Seek the original meaning for the original audience.

Key idea: Scripture's true meaning always points us to Jesus, the Word made flesh.

Icon:  (star)

M — Main Idea: The Center of the Circle

Every passage contains one central truth—like the anchor word at the center of a circle. Finding it brings clarity and focus, like fastening the first button on a shirt.

Look for:

- Lightbulbs — clear statements (“These are written so that you may believe...” John 20:31).
- Bookends — ideas that frame a section.
- Echoes — words or themes that repeat.

Key idea: The main idea aligns everything else and shows how the passage fits into God’s story of love in Christ.

Icon: ➔ (arrow)

A — Application: Built on the Rock

The Bible is not just for hearing, but for doing (Matthew 7:24–27). Everyone builds a house, but only those who obey Jesus build on the rock. Application means asking:

- What does this teach me about God?
- What does it reveal about me?
- How should this change my thoughts, feelings, and actions? (Head, Heart, Hands)

True application flows from faith in Christ’s finished work, not guilt or self-effort. It’s about living transformed lives by the Spirit’s power.

Key idea: God’s Word isn’t meant to sit on a shelf—it’s meant to shape our lives.

Icon: ▲ (triangle)

Putting It Into Practice

Use a COMMA Journal:

1. Write the date and passage.
2. Pray for God to speak.
3. Read the passage at least twice.
4. Work step by step—Context, Observation, Meaning, Main Idea, Application.
5. End with prayer and reflection.

The COMMA Method is more than a study tool—it’s a pathway to encounter God. When we approach Scripture with humility, curiosity, and prayer, we discover that the Bible is not just ancient writing, but a living conversation with God Himself.

Read more on our website:

<https://newcityoburg.com/the-comma-method>