

STATE OF THE BIBLE REPORT

RAW DATA

sotb.research.bible

Note: Years missing in a series are because either the question was not asked, or data could not be found in that year's annual report.

VIEWS OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is “sacred or holy.”

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	86%	82%	80%	79%	79%	80%	82%	79%

The Bible contains everything that a person needs to live a meaningful life.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Disagree	23%	27%	31%	30%	30%	33%	30%	32%	37%	32%	25%	31%
Agree	75%	69%	66%	69%	69%	66%	69%	67%	62%	68%	54%	49%

The Bible, Koran, and Book of Mormon are all different expressions of the same spiritual truth.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Disagree	45%	46%	47%	44%	44%	46%	43%	43%	40%	36%	32%
Agree	50%	46%	47%	47%	48%	45%	56%	57%	53%	65%	41%

How much influence does the Bible have on U.S. society? (2011-2018) Would the country be better, worse, or the same without the Bible? (2019-2022)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Too Much/Better	13%	16%	13%	16%	19%	19%	22%	25%	15%	13%	14%	14%
Just Right/Same	28%	29%	26%	30%	27%	30%	27%	31%	30%	39%	33%	41%
Too Little/Worse	54%	47%	56%	50%	51%	46%	48%	41%	55%	49%	54%	45%

BIBLE OWNERSHIP

U.S. Households that own a Bible.

1993	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2022
92%	88%	85%	88%	88%	88%	86%	87%	82%	84%	77%	77%

Number of Bibles owned.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Mean	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.7	4.4	4.6	4.1
Median	3.4	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.0	3.0	3.0

BIBLE ENGAGEMENT

How often the Bible is read apart from church activities.

	1999	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Never	21%	25%	26%	26%	26%	28%	27%	32%	30%	31%	34%	29%	40%
Less than 1x per year		13%	10%	12%	9%	10%	14%	10%	12%	10%	11%	13%	12%
1-2x per year	16%	11%	10%	10%	11%	10%	9%	8%	8%	8%	7%	8%	8%
3-4x per year		8%	9%	9%	8%	6%	8%	6%	7%	6%	8%	8%	7%
1x a month		8%	8%	7%	8%	9%	7%	7%	6%	7%	9%	8%	7%
1x a week		8%	7%	8%	9%	8%	8%	7%	9%	9%	9%	9%	5%
Several times a week 4+		15%	13%	13%	13%	14%	14%	14%	13%	14%	10%	9%	7%
Every day		11%	13%	13%	15%	14%	13%	16%	15%	16%	9%	11%	10%

Those who indicate they wish they read the Bible more.

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
67%	60%	61%	62%	61%	61%	58%	57%	56%

How personal reading changed over the past year.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Increased	27%	26%	18%	22%	23%	21%	21%	20%	22%	24%	13%
Stayed the Same	58%	63%	71%	66%	66%	67%	65%	70%	64%	63%	78%
Decreased	12%	9%	9%	12%	8%	10%	12%	10%	11%	9%	10%

Reasons for increased Bible engagement.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	AVG
Came to understand its importance to faith	53%	58%	67%	56%	59%
Difficult experience in life	41%	25%	26%	39%	33%
Downloaded on device	26%	16%	18%	17%	19%
Significant life change (e.g., marriage)	17%	18%	20%	22%	19%
Saw how the Bible changed others	15%	5%	14%	30%	16%
Someone I know asked me to read w/them	14%	7%	10%	20%	13%
Media conversations	14%	2%	5%	11%	
Joined a group	13%				
Went to a church with Bibles accessible	13%	9%	12%	23%	14%
Listened to a church podcast/stream	12%				
Watched a Bible mini-series	11%				
Conversation w/friend	11%				

Reasons for decreased Bible engagement.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	AVG
Too busy / life's responsibilities	40%	42%	58%	54%	49%
Significant life change (e.g., job loss)	17%	12%	8%	22%	15%
Became atheist/agnostic	15%	4%	17%	11%	12%
Difficult experience caused doubt of God	13%	15%	12%	25%	16%
Saw how Bible reading made little difference for others	8%	9%	6%	10%	8%
Decided to leave the church	4%	12%	17%	18%	13%
Converted to another faith	4%	4%	5%	4%	4%
Media discussions	1%				
Conversation w/non-Christian friend	0%				

Scripture engagement levels (in millions).

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Disengaged	135.6	120.1	118.5	100.0	145.0
Neutral	13.7	22.1	24.4	95.0	66.0
Friendly	36.7	48.4	41.5		
Engaged	43.3	49.9	48.2	64.0	49.0
Centered	23.1	13.5	22.7		

Adult Bible users (in millions) and percentage of all adults.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number	118	120	121	129	126	124	125	123	124	123	128	103
Percent	50%	50%	50%	53%	51%	50%	50%	49%	59%	48%	50%	39%

BIBLE ENGAGEMENT MOTIVATIONS

What most motivates Bible readers.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2019	2020	2021	2022	AVG
Brings me closer to God	64%	55%	53%	56%	60%	55%	68%	47%	38%	24%	41%	51%
Need comfort	14%	10%	14%	15%	12%	16%	14%	10%	16%	16%		14%
Problem to be solved/need direction	12%	17%	18%	17%	18%	16%	9%	8%	5%			13%
I'm supposed to	3%	5%	6%	4%	4%	6%	6%	4%	6%			5%
Helps me discern God's will								12%	18%		18%	16%
Tells me about the nature of God								10%	10%			10%
Shows me how to treat others								7%	4%			6%

The primary favorable emotion felt.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	AVG
Peaceful	34%	37%	42%	43%	54%	52%	41%	46%	51%	19%	42%
Encouraged/Inspired	33%	29%	33%	38%	46%	45%	33%	40%	48%	17%	36%
Hopeful	27%	30%	29%	34%	46%	49%	35%	33%	52%	16%	35%
Sense of Direction	25%	26%	25%	31%	42%	35%	24%	31%			30%
Happy	18%	19%	25%	26%	38%	32%	25%	24%			26%
Intrigued						20%	14%	12%	16%		16%

BIBLE ENGAGEMENT FRUSTRATIONS

What most frustrates Bible readers.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	AVG
No time	37%	32%	30%	35%	33%	31%	23%	19%	19%	18%	15%	25	28%
Language is difficult	13%	12%	14%	11%	13%	14%	8%	10%	8%	14%	12%	*	12%
Not excited	9%	11%	12%	10%	11%	12%	9%	8%	6%	4%	11%	*	9%
Don't know background/history	8%	7%	7%	7%	7%	10%	5%	5%	4%	5%	8%	*	7%
Cannot find what I am looking for	5%	6%	5%	7%	7%	5%	1%	2%	4%	2%			4%
Don't know where to start							7%	7%	6%	10%	25%	*	11%
Layout is difficult							3%	2%	3%	4%	11%		5%
Stories are confusing							2%	3%	3%	5%	10%		5%

The primary unfavorable emotion felt (if any).

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	AVG
Confused	12%	12%	15%	14%	19%	12%	14%
Overwhelmed	11%	11%	9%	13%	17%	13%	12%
Doubtful	8%	6%	6%	9%	10%	7%	8%
Bored	3%	3%	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%
Discouraged	3%	5%	5%	6%	5%	4%	5%
Convicted/guilty/sinful / Judged (2017)	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	6%	2%

BIBLE KNOWLEDGE

Self-reported level of Bible knowledge.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021	AVG
Highly/Completely	5%	12%	12%	13%	12%	11%	11%	12%	11%	12%	11%
Moderately	18%	32%	31%	32%	33%	30%	26%	25%	26%	31%	28%
Somewhat	56%	35%	38%	37%	38%	39%	36%	32%	36%	31%	38%
Not too	18%	16%	13%	12%	12%	13%	18%	21%	17%	26%	17%
Not at all	3%	5%	6%	6%	4%	5%	8%	9%	8%		6%