

# Gen Z changed through Scripture despite decline in use

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PHILADELPHIA (BP)—Most Gen Z adults say their lives have been transformed through Scripture despite their three-year decline in Bible engagement, the American Bible Society said in the latest chapter of the [2023 State of the Bible](#).

The oldest Zoomers—another informal name for Gen Z—were toddlers when the world was abuzz with turn-of-the-century Y2K projections, and many still live with their parents. Some Zoomers are as young as 11, too young even to be included in the American Bible Society study limited to ages 18 and above.

“Gen Zers have been described as curious, digitally savvy and advocates for change. We see all of this reflected in our research, but we also see a generation struggling to find their footing with faith,” Chief Ministry Insights Officer John Farquhar Plake said in announcing the latest release from the report.

While only a 10th of the generation regularly engages with the Bible, Zoomers still confess a significant interest in the Bible and its message.

“Ministry leaders may be surprised to find how open Gen Z adults in their communities are to discussions about God’s word,” Plake said. “And if the trends we’re seeing continue, it’s crucial to be having those conversations now.”

The latest chapter of the study holds key findings about Gen Z and the interest in Scripture:

- 44 percent are “extremely curious” about Jesus, but the interest is higher among the youngest adult Zoomers.
- 56 percent of Zoomers ages 18 to 21 said they are curious about Jesus or the Bible, but only 34 percent ages 22 to 26 said the same.
- Curiosity has sharply declined since 2022, when 77 percent of all Gen Z adults reported curiosity in Scripture.

Scripture engagement among Gen Z adults registers at 10 percent, down from 12 percent in 2022 and 14 percent in 2021.

## **Despite low Scripture engagement:**

- 49 percent of Zoomers ages 18 to 21 say the Bible’s message has transformed their lives, and 52 percent of those 22-26 say so.
- 58 percent of Gen Z identify as Christian, including Catholic, Protestant and “other” Christian traditions.
- 34 percent identify as agnostic, atheist or having no religion.

Even non-practicing Christians and non-Christian Zoomers are open to scriptural experiences and conversations.

## **The American Bible Society found:**

- A quarter of non-practicing Gen Z Christians would accept a Christian friend’s invitation to stream a church service, watch a TV show or movie about Jesus, or attend a Christian concert.
- 18 percent percent of non-Christian Zoomers said they’re open to eating a meal in a group where biblical issues are discussed.

The American Bible Society expanded the State of the Bible this year to explore the various ways people connect with God, incorporating nine spiritual temperaments bestselling author and former Southern Baptist pastor Gary Thomas presented in the 1996 book *Sacred Pathways*.

The Bible Society found the largest chunk of Zoomers—27 percent of those ages 18 to 21, and 32 percent of those above 21—identify as naturalists and connect best with God while in nature.

The smallest portion identify as intellectuals, including 2 percent of younger adult Zoomers and 6 percent of older Zoomers. Intellectual Zoomers connect best with God when they learn something new about him.

The State of the Bible annually looks at the Bible, faith and the church in America. The ABS collaborated with the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center in designing the study conducted online and via telephone to NORC's AmeriSpeak Panel.

The 18-minute survey, conducted Jan. 5-30, produced 2,761 responses from a representative sample of adults 18 and older within the 50 states and Washington, D.C.