

# Online worshippers lead in Bible reading frequency

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PHILADELPHIA (BP)—Bible users who worship God online are most likely to read the Bible at least weekly apart from church service, the American Bible Society said in the latest installment of its [2023 State of the Bible](#) report.

Among online worshippers, 74 percent read the Bible at least weekly, whether they worship solely online or online and in person. Of in-person-only worshippers, 32 percent read the Bible at least weekly, the American Bible Society stated.

“This might seem surprising to those who see online church as a lesser experience, used by people who are less committed spiritually,” the society said in the report’s seventh chapter, focused on Bible use and technology. “We suspect that these numbers speak to the personal nature of online attendance.”

Online attendance, often done alone or with immediate family, “can be more about hearing about God and from God,” the Bible society speculated. “It’s personal, as Bible reading often is.”

The findings are among the results of an 18-minute survey conducted in January among a representative sample of adults 18 and older within the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Percentages are based on 2,761 responses.

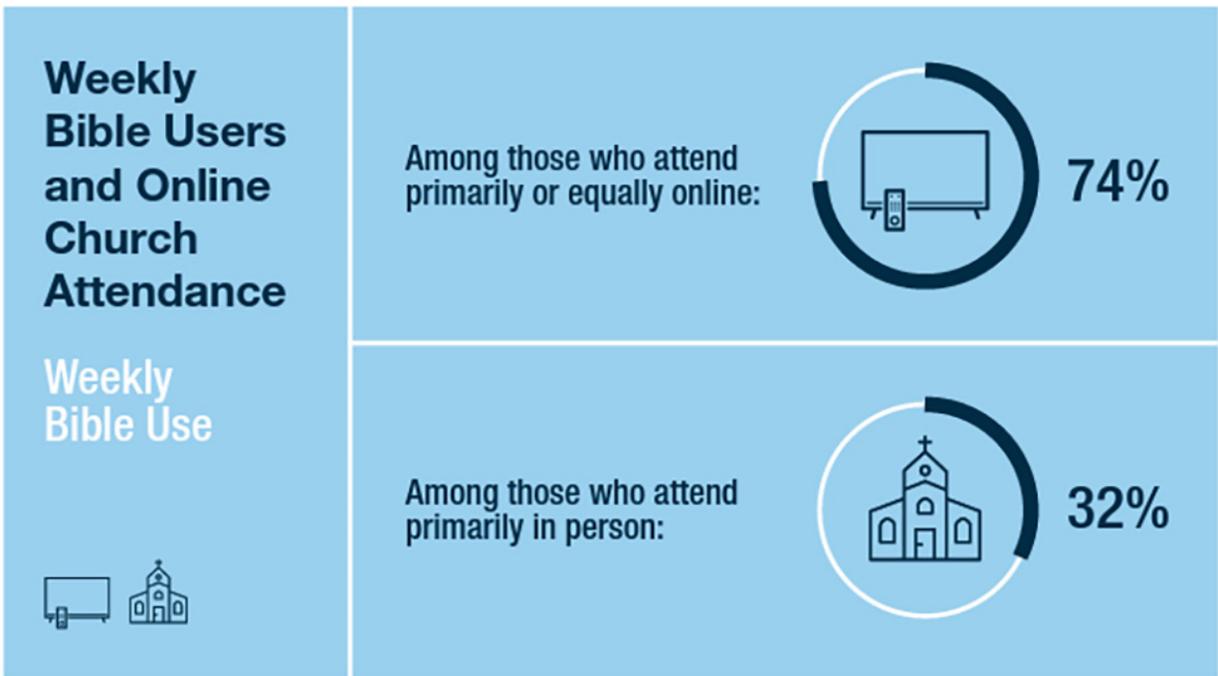
The release delved into how many people read the Bible at least weekly outside of normal church services and certain descriptive characteristics concerning them.

## Among the top findings:

- 25 percent of American adults use the Bible at least weekly, amounting to about 65 million people.
- More than half of evangelicals, 53 percent, report reading the Bible weekly, compared to 21 percent of Catholics who do so.
- Black Americans far surpass others in reading the Bible at least weekly, with 38 percent reporting so, compared to 23 percent among all other ethnic groups combined. Nearly one in five Blacks (19 percent) read the Bible daily, outpacing all other groups combined, which numbered 8 percent.

Curiosity about Scripture doesn't necessarily drive Scripture reading, the Bible society found. About 39 million U.S. adults say they are extremely curious about Scripture, but they don't read it at least weekly. More than half of Americans—52 percent—wish they read Scripture more, but only 14 percent increased their Bible reading in the past year.

Among the top impediments to reading Scripture more frequently were a lack of time (26 percent), a lack of excitement (15 percent), not knowing where to start (17 percent), and difficulty in relating to the language (15 percent).



## Among other findings:

- The popularity of digital Scripture sources is about the same as in 2022. Just under 70 percent of Bible users read a printed Bible at least monthly, 50 percent read a digital Bible app at least monthly, and 48 percent read Scripture through internet searches at the same frequency.
- Elders continue to favor printed Bibles at 87 percent, while 46 percent of Boomers are most likely to watch a Bible program on video.
- Bible apps and podcasts are most popular among Millennials, 42 percent, and Gen X, 39 percent; with digital Bibles and online Bible reading plans also most popular among those generations.
- Gen Z is most likely to access Scripture through internet searches.

The State of the Bible annually looks at the Bible, faith and the church in America. The American Bible Society 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.

Previous chapters of the 2023 study revealed various aspects of how Scripture engagement impacts daily life. Future chapters will offer new insights on how the Bible affects philanthropic habits and summarize highlights from 2023 research.