

Scripture-engaged give more, gain greater hope

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PHILADELPHIA (BP)—Scripture-engaged Americans give more to churches and charities than others, reaping more hope and purpose through the process, the American Bible Society said in its [2022 State of the Bible report](#).

Americans considered Scripture-engaged gave \$145 billion to charity in 2021, including church tithes and offering, or \$2,907 per household, the report said, compared to \$924 per household among those described as Bible disengaged.

“People who give the most to charity flourish more and have more hope and purpose,” the American Bible Society stated Nov. 10 in releasing the latest chapter of the 2022 State of the Bible.

“Our data reveal a substantial correlation between charitable giving and our measures of human flourishing and hope. One of the six aspects of the Human Flourishing Index, ‘Meaning and Purpose,’ has an especially strong connection.”

The American Bible Society determines Scripture engagement based on a set of questions gauging how often a person reads the Bible and how Scripture impacts their choices.

“These people seem to follow the guidance of James 1:22 (NIV): ‘Do not merely listen to the word.... Do what it says,’” the report stated.

“The Bible teaches us to give, so it’s no surprise to find high levels of giving among people who read and follow Scripture. But there’s more to it than

simple obedience. Transformation is at the heart of the biblical message. We receive grace, and so we show grace. We love because God first loved us.

“When we encounter a loving and giving God in the Bible on a regular basis, it only makes sense that we become more loving and giving in response.”

Does giving reap hope and flourishing, or do hope and flourishing spur generosity?

“Perhaps both are true,” the report states. “These findings might suggest that people find a sense of meaning by giving to a worthy cause. Or perhaps people give to support causes that fit the purpose they already have. Taken together, these correlations indicate that people live well when they give well, and vice versa.”

Generational trends

Scripture-engaged people give most of their charity to churches, giving 13 times as much as the Bible disengaged, but also outpace the Bible disengaged in giving to non-church charities. The Scripture engaged gave 62 percent more than the Bible disengaged to non-church charities, the report found.

The elderly, those 76 and older, gave to charity more often than younger generations in 2021. Half the members of Generation Z, ages 18-25, contribute to charity, compared to 84 percent of the elderly.

“We can attribute this pattern partly to economics. Many Gen Z adults aren’t earning their own money yet, or they’re at the bottom of the pay scale,” the report stated.

“But Gen X currently has the highest income of any group, and yet they are

less likely to give than the two older generations. Is this a matter of disposable income, or is there a cultural commitment to philanthropy that's stronger in the older groups?"

Those who were ages 42-57 in 2021 were included in Gen X.

Among other findings, people tend to give more to charities in their local communities than internationally, the report said.

American Bible Society researchers collaborated with the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center to survey a nationally representative group of American adults on topics related to the Bible, faith and the church. The study conducted online via telephone produced 2,598 responses from a representative sample of adults 18 and older in all 50 states and Washington D.C.