

State of the Bible: Printed Bibles more popular than apps

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PHILADELPHIA (BP)—Printed Bibles remain the most popular choice among Bible readers, the American Bible Society said in its latest installment of the [2022 State of the Bible](#) report.

Bible readers who classify as Scripture engaged, meeting more stringent criteria of Bible use, are also overwhelmingly more successful in unconditionally forgiving those who wrong them, the Bible society's report said. The study's seventh chapter released Oct. 13 focused on how Bible users interact with Scripture.

"You might think no one is reading printed Bibles anymore," researchers posed in the report. "Actually, print is still the Bible format used most often. Nearly seven of 10 Bible users say they have read on their own in the past month from a printed version of the Bible, but several tech options are vying for second place, chosen by nearly half of Bible users."

Specifically, 69 percent of Bible users read from the printed Bible within the month preceding the query, and 48 percent used a Bible app on a phone, tablet or computer, the American Bible Society study stated, with the categories overlapping.

Among additional delivery methods, 46 percent watched a Bible-oriented program, 46 percent searched for Bible content online, 29 percent enrolled in an app-based Bible reading plan, and 28 percent listened to a Bible-related podcast.

Printed Bibles span generations

Printed Scripture remains popular across generations, although younger adults ages 18-57 are more likely to engage online than adults older than 57. A majority of younger adults (69 percent) and older adults (75 percent) read printed Scripture within the previous month.

But younger adults engaged with Bible apps more than older adults within the preceding month, 53 percent compared to 35 percent, the American Bible Society reported.

The Bible has transformed the lives of those who read it, the the American Bible Society report said. Among Bible users, 92 percent said the Bible's message had transformed their lives, with only 8 percent seeing no personal transformation.

Even those who don't use the Bible at least three times a year—the American Bible Society benchmark for categorizing people as Bible users—38 percent agreed the Bible has transformed their lives.

Non-Bible users have encountered Scripture through occasional church attendance or through personal conversations, the American Bible Society concluded.

“Of course, we wish more Americans would interact with Scripture on a regular basis,” the American Bible Society said in the report, “but this is a noteworthy statistic. Of the 155 million non-Bible users in America, nearly 60 million would say the Bible message has transformed them.

Describing forgiveness as one of the most difficult biblical mandates to achieve, the American Bible Society found Bible users who ranked as “Scripture engaged” reported more success in forgiving others regardless of whether those who wronged them apologized and sought forgiveness.

Among the Scripture engaged, 47 percent strongly agreed and 47 percent somewhat agreed with the statement, “I am able to sincerely forgive whatever someone has done to me, regardless of whether they ever ask for forgiveness or not.” Among the Bible disengaged, only 11 percent strongly agreed with the statement, 48 percent somewhat agreed, and 40 percent disagreed somewhat or strongly.

Systematic reading plans helpful

The American Bible Society judges Scripture engagement based on responses to 14 survey questions centered on the frequency of Bible use and its impact on the lives of readers, revealing what researchers consider a “high-fidelity, numerical measure of holistic Scripture engagement among U.S. Bible users.”

In exploring ways to increase Bible use, the research found the most promising indications among those who approach Scripture by reading one or more chapters or a complete story at a time. In that category, 48 percent were more likely to increase their Bible reading.

In other categories, 42 percent of those who follow a schedule, plan or program are more likely to increase their Bible reading, compared to 24 percent of those who read the Bible at the same time each day.

“In our churches and ministries, we need to keep meeting people wherever they are” researchers wrote. “Show them how to make the Bible a part of everyday life. Show them how it addresses their issues. And always recognize the transforming work God is doing in each of them.”

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.