

State of the Bible

USA 2025

RESEARCH FROM AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

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STATE OF THE BIBLE: USA 2025

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THE BIBLE IN AMERICA TODAY

*After the success of “The Chosen,” Amazon and Netflix
are converting Bible stories into films and
TV shows with “Game of Thrones”-style intrigue
and romantic comedy elements.*

*The New York Times*¹

The story of Jesus, presented in the multi-season serial *The Chosen*, has become a smash hit in recent years. Now there are other Bible-based dramas in the works, covering the stories of Ruth, David, and Mary the mother of Jesus, with even more on the horizon. The *Times* article notes that “other studios are eager to adapt material that has zero copyright protection and billions of adherents.”²

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/02/arts/television/house-of-david-the-chosen-amazon-prime-netflix.html>

² Ibid.

For decades, religious companies have produced faith-based films that found churchgoing audiences. But *The Chosen* has pushed far beyond that. Its producing team “estimates that the show has been watched by more than 280 million unique viewers worldwide, *a third of whom it says are not religious*.”³

This “not religious” audience intrigues us. That’s 90 million-plus, in the U.S. and elsewhere, who presumably are not Bible readers, yet have tuned in to a creative, Bible-based account of the life and teachings of Jesus.

Whatever your opinion of *The Chosen*, its popularity raises a question for anyone interested in how Americans connect with the Bible. Could *The Chosen*—or other similar presentations in the future—have a significant effect on the people we call Bible Disengaged or non-Bible Users or Non-Practicing Christians?

America’s relationship with the Bible took a serious downturn a few years ago, and it has wallowed in a statistical trough ever since. This year we see a slight uptick. Is this a reversal of a previous trend? Time will tell. Significantly, we see the greatest increases among Millennials and men, populations that have previously scored low in Bible Use and Scripture Engagement. There’s also been a Bible boost in formerly resistant regions—the Northeast and West. Even adherents of non-Christian religions are turning to the Bible more often.

Can we credit a particular TV show or ad campaign with these increases? Our research does not directly address motivations, but it is clear that people are looking for answers . . . increasingly in visual

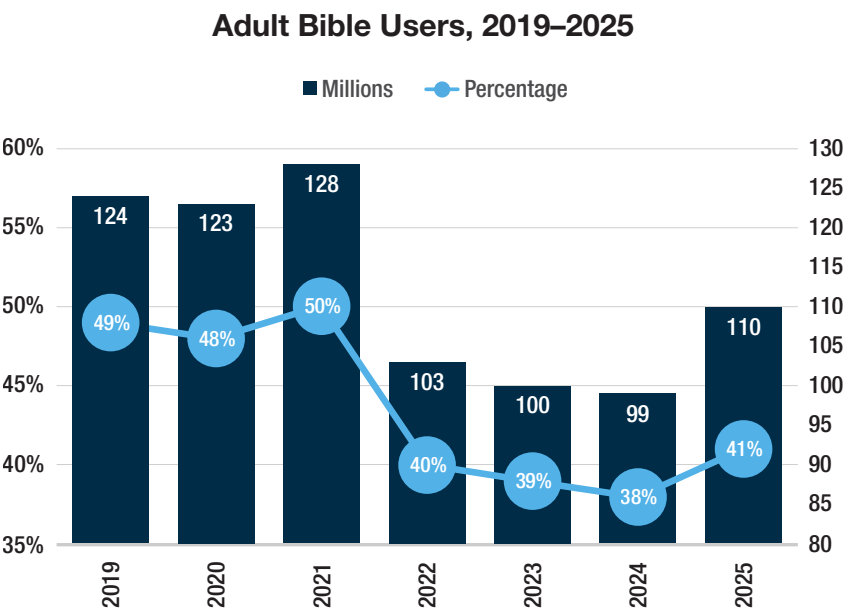
3 Ibid. Italics ours.

media. These sorts of public presentations reinforce the quietly faithful lives and creative outreach of millions of Christians eager to share with their neighbors the “greatest story ever told.”

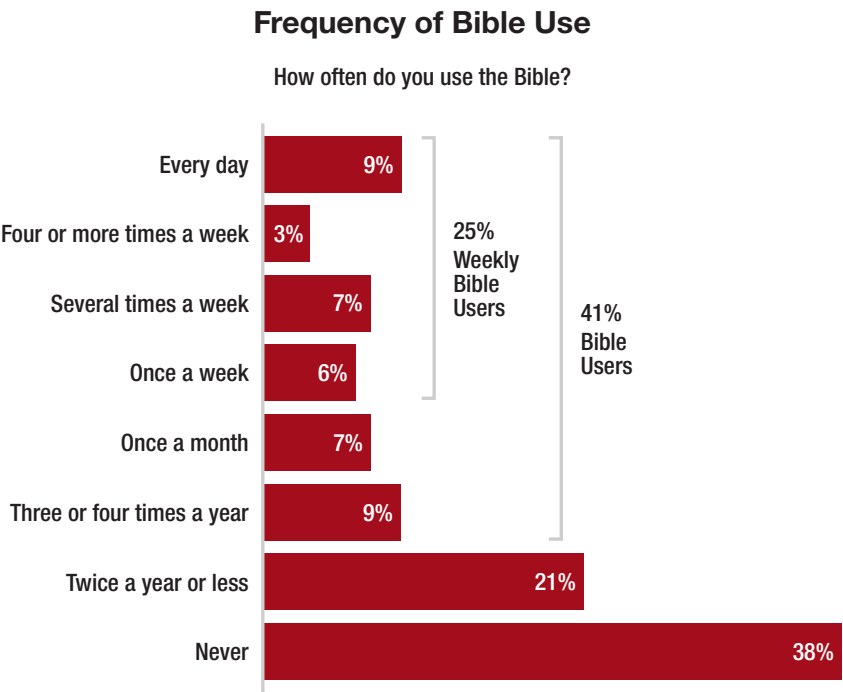
BIBLE USE

We define Bible Users as those who connect with Scripture on their own at least three times a year, “not including times when you are at a large church service or Mass.” This is a low bar, but it does reflect a personal decision to interact, at least occasionally, with the Bible.

From 2011 to 2021, nearly half of all Americans qualified as Bible Users, with little change from year to year. In 2022, Bible Use fell dramatically (from 50% to 40%), and it kept sliding. Our 2024 survey found only 38 percent of American adults were Bible Users, falling below even those who said they “never use the Bible” (40%).



But this year there's better news: 10 million *more* American adults are Bible Users. The total amount of 110 million represents 41 percent of the adult population. This is the highest total since our 2021 report.⁴



GENERATION AND GENDER

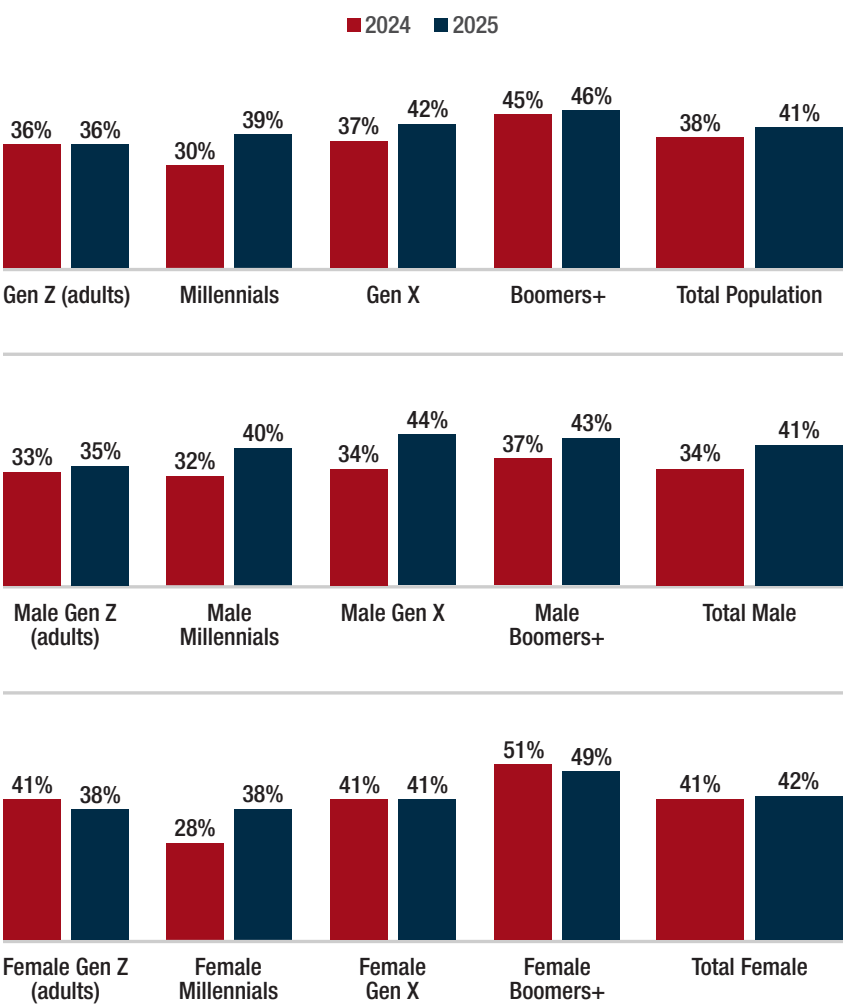
This might surprise you. **Millennials** are leading the way in this move toward greater Bible Use, and in every generation **men** are using the Bible more.

In the 2024 report, Millennials trailed all other generations, with only three in ten (30%) qualifying as Bible Users. This year they've

⁴ The *State of the Bible* survey is conducted in January, so many of its findings reflect situations from the previous year.

jumped to nearly four in ten (39%), surpassing their younger siblings in Generation Z. Both male and female Millennials have seen a substantial year-to-year increase.

Bible Users 2024–2025 by Generation⁵ and Gender

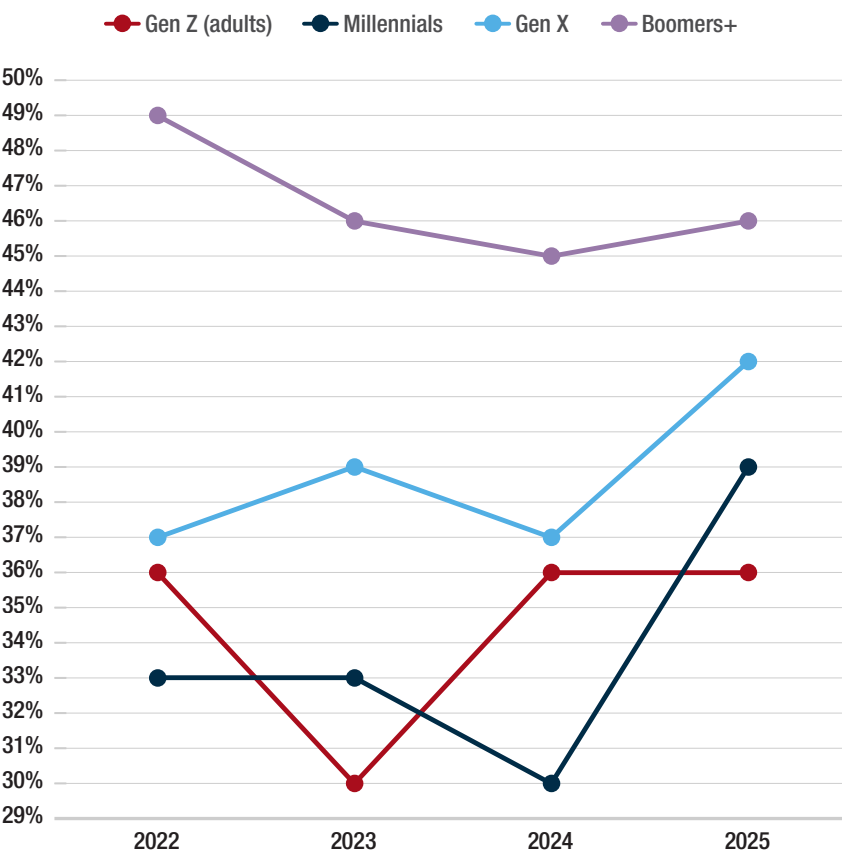


⁵ See the Definitions section for the current ages of each generation. Note that the Boomers+ now also includes the group previously known as Elders.

In all other generations, women have held steady or decreased slightly in their Bible Use, while men had substantial gains. In Gen X, men had a ten-point rise in percentage of Bible Users, while women in that generation saw no increase at all. In that age group, men forged ahead of women in Bible Use (now 44% to 41%).

Overall, in the past year, men have nearly closed the gender gap in Bible Use, turning a seven-point gulf (41% to 34% in 2024) to a slim one-point deficit (42% to 41%).

Bible Users by Generation, 2022–2025

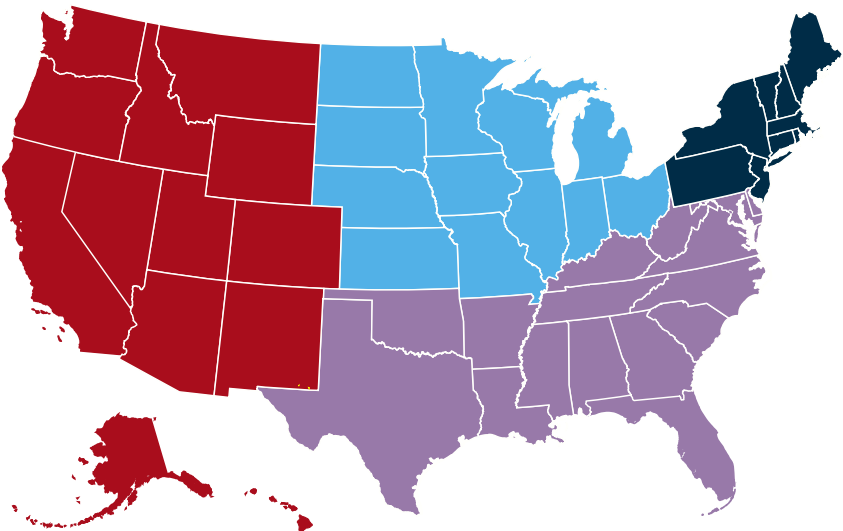


REGION, RACE, RELIGION

The Southern U.S. consistently leads the way in measures of Bible Use and Scripture Engagement. In 2025 the South once again boasts the highest percentage of Bible Users (48%), with a very slight increase over 2024, but its lead is shrinking. *Every other region in the U.S. has increased its share of Bible Users by five or six points in the last year*, even the often-resistant Northeast.

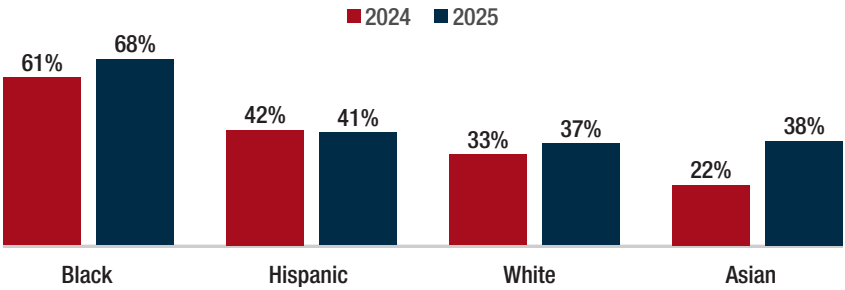
Bible Users by Region, 2024–2025

West		Midwest		South		Northeast	
2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
33%	39%	34%	39%	47%	48%	28%	33%



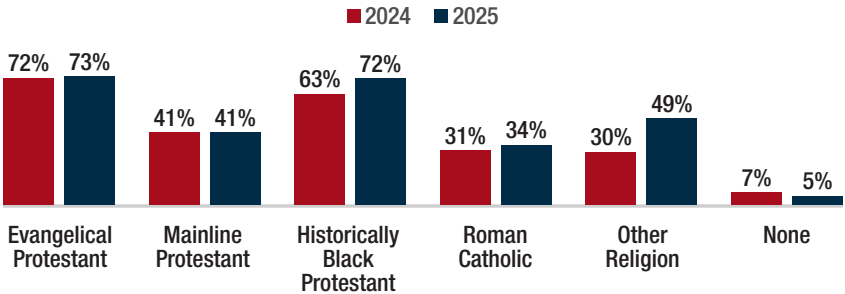
Two out of three Black Americans (68%) are Bible Users, by far the highest proportion of any ethnic group in our survey. Every group except Hispanics shows a substantial increase in Bible Users in the past year.

Bible Users by Race/Ethnicity,⁶ 2024–2025



Nearly three-quarters of those attending Evangelical Protestant (73%) or Historically Black Protestant churches (72%) are Bible Users. Every denominational group has an increase in Bible Users over 2024, most notably the Historically Black Protestants moving up nine points from 63 percent in 2024. The most surprising finding is that nearly half of those in “other religions” (that is, non-Christian religions) qualify as Bible Users, interacting with the Bible at least three times in the previous year.

Bible Users by Religion,⁷ 2024–2025



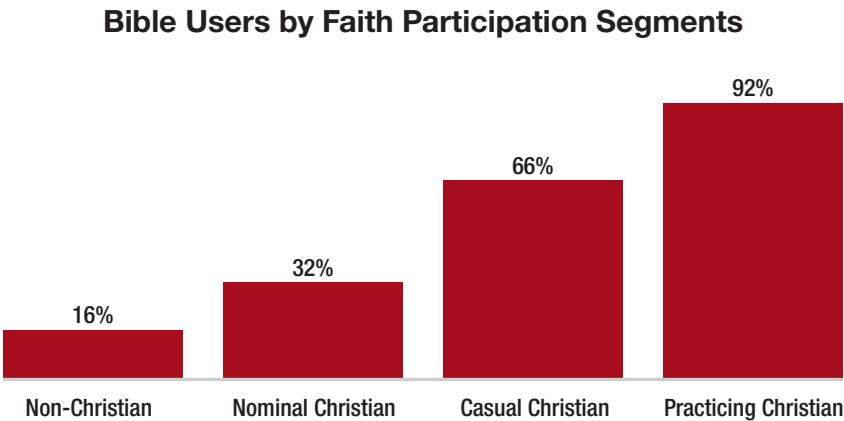
6 A number of ethnic designations are excluded in this analysis because the sample sizes are too small to provide reliable data.

7 An additional category, “Other Christian and Orthodox Christian,” had too few respondents to assemble reliable data. “Other Religion” includes non-Christian religions like Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, and Buddhism.

In addition to denominational connection, we look at how deeply people interact with their churches. For several years, we have used the designation Practicing Christians for those who (1) say they’re Christian, (2) attend church (in person or online) at least once a month, and (3) consider their faith “very important” to them. About a fifth of Americans are Practicing Christians.

Last year we used these same factors to identify two other groups of people. Nominal Christians call themselves Christian but don’t attend church even monthly. Casual Christians attend, but they don’t consider their faith “very important.” And a substantial group of Non-Christians (34% of the population) does not claim to be Christian and generally doesn’t participate in a church. These categories combine within a measure we call Faith Participation.

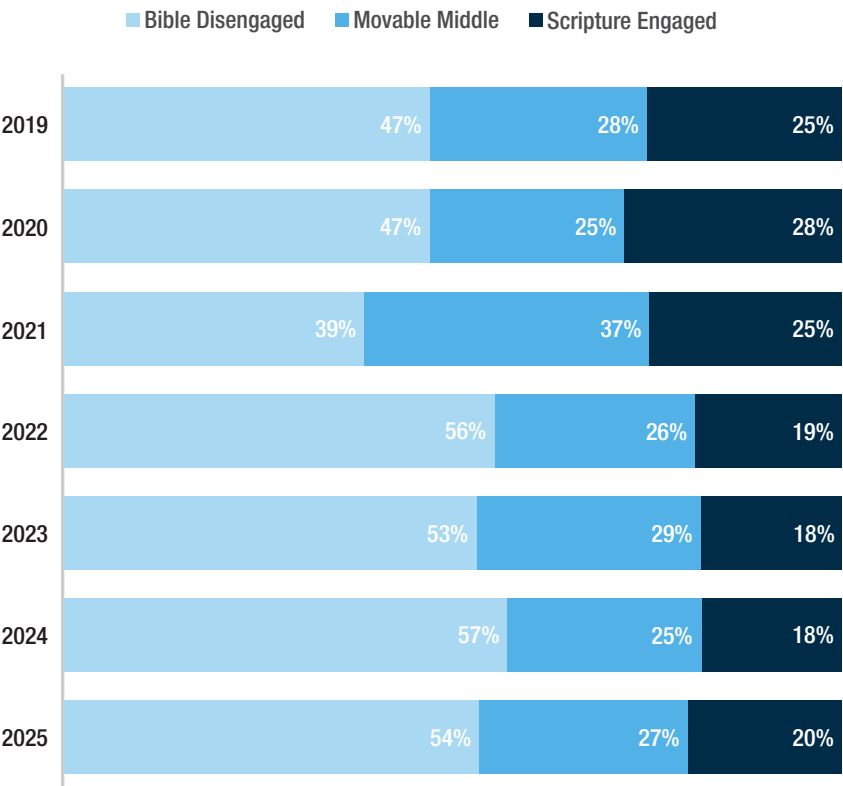
How many at each of these levels qualify as Bible Users? The percentages are starkly different. One in six (16%) Non-Christians are Bible Users, as well as nearly a third of Nominal Christians (32%). About two-thirds of Casual Christians (66%) are Bible Users, along with nearly all (92%) Practicing Christians.



SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT

Where Bible Use represents a rather low commitment, as little as three readings a year, Scripture Engagement is a far more robust category. It merges frequency of Bible reading with other measures of the Bible’s role in people’s lives. We look at the *centrality* of the Bible in people’s decision-making and its *impact* on people’s relationships with God and others. Responses to fourteen questions on these matters create a score, which then qualifies a respondent as Scripture Engaged, Movable Middle, or Bible Disengaged.

Scripture Engagement, 2019–2025



In recent years, Scripture Engagement has been in the same statistical trough as Bible Use. The survey taken in January 2022 showed a major spike in the number of Bible Disengaged, and both the Movable Middle and Scripture Engaged suffered big losses. The next two surveys showed no improvement.

This year, however, there's a glimmer of good news. The percentage of Scripture Engaged has edged upward (to 20%)—still not back to 2021 levels, but moving in the right direction. Last year, 47 million Americans qualified as Scripture Engaged; this year there are more than 52 million.

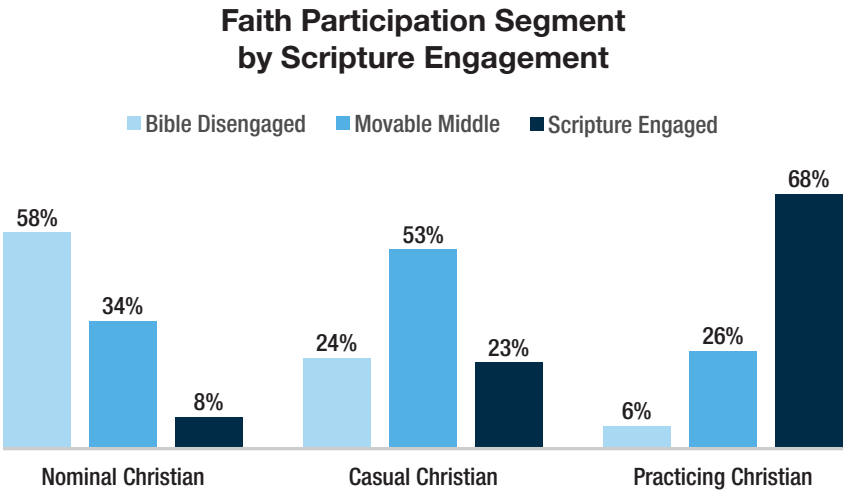
SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT AND THE CHURCH

The Bible repeatedly touts the value of the community of faith, urging us not to “give up the habit of meeting together” (Hebrews 10:25). While it's possible for someone to be Scripture Engaged and not go to church, it's rather rare. Only one in eight of the Scripture Engaged (12%) are unchurched.

Earlier in this chapter, we reviewed Faith Participation segments, including the categories of Nominal Christians (the 57% of self-identified Christians who seldom attend church) and Casual Christians (the 16% of Christians who attend but don't consider their faith “very important”). The connection between Scripture Engagement and church involvement becomes even clearer when we examine these categories.

More than two of three (68%) Practicing Christians are also Scripture Engaged, with about a quarter (26%) in the Movable Middle and

very few (6%) Disengaged. Nominal Christians show the reverse, with the great majority Bible Disengaged. What’s most fascinating is how the Movable Middle (53%) owns the Casual Christian category, and that makes sense. These people are in church, but their faith is not very important to them. In the same way, they may read the Bible occasionally, but they seem to hold its teachings at arm’s length, not fully committing.



EXAMINING KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Where does the 2025 rise in Scripture Engagement come from? The two youngest generations. While they are still the least-engaged age groups, both have increased by about a third over last year (11% to 15% for Gen Z and 12% to 17% for Millennials).

While Generation X shows a minor decrease in Scripture Engagement (21% to 20%), there seems to be a major relocation in that group from the Disengaged to the Movable Middle.

Black Americans were already leading the way in Scripture Engagement by a large margin, yet they had a major rise in that category (from 27% to 36%). Their percentage of Scripture Engaged is now twice that of any other major ethnic group (36% to 18% for Whites and Hispanics). Asian-Americans had a major shift from the Bible Disengaged up to the Movable Middle, and a substantial rise in the Scripture Engaged. White Americans also had gains in the Scripture Engaged and Movable Middle, with a corresponding drop in the Bible Disengaged.

ACCESS, APPROACHES, AND ATTITUDES

How do people interact with Scripture, and why? The *State of the Bible* survey includes questions about technology, reading habits, and beliefs about the Bible.

More than three in four Americans say they own a Bible (77%, up from 74% last year), and virtually all of these people say it's "in a language and format they understand." For most of its history, American Bible Society has focused on making sure people had Bibles, but the digital revolution has changed that playing field.⁸ Now, if you have a smartphone or computer, you essentially own a Bible.

But are people using that technology? Increasingly, yes. Two thirds of Bible Users (66%) say they access the Bible digitally at least some of the time, with higher numbers among younger generations.

⁸ American Bible Society is now at the heart of digital Bible use around the world through its stewardship of the Digital Bible Library.

These days people have three broad choices when accessing information or entertainment . . . or the Bible. We can read it as text, we can listen to audio content, or we can watch video. Our survey asked how often people access the Bible in these three general formats.

We're especially interested in the Movable Middle, because this is where future growth in Scripture Engagement will come from. We're also curious about the media preferences of different generations.

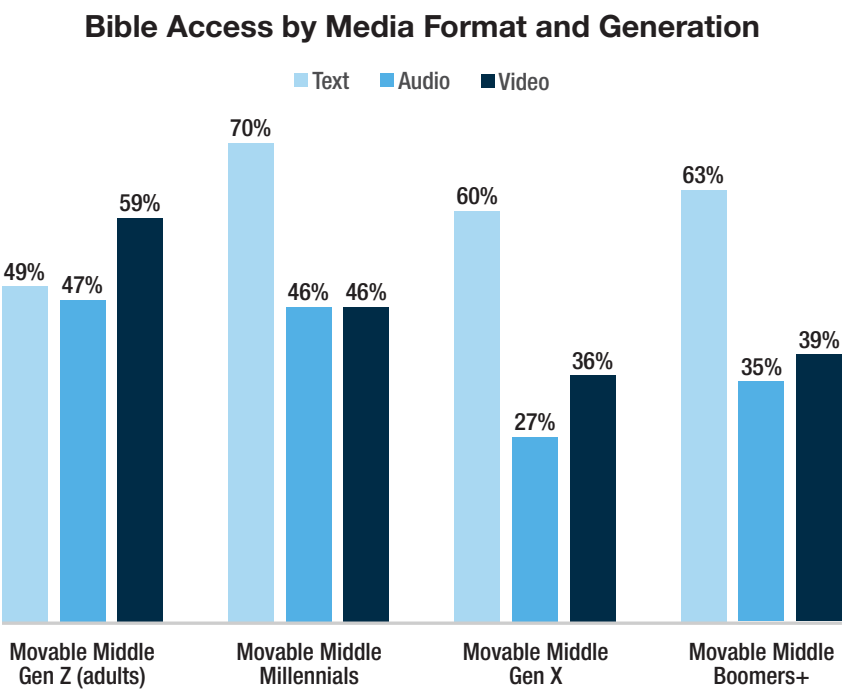
You won't be surprised that Gen Z, our youngest group, shows the greatest preference for video content, with nearly three of five (59%) in the Movable Middle accessing such content at least monthly. Guess which generation leads in the monthly reading of Bible text. Millennials, at 70 percent.

As we seek to draw more of the Movable Middle into Scripture Engagement, especially in these low-engaging age groups, Bible communicators might consider two courses of action. First, provide more Bible content on video to meet the clear preferences of Gen Z. Second, let Millennials know that quality Bible content also exists in video and audio formats.

When people of all these generations access Bible content online, what platforms do they use? (We're not just including those in the Movable Middle now, but all those who say they use the Bible online at least some of the time.) Three out of five digital Bible Users (62%) say they click on "Bible apps" (such as YouVersion). The next most popular options, a "Bible-based website" and YouTube, get about half that traffic (30% and 27% respectively).

Generations have distinctive platform preferences. While every age group seems to like Bible apps, those in our oldest generation, Boomers+, specialize in what we might consider classic technology—not only TV and radio, but websites and Facebook. Those in Gen X often find their Bible content on YouTube; Millennials on Instagram. While it’s no surprise that TikTok reaches our youngest generation far more than our oldest (24% to 1%), Gen Z also enjoys Bible content on podcasts—in fact it’s their second most favored option (at 33%, with 59% using Bible apps).

It’s worth remembering that our survey only includes adults over 18 years of age, so a third of Gen Z is not included here . . . yet. In the coming years we expect their preferred media to rise in these rankings.



Digital Bible Platform Preferences

On which of the following platforms do you most often interact with Bible content?

	Overall Percentage	Leading generation	Lowest generation
Bible app	62%	Millennials (67%)	Gen Z (59%)
Bible-based website	30%	Boomers (40%)	Millennials (25%)
YouTube	27%	Gen X (31%)	Boomers+ (20%)
Podcast/Webcast	21%	Gen Z (33%)	Boomers+ (14%)
Facebook	16%	Gen X (19%)	Gen Z (8%)
TV/Radio	14%	Boomers+ (22%)	Gen Z (8%)
Instagram	8%	Millennials (15%)	Boomers+ (3%)
TikTok	8%	Gen Z (24%)	Boomers+ (1%)

Note: Respondents could choose multiple options

Base: Bible Users who use digital platforms

METHODS OF BIBLE READING

For a few years now, we have asked people about their Bible reading practices—not just frequency but details of how they conduct their time with Scripture.

I do it at about the same time of the day.

I participate in a Bible study group.

I read one or more chapters or a complete story.

I follow a reading guide, schedule, plan, or program.

I read a few verses at a time.

I select Bible passages based on my mood at the time.

Those who are less Scripture engaged choose the last two statements more than the first four. We characterize the first four as “disciplined” Bible reading—requiring commitment to a group, a schedule, a plan, or a longer text. We call the last two options “casual” Bible reading. While the Bible benefits committed and casual readers alike, those who are most transformed by Scripture tend to go beyond grabbing a few mood-appropriate verses.

The 2025 survey has confirmed this pattern, with Scripture Engaged people generally doubling up on the Movable Middle on those first four statements.

For years we’ve noticed a recurring anomaly. When we ask whether people’s Bible reading increased or decreased in the previous year, more people say they’ve increased (usually 15% claiming increase with 10% admitting decrease). This has occurred consistently, even in years when Bible reading was dropping. But this year it’s not just wishful thinking: Bible Use has actually increased.

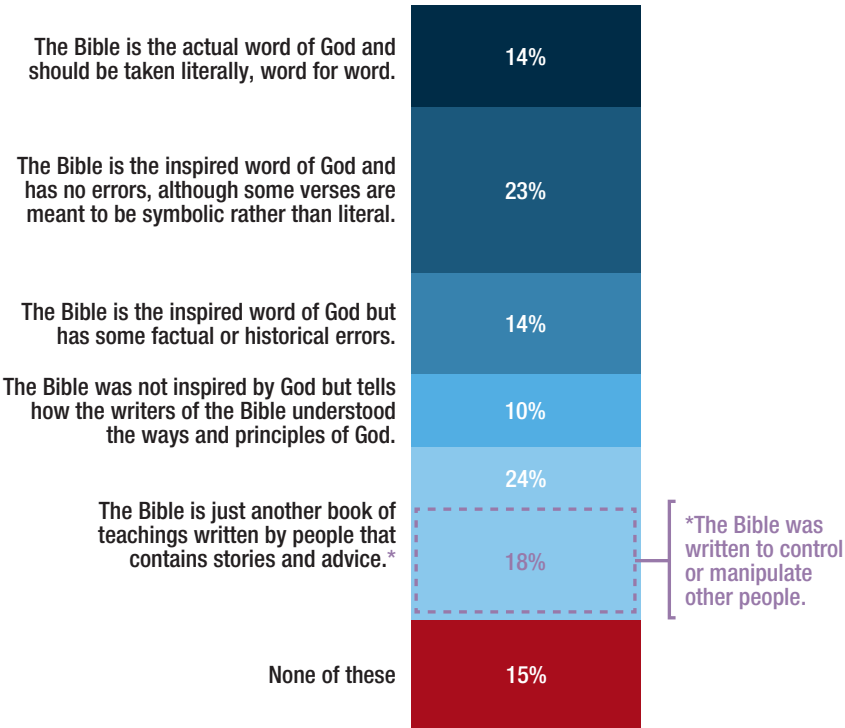
Speaking of wishful thinking, we also ask respondents, “Do you wish you read the Bible more?” Just over half of all Americans (51%) say yes (a couple of ticks down from last year’s 53%). As you might expect, the Scripture Engaged can’t get enough of God’s Word. Seven of eight (88%) say they wish they read it more. Only a quarter of the Bible Disengaged (26%) have this wish; it’s just not that important to most of them. But that Movable Middle group (80%) comes close to the Engaged in their desire for more Bible reading. To be sure, there can be many obstacles between wish and reality, but this is a positive factor. It’s what makes this group movable.

ABOUT THE BIBLE

Besides all the data on formats and practices in Bible use, we also want to know what people believe *about* the Bible. We present five statements in random order and ask participants which comes closest to their view. For those who say the Bible is “just another book of teachings,” we ask if they agree with another, more negative, statement: *The Bible was written to control or manipulate other people.*

Taken together, these responses give us a sense of the terrain of American attitudes toward the Bible, from traditional to modernist and even antagonistic.

Attitudes about the Bible, 2025



CONCLUSION

More than half of Americans (56%) say they are curious about the Bible and/or Jesus. Even among the youngest generations, Gen Z and Millennials, half of them say they're curious. Among the Movable Middle, that neutral group brimming with possibility, more than four out of five (82%) confess curiosity about the Bible or Jesus or both.

What can we do about that?

You might be afraid that people don't want to hear the good news. You might assume that everyone in your community is part of that 18 percent who are sure that the Bible was written to control and manipulate. It's a shame that those people think that, and maybe someday we can convince them otherwise, but three times as many people are longing to know more. How will we satisfy that desire? We see in this year's data a move toward Scripture, especially in previously resistant groups. For Christian leaders, communicators, artists, and servants, this is a time to talk about the deep wonder we find in the Bible, to live out its teachings with compassion and wholeness, and to welcome others into its rich wisdom. ■

ARE MORE PEOPLE USING THE BIBLE?

Our first interview of 2025 is with **Jennifer Holloran**, President and CEO of American Bible Society, talking about why Bible use might be on the rise. Click on or follow the QR code to listen now, and subscribe to this new podcast series to hear future conversations about the State of the Bible in America.





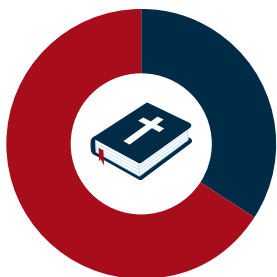
Bible Use

29% 

increase in Bible use
among Millennials

19% 

increase in Bible
use among Men



66%

of Bible
users access
the Bible
digitally

34%

of Bible
users access
the Bible
only in print

TOP 3

Platforms of Digital Bible Users

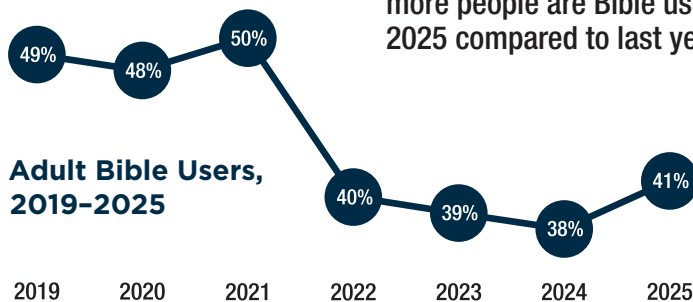
62% Bible App

30% Bible Website

27% YouTube

10 MILLION

more people are Bible users in
2025 compared to last year



Adult Bible Users, 2019-2025

DEFINITION

Bible Users are individuals who
interact with the Bible on their
own at least three times a year.