

Bible Literacy Factoids

Bible Reading

- About six in ten Americans (59%) say they read the Bible, at least on occasion
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Readership of the Bible has declined from the 1980s overall, from 73% to 59% today
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- The percentage of frequent readers, those who read the Bible at least once a week, has decreased from 40% in 1990 to 37% today
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Only one American in seven reports an involvement with the Bible that goes beyond reading it
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Sixteen percent of Americans say that they read the Bible every day
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Twenty-one percent of Americans say they read the Bible once a week
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Twelve percent of Americans say they read the Bible once a month
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Ten percent of Americans say they read the Bible less than monthly
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Forty-one percent of Americans say they rarely or never read the Bible
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- About 43% of American women say that they read the Bible either weekly or daily, compared to 29% of American men
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.

- Thirty-eight percent of Americans who are currently married read the Bible at least once a week, compared to 35% of those who are not married
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Forty-two percent of white Americans say they rarely or never read the Bible, compared to 32% of nonwhites Americans
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Fifty percent of Americans over the age of 65 read the Bible at least weekly, compared to 27% of people between the ages of 18 and 29
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Forty-seven percent of Republicans say they read the Bible at least weekly, compared to 32% of Democrats
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Women are much more likely than men to read the Bible at least weekly. About 43% of women say that they read the Bible either weekly or daily, compared to 29% of men
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Seventy-two percent of those who read their Bible daily or weekly are optimistic about the future, while 82% of those who rarely or never read the Bible are optimistic about the future
-- The Gallup Organization, October 13, 2002.
- 92% percent of households in America own at least one copy
-- Barna Research Group, "The Bible," (1993).
- Of those households that have a Bible, the average number of Bibles is three
-- Barna Research Group, "The Bible," (1993).
- In a poll taken by Gallup in October, 2000, 59% percent of Americans reported that they read the Bible at least occasionally. This is down from 73% in the 1980s
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Those Americans who read the Bible regularly spend about 52 minutes a week in the Scriptures
-- Barna Research Group, "The Bible," (1997).
- Women (42%) are more likely than men (32%) to have read the Bible in the past week
-- Barna Research Group, "The Bible," (2001).

- Only one in seven Americans report an involvement that goes beyond! Just reading the Bible. Fourteen percent of Americans currently belong to a Bible study group
– The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Eighty-six percent of evangelical Christians have read the Bible in the past seven days
– Barna Research Group, “The Bible,” (2004).
- Women (49%) are more likely than are men (38%) to have read the Bible in the past week
– Barna Research Group, “The Bible.” (2004)
- Bible reading during a typical week drops as age drops: 53% of Elders (Builders and Seniors); 44% of Boomers; and 38% of Busters and 33% of Mosaics read the Bible in a typical week.
-- Barna Research Group, “The Bible, (2004)
- An estimated 75 million adults (42%) said that reading the Bible is very important to them
– Barna Research Group, “The Bible,”(1997)
- The King James Version is more likely to be the Bible read during the week than is the NIV by a 5:1 ratio. (1997)
- Blacks (59%) are the ethnic group most likely to have read the Bible in the past week, followed by Hispanics (39%), whites (36%), and Asians (20%)
– Barna Research Group, “The Bible,” (2004).
- Bible reading by adults during the week by region-Northeast 33%; South 52%; Midwest 41%; West 44%
-- Barna Research Group, “The Bible,” (2004).
- The percent of adults in California, Oregon, and Washington that read the Bible during the past week (other than while at church), has risen from 29% in 1994 to 44% in 2004
– Barna Research Group, “The Bible,” (2004).

Attitudes Toward the Bible

- Sixty-five percent of Americans agree that the Bible "answers all or most of the basic questions of life"
--The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Almost half of Americans who believe the Bible "answers all or most of the basic questions of life" read the Bible at least weekly
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Amazingly, 28% of Americans who believe the Bible "answers all or most of the basic questions of life" say they rarely or never read the Bible
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Forty-six percent of Americans with a postgraduate degree say the Bible answers basic life questions, compared to 72% of those with a high school education or less
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Thirty-five percent of Americans say they are "very interested" in deepening their understanding of the Bible
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Forty percent of Americans say they are "somewhat interested" in deepening their understanding of the Bible
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- Only 14% of Americans report that they are currently a part of a Bible study group
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- When Americans were asked their favorite books of the Bible, eight books were mentioned by 2% or more of those interviewed -- Psalms is the most popular, named by 13%, followed by Genesis (9%), Matthew (7%), John (6%), Revelation (6%), Proverbs (3%), Job (2%), and Luke (2%)
-- The Gallup Organization, October 20, 2000.
- The percentage of Americans who are biblical literalists -- that is, believe the Bible is literally true, word for word -- has been gradually falling. Our most recent update on this measure finds that 30% of Americans adopt a literalist position on the Bible, while 52% say the Bible is inspired by God, but shouldn't be taken literally
-- The Gallup Organization, December 17, 2002.

- Fifteen percent of Americans say the Bible is an ancient book of fables.
– The Gallup Organization, December 17, 2002
- According to a 2000 Gallup Poll conducted for the American Bible Society (ABS), fully 93% of Americans say they own a Bible
– The Gallup Organization, June 18, 2002.
- According to a 2000 Gallup Poll conducted for the American Bible Society (ABS), the most popular version of the Bible is the King James Version (KJV), preferred by 41% of American Bible owners
-- The Gallup Organization, June 18, 2002.
- While more respondents to a 2000 Gallup Poll reported that the KJV is their preferred version of the Bible, it is not the best seller. The New International Version (NIV) accounts for 45% of sales at Christian book stores, and it's the best seller in every English-speaking country in the world
-- The Gallup Organization, June 18, 2002.
- According to a 2000 Gallup Poll conducted for the American Bible Society (ABS), 71% of Americans shopping for a Bible insist on footnotes, and 70% look for large type
-- The Gallup Organization, June 18, 2002
- American adults are more likely, at 34%, to be biblical literalists than are persons in many other nations -- only Filipinos (54%) and Poles (37%) are more likely to believe that the Bible is the literal word of God
-- The Gallup Organization, February 5, 2002
- Almost all Americans -- 93% -- own a Bible, usually the King James Version (KJV) (41%)
-- The Gallup Organization, February 5, 2002
- While most Americans (71%) either strongly or somewhat agree that biblical translations should "be closer to Greek and Hebrew texts," still, 61% think the Bible should be easier to read
-- The Gallup Organization, February 5, 2002.
- When asked, "Could the Bible be rewritten in modern English and still convey God's word?" 83% said yes, but 14% said no
-- The Gallup Organization, February 5, 2002.

- Thirty-eight percent of Americans believe the entire Bible was written several decades after Jesus' death and resurrection
-- Barna Research Group, "The Bible," (1994).
- In 2004 16% of all adults agreed somewhat that the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings compared with 19% in 2002 and 25% in 1991
– Barna Research Group, “The Bible” (2004).
- Twelve percent of born again Christians disagree that the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings
– Barna Research Group, “The Bible,” (2004)
- A majority of both women (66%) and men (53%) believe that the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings
– Barna Research Group, “The Bible,” (2004)
- Belief that the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings by generation: Mosaics 50%, Busters 54%, Boomers 60%, Elders 72%
-- Barna Research Group, “The Bible,” (2004)
- Sixty-eight percent of those who attended high school or less believe that the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings compared with 41% of those who have graduated from college
– Barna Research Group, “The Bible,” (2004).
- The Northeast (46%) and the West (39%) are more likely to disagree that the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings than the South (24%) and the Midwest (30%)
– Barna Research Group, “The Bible,” (2004).
- Blacks (81%) are the group most likely to believe that the Bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings compared with 58% of Hispanics and Whites and 47% of Asians
– Barna Research Group, “The Bible,” (2004).
- A strong majority of Republicans (72%) and Democrats (64%) believe that the bible is totally accurate in all of its teachings
– Barna Research Group, “The Bible.”(2004).
- Six out of ten adults (60%) believe the Bible is “totally accurate in all of its teachings.” However, less than half (44%) strongly agree with that notion
– Barna Research Group, March 19, 2004.