

American Bible Society

State of the Bible 2018: Bible Engagement Segmentation

Research conducted among U.S. adults
March 2018

*Research commissioned by
American Bible Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania*

*Research conducted by
Barna Group, Ventura, California*

Report Contents

Introduction 3

Data Analysis

1. Bible Engagement 6
2. Bible Impact..... 14
3. Bible Perceptions 17
4. Bible Literacy 22
5. Moral Decline 24
6. Hope and Fears..... 27

Appendix I | Data Tables

1. Bible Engagement 32
2. Bible Impact..... 38
3. Bible Perceptions 41
4. Bible Literacy 45
5. Moral Decline 49
6. Hope and Fears..... 51

Appendix II | About the Study

A. Methodology 52
B. Guide to Survey Data..... 54

Introduction

This report contains the findings from a nationwide study commissioned by American Bible Society and conducted by Barna Group. Two research methodologies were used for the study; one included 1,004 telephone interviews with adults 18 and older in the continental U.S., while the other was an online survey conducted with 1,036 adults using a nationally representative panel. A total of 2,040 interviews were conducted.

A subset of the questions was asked in the telephone survey, while all of the questions were included online. The use of two methodologies provides a larger sample size and ensures greater representation among all age groups, ethnicities and socioeconomic groups. The telephone interviews were conducted from January 4 to January 11, 2018, and the online surveys were conducted January 9 to January 18, 2018. The objectives of this research were to gauge:

- Bible engagement
- Bible impact
- perceptions of the Bible
- Bible penetration
- Bible literacy
- the Bible and technology
- moral perceptions and social impact
- fearfulness and hope for the future
- experiences with trauma
- charitable giving

This report contains key findings from the telephone and online interviews completed for this study. Following the Introduction is the Data Analysis section, which is a written explanation of the results that also includes an analysis of the data's implications. The Appendices contain data tables, a more detailed description of the research methodology and definitions of terminology used in this report. Copies of the questionnaire and more detailed, cross-tabulated data tables are provided separately.

Survey Definitions

Segmentation of the findings is as follows:

Bible Engagement (see next page)

Practicing Protestant, practicing Catholic: Practicing Christians are those who identify as either Protestant or Catholic, who attend a religious service at least once a month and who say their faith is very important in their lives.

Non-Practicing Christian: Self-identified Christians who are non-practicing as defined above

No faith/Other faith: Individuals who do not consider themselves Christian (including atheists, agnostics and other faiths); Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses are also included, even if they describe themselves as Christian.

Other definitions used in the survey include:

Bible User: Individuals who read, listen to or pray with the Bible on their own at least 3-4 times a year, outside of a church service or church event.

Unchurched: adults who have not attended a Christian church service in the past six months.

Generations:

Millennials: those currently ages 19 to 33

Gen X: those currently ages 34 to 52

Boomers: those currently ages 53 to 71

Elders: those currently ages 72 or older

Bible Engagement Definitions

In 2017, American Bible Society conducted additional research on the nature of interactions with and perspectives about the Bible. This study has been used in 2018 to develop an enhanced definition of Bible Engagement to encompass a more detailed, richer understanding of Bible engagement that demonstrates how consistent interaction with the Bible shapes people's choices and transforms their relationships with God, self and others. **Fourteen** questions are used to define the new segments. These questions are as follows:

1. Realistically, how often do you use the Bible?
2. How often do you use the Bible on your own, not including times when you are at a large church service or Mass.
3. When I use the Bible, I experience a sense of connection to God
4. When I use the Bible, I experience curiosity to know God better
5. When I use the Bible, I experience an awareness of how much I need God
6. As a result of using the Bible in the past month, I feel more willing to engage in my faith
7. As a result of using the Bible in the past month, I am more generous with my time, energy or financial resources
8. As a result of using the Bible in the past month, I show more loving behavior towards others
9. I believe that the Bible is a rulebook or guide on how to live my best life
10. I believe that the Bible is a letter from God expressing his love and salvation for me
11. I believe that the Bible is a way of knowing what God expects from me
12. The Bible has a lot of influence on what I buy
13. The Bible has a lot of influence on my decision on who to vote for
14. The Bible has a lot of influence on the movies and television I choose to watch

The 14 questions fall into categories that most influence the concept of scripture engagement: Frequency (how often people interact with the Bible), Centrality (how the Bible shapes their choices), and Impact (how the Bible transforms their relationships).

The resulting five Bible Engagement segments were developed using an algorithm cultivated from statistical modeling techniques, rather than an a priori segmentation, as done previously. An overall score across all 14 questions, incorporating the statistical influence of each on the concept of Bible Engagement, is generated. **Those highest on the engagement scale score highly on the combined factors of scripture engagement, while those who are disengaged score the lowest.**

Data Analysis

1. Bible Perceptions

Bible Engagement Profile

[Table 1.1, pages 32-33]

Bible Centered (9% of the population) More often than no, Bible Centered adults are married men from the Baby Boomer generation, are 51 years of age on average, attend church weekly, attend Protestant churches, and reside in the South. Most do not have children under 18 at home. Four out of five Bible Centered adults (80%) use the Bible *every day*, while the remainder read it several times a week (16%) or once a week (3%).

Bible Engaged (17% of the population) On average, Bible Engaged adults are 4 years younger than those who are Centered, at 47 years old. Like Bible Centered adults, Engaged are more likely to be married, attend a Protestant church, are weekly church attenders, and reside in the South. More women than men are in the Engaged category. Three in 10 Engaged adults (30%) use the Bible every day, and another 59% read it at least weekly.

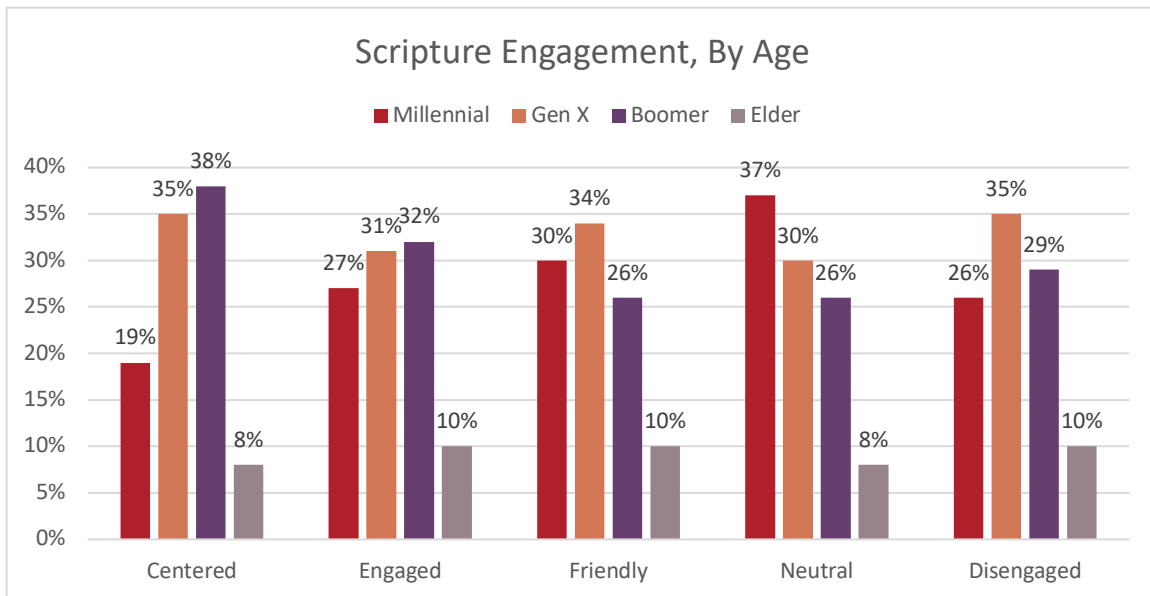
Bible Friendly (15% of adults) Adults in this category average 44 years of age. Men are just as likely as women to be in this group, and they are just as likely to be married as they are single. Half are non-practicing Christians, that is, they call themselves Christian but either do not attend church at least once a month or do not consider their faith very important. They are just as likely to attend a Catholic church as they are a Protestant church. Just under half (47%) attend church weekly. While only 8% use the Bible every day, just under half use it once a week (47%), compared to 21% who use it monthly, and 24% who use it at least once a year.

Bible Neutral (5% of adults) interact with the Bible sporadically. More than half (55%) use the Bible at least three or four times a year, 23% use it once a month, and the remaining 21% use it at least one a week or more. They are younger than other engagement segments, with an average age of 38 and more likely to be men than women. Two-thirds are not practicing Christians, and another one in six (16%) are non-Christians or are not affiliated with any faith group. While 42% attend church weekly, more than one-third are unchurched (38%).

Bible Disengaged (54% of the adult population): The largest segment of the population is

defined as Bible Disengaged. Those in the Bible Disengaged category do not necessarily have hostile or negative feelings toward the Bible, but may simply be indifferent. A majority of the Bible Disengaged do not interact with the Bible at all. 91% use the Bible on their own once or twice a year or less. The Disengaged are primarily classified by their infrequent interaction with the Bible and its minimal impact on their lives.

The average age is on par with Bible Engaged adults at 46. Bible Disengaged are more likely to be Gen X, unmarried, without children under 18 at home, and reside in the suburbs. They are roughly split between non-practicing Christians (46%) and non-Christians (48%); few are practicing Christians (6%). They are largely unchurched (73%), and a small 10% report using the Bible at least three to four times a year. Three in five (60%) say they never engage with the Bible on their own, while 22% use it less than once a year.



Please note that many of the questions in this section were asked only of the “Bible users” segment. “Bible users” are those who report reading, listening to or praying with the Bible on their own at least three to four times a year.

Bible Users

[Tables 1.2 and 1.3, page 34]

One-half of Americans are ‘Bible users’ – that is, they engage with the Bible on their own by using, listening to, watching, praying or using Bible text or content in any format (*not* including use at a church service) at least three to four times a year (48%). Bible use has remained relatively consistent since 2011.

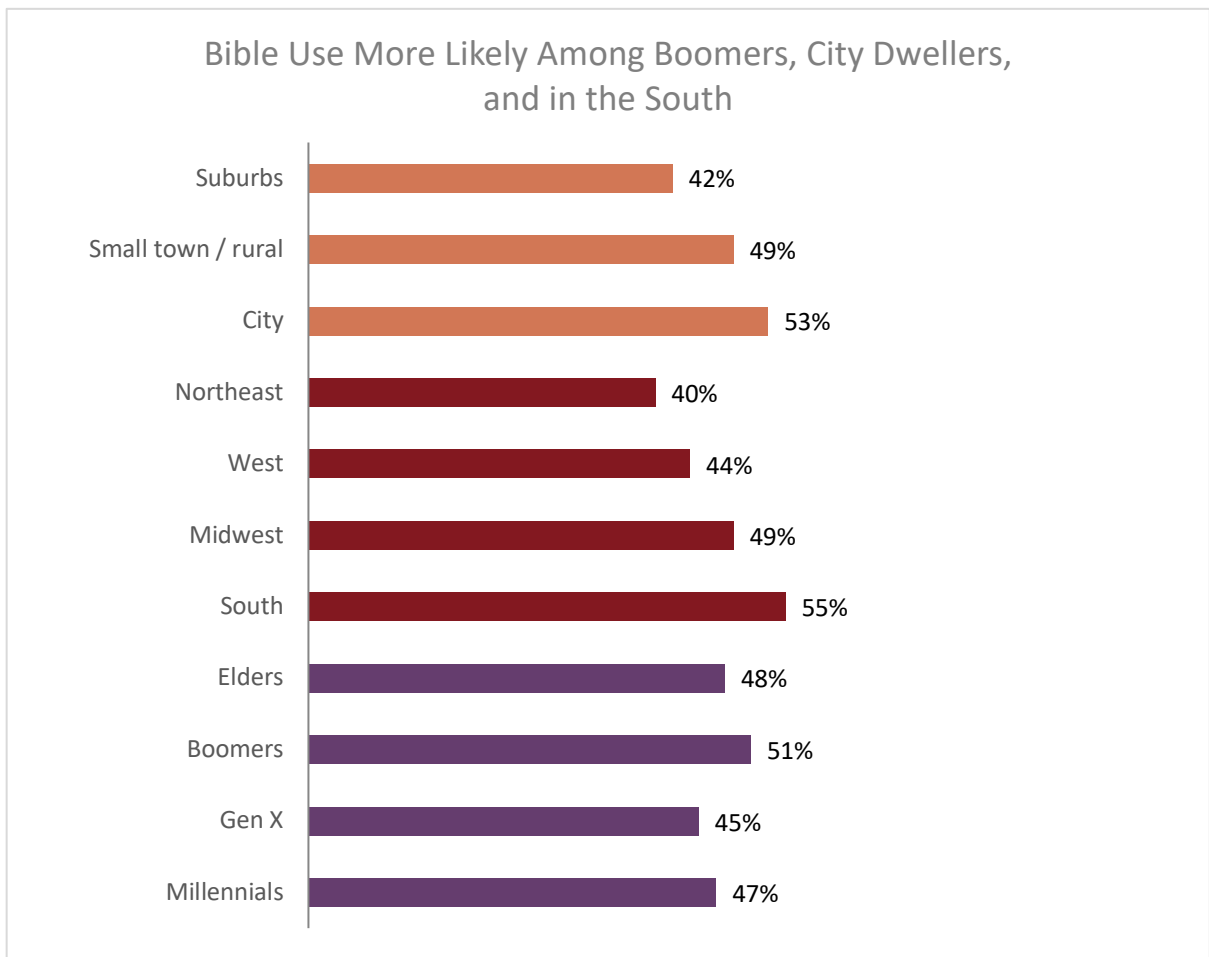
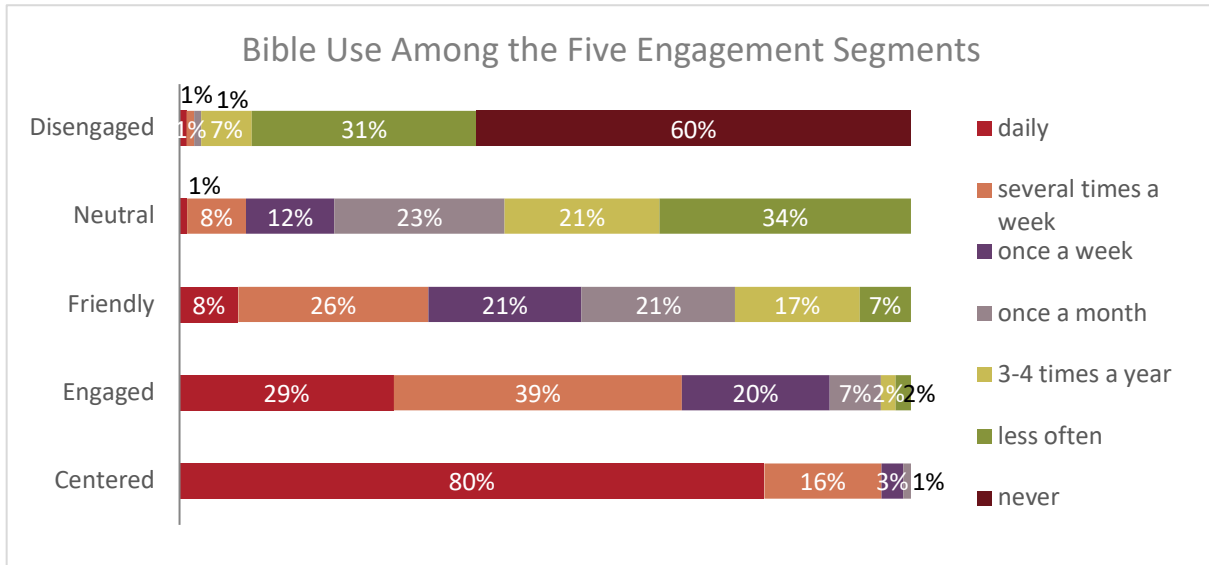
Adults who use the Bible daily account for 14% of the total adult population, followed by 13% who use it several times a week, 8% who do so once a week, 6% about once a month, and 8% who use it three to four times a year. Millennials, Gen X and Elders are less likely to use the Bible than Boomers.

Four out of five Bible Centered adults use the Bible daily, while another 18% use it at least weekly. Three in ten (29%) Bible Engaged use the Bible daily, and another 59% use it at least weekly.

Nearly one-third of adults say they never use, listen to or pray with the Bible (32%). One in eight adults (12%) uses the Bible less than once a year and 8% engage with it once or twice a year. Disengaged readers are most likely to say they never use the Bible (60%) or use it less than once a year (22%).

City dwellers (53%) and small town or rural (49%) residents report higher use of the Bible than do adults who reside in the suburbs (42%). Above-average use can also be found among residents of the South, married adults and households with children under 18.

To determine total exposure to the Bible, adults were asked how often they *realistically* use the Bible. A nearly identical number (57%) of adults say they use the Bible at least three or four times a year.



To determine total exposure to the Bible, adults were asked how often they *realistically* use the Bible. Half of adults (50%) say they use the Bible – in any setting - at least three or four times a year. This is nearly identical to the proportion of adults who use the Bible that frequently on their own (49%).

The Bible is a Necessity in Daily Life

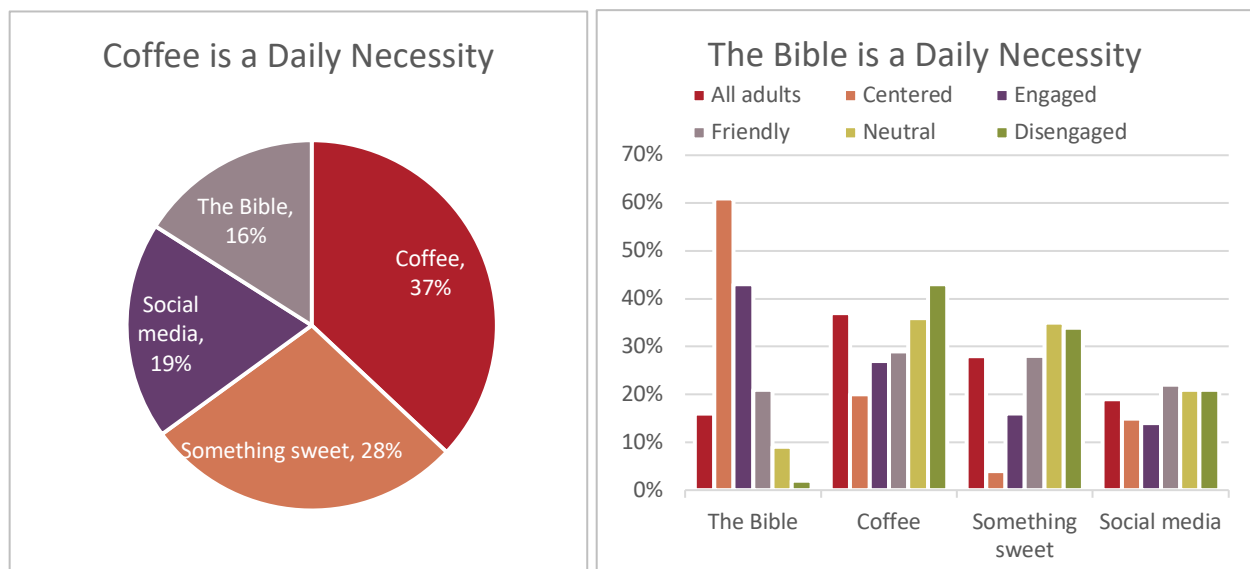
[Table 1.4, page 35]

Out of four possible choices – coffee, something sweet, social media and the Bible – adults were asked to choose which they consider a daily necessity. More than one-third (37%) chose coffee as fundamental to their day. Another 28% say something sweet is essential, while one in six adults (16%) say the Bible is a must. A similar number said social media (19%).

Elders and Boomers are more likely to say that coffee is something they must have during the day (46% and 47%), compared to 32% of Millennials and 30% of Gen X.

Segments more likely to choose the Bible are married adults, college graduates, households with children under 18 and residents of the South.

Bible Centered adults are the only segment in which a majority insist on the Bible as a daily necessity at 61%. Bible Engaged adults prefer the Bible over the other three choices offered, but to a lesser extent at 43%. One in five who are Bible Friendly prefer the Bible over coffee, sweets and social media (21%).



Level of Bible Use and Desire for Use

[Tables 1.5 and 1.6, pages 35-36]

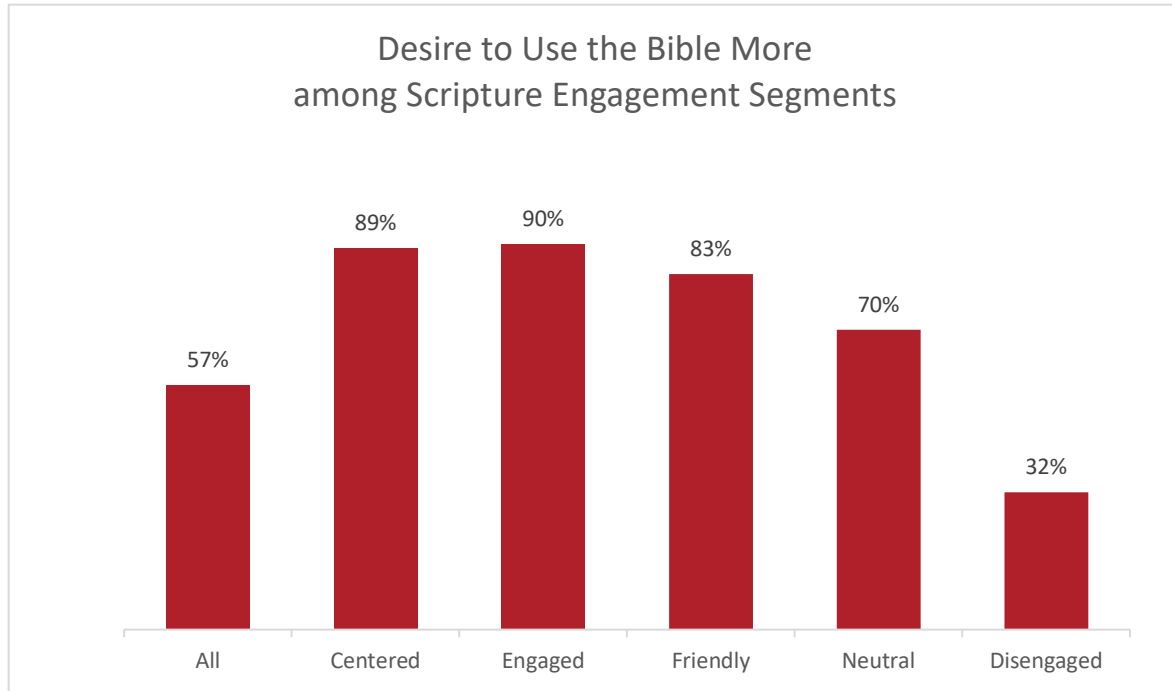
More than half of all adults wish they used the Bible more often (57%), which is on par with 2017 (58%). The vast majority of Centered (89%), Engaged (90%), Friendly (83%) and most Neutral (70%) also have an appetite for greater time with the Bible. One in three (32%) Disengaged adults are interested in greater time with the Bible, compared to more than three out of five (63%) who are *not* interested in using the Bible more.

Residents the South (64%), who are also more apt to use the Bible, are more inclined to express a desire to use it more frequently than those in the Northeast (49%), the West (53%), or the Midwest (58%).

Despite most Americans' desire to use the Bible more, two-thirds of them (65%) say their level of Bible use is about the same as it was one year ago, which is on par with 2017. One in five (21%) report an increase in Bible use this year compared to one in eight (12%) who believe their use is down this year compared to a year ago.

Whether or not Bible usage has increased in the past year correlates with the level of Bible Engagement. Centered adults are most likely to report an increase in their own personal use of the Bible (61%) compared to Engaged adults (44%). The less engaged segments – Disengaged (77%), Neutral (61%) and Friendly (63%) are more likely to report that their level of engagement is the same as it was one year ago.

Weekly church attenders are more likely than average to report an *increase* in Bible interaction over the past year. Millennials and Gen X are more likely to report a *decrease* than are older generations who are more likely to report their Bible use stayed the same.



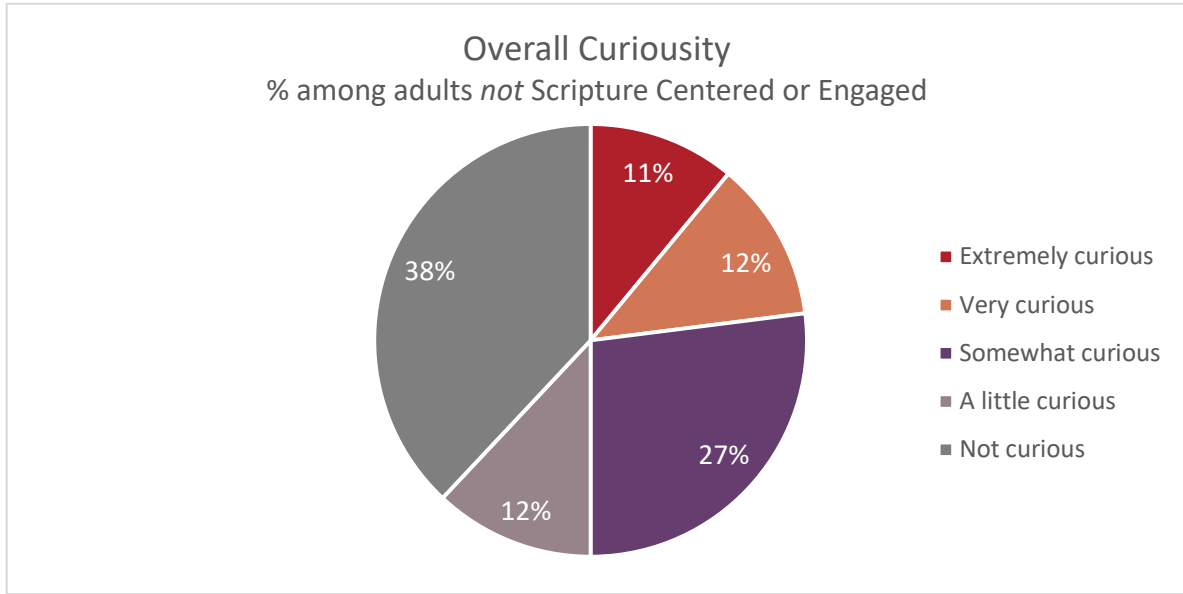
Bible Curiosity

[Table 1.7, page 37]

Two-thirds of Americans (66%) expressed at least some curiosity to know more about what the Bible says, including one in three (29%) who express a strong desire. A similar number of adults (63%) also are interested in knowing more about who Jesus Christ is, including 31% who agree strongly.

As expected, those who are most engaged with the Bible have a greater curiosity to know more about the Bible and about Jesus. The majority of Bible Centered (73%) and Bible Engaged (68%) express a strong desire to know more about the Bible. These two engaged groups are also more likely to express a desire to learn more about who Jesus is (81% among Centered, 73% among Engaged). Curiosity drops off substantially for those who are Friendly (42% Bible, 39% Jesus), Neutral (17% Bible, 25% Jesus) and Disengaged (10% and 13% respectively).

Curiosity is most common among weekly church attenders, adults who have never been to college, and adults with minor children at home. Elders, households without children under 18, residents of the Northeast and unchurched adults are less likely than average to express a curiosity for Scripture. It is those who are already familiar with, and open to using, the Bible and those who are already in the church pews that are the most movable.



Extremely curious is defined as strong curiosity (agree strongly) to both the Bible and Jesus
Very curious is a strong curiosity for one or the other
Somewhat curious is moderate curiosity (agree somewhat) to both the Bible and Jesus
A little curious is moderate curiosity for one or the other
Not curious are all those who disagree with these two statements.

2. Bible Impact

Bible Impact on Thoughts and Behaviors

[Tables 2.1 and 2.2, pages 38-39]

Adults who have used the Bible in the past month were asked a series of statements about how the Bible has influenced their thoughts and behavior to determine what impact, if any, the Bible has on behavior.

More than half of monthly Bible users believe strongly, either *very* strongly or strongly, that the Bible has resulted in their willingness to engage in their faith more (56%) and to show more loving behavior towards others (54%). One in three adults expresses moderate agreement with these two statements, while only one in twenty say they do not believe the Bible has influenced them in this way.

Two out of five Bible users (42%) say they are more generous with their time, energy or financial resources. One in three (29%) agree moderately.

Bible Centered adults are most likely to express the highest level of agreement when it comes to the Bible's influence on the generosity, love for others and a greater desire to engage in their faith. Adults who are Bible Engaged are also more likely than those who are less engaged to agree with each of these statements, yet their agreement with these statements is two to four times below that of Bible Centered.

Those who have used the Bible at least three to four times in the past year were also asked a group of questions to determine how the Bible impacts their relationship with God.

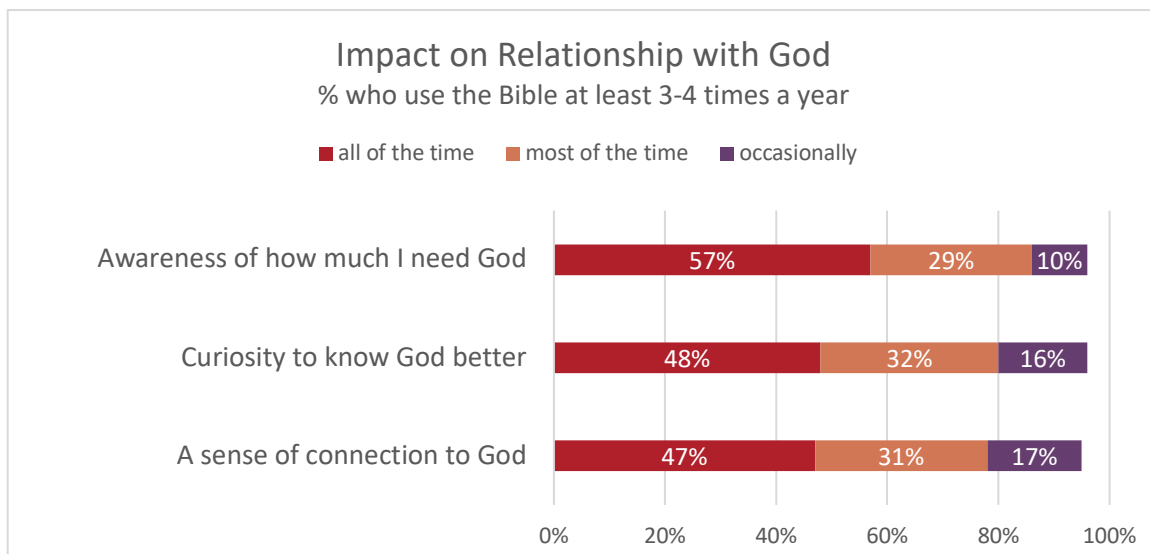
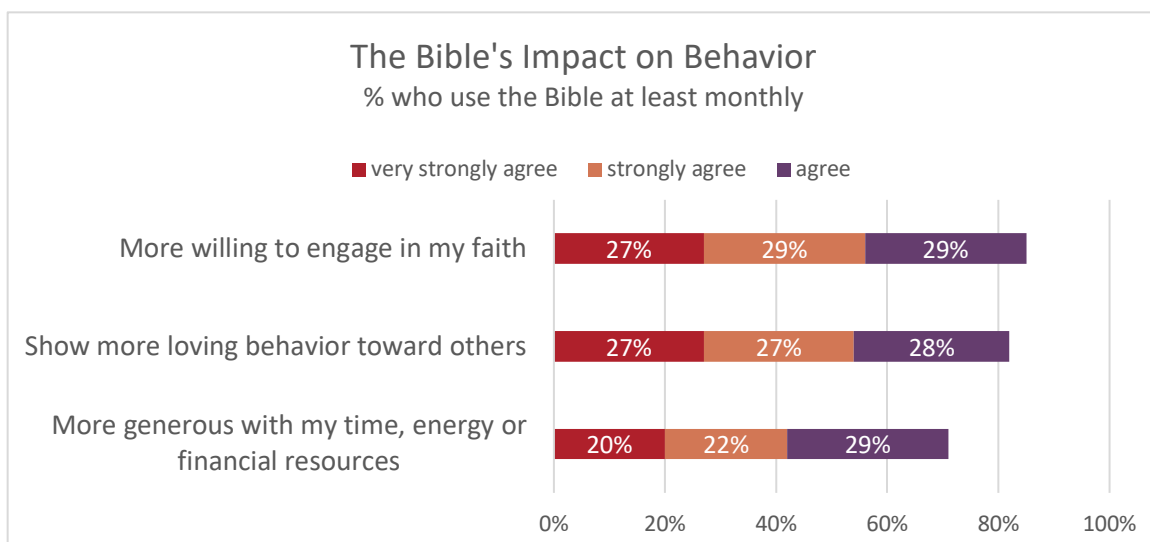
More than half of Bible users contend that when they use the Bible, they have a greater awareness of how much they need God, with 57% saying this realization happens all of the time, compared to one in three (29%) who say this happens most of the time. One in ten (10%) feel this desire occasionally, while 4% say they rarely or never experience this. Boomers and Elders are more likely to realize their need for God all of the time than are Millennials and Gen X.

Slightly less than half of Bible users experience a curiosity to know God better all of the time (48%), compared to one in three (32%) who feel this most of the time, and 16% who encounter it occasionally.

A similar 47% of Bible users consistently experience a sense of connection with God, and 31% experience this most of the time. One in six (17%) feels this occasionally. Women experience more of a link to God when they use the Bible; 46% experience this all of the time compared to 39% of men. Boomers (50%) experience this kinship all of the time compared to 43% of Gen X, 40% of Elders and 35% of Millennials.

While two in five (39%) in the Bible Friendly category report a greater awareness of their need for God, they are less likely to sense a connection with Him or desire to know

Him better (31% and 30%, respectively). This is also true among residents of the South, not surprising given their propensity for greater Bible engagement. Surprisingly, Bible users who are in the Disengaged category are more likely than those who are Neutral to say they experience each of these all of the time.



The Bible's Message

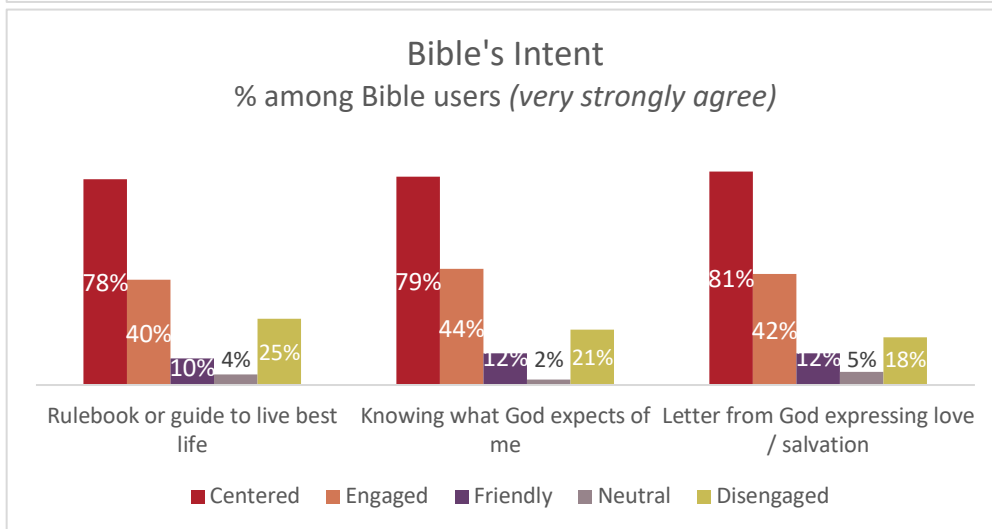
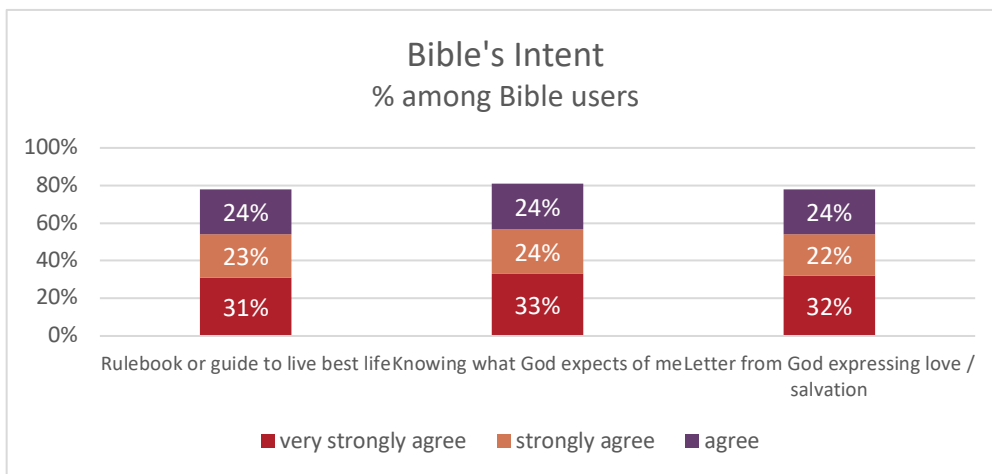
[Table 2.3, page 40]

When asked a series of questions about the Bible's intent, most Bible users see it as a letter from God expressing his love and salvation for them, a way to know what God

expects from them, and a rulebook or guide on how to live their best life. More than one-third of Bible users express very strong agreement (34%-36%) with each of these statements, while one in four assert strong agreement (24%-26%), and another one in four claim moderate agreement (23%-25%). Approximately one in six Bible users have some doubts about the Bible's intent (15%-16% somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or disagree).

Approximately four out of five Bible Centered adults (78-81%) express the highest level of agreement with each of the three statements, while half as many Bible Engaged adults agree very strongly (40-44%).

Bible users who are Disengaged are somewhat more likely to express very strong agreement, though still relatively minor, with each of the statements compared to those who are Friendly and Neutral. Disengaged Bible users are also most likely to disagree with each statement, which could indicate that the Disengaged category includes two types of people: those who have never engaged with scripture and those who once did but no longer do so. Neutral respondents rank lowest among those who very strongly agree with each statement.



3. Bible Perceptions

Sacred Literature

[Table 3.1, page 42]

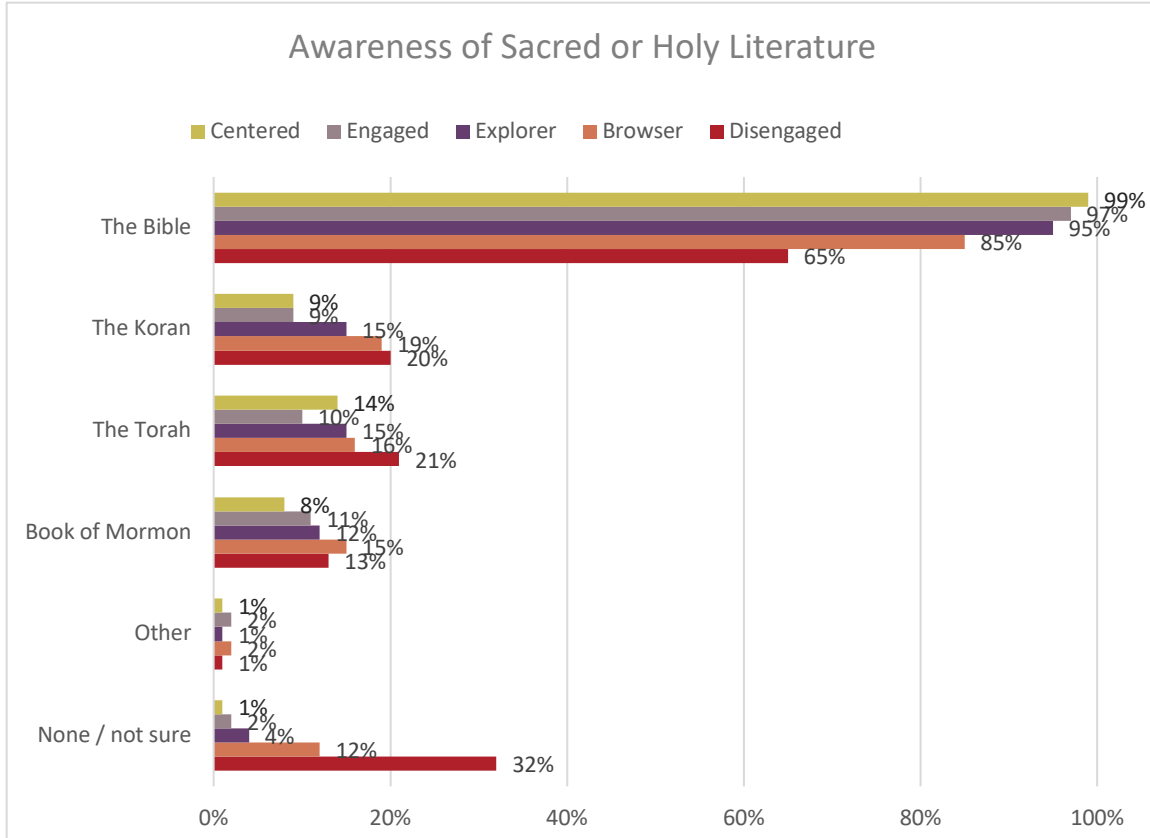
As in previous years, Americans overwhelmingly name the Bible as literature they consider sacred or holy. However, this year, awareness of the Bible (79%) is down slightly from 82% in 2017. While awareness is nearly universal among Bible Centered (99%), Engaged (97%), and Friendly (95%), it dips to 85% among Neutral and 65% among Disengaged.

Less than one in five mention the Torah (17%), the Koran (16%) and the Book of Mormon (12%). Awareness of the Koran and the Torah has decreased in 2018, yet awareness of these non-Christian texts has grown since tracking began. Bible Disengaged tend to have the highest recall of the Torah and the Koran, compared to those in other engagement segments. Awareness of the Book of Mormon is the same across the board.

The number of adults who say that none of the four texts are sacred or holy is also on the rise at 18%, a statistically significant rise from the previous year (13%). Two percent of adults said they did not know the names of any sacred text. The Neutral (12%) are more likely to say none are holy or sacred. This number rises to 30% among the Disengaged.

The percentage of adults who agree strongly that the Bible, the Koran, and the book of Mormon are all different expressions of the same spiritual truths has remained statistically unchanged since 2011 at 18%. Nearly two in five adults (39%) agree somewhat with this statement. The more engaged a person is in the scripture, the more he or she is to reject this idea.

Age plays a significant role in the belief that all sacred literature expresses the same spiritual truths. Millennials are more likely to agree strongly with this statement (23%), compared to 19% of Gen X, 14% of Boomers and 8% of Elders. Practicing Catholics (30%) are also more likely to agree, even more so than non-practicing Christians (16%) and those of other or no faith (18%).



Beliefs about the Bible

[Table 3.2, page 42]

When it comes to beliefs about the Bible, 42% of adults agree strongly that the Bible contains everything a person needs to know to live a meaningful life. Down slightly from 2017 (44%), this continues the downward trend from its high at 53% in 2011.

The vast majority of Bible Centered (89%) and Engaged (80%) believe this to be true, while about half of those who are Friendly do (54%). Agreement drops sharply among adults classified as Neutral (31%) and Disengaged (19%).

Strong agreement with this statement is most common among Boomers (47%), compared to 42% of Gen X, 37% of Elders, and 34% of Millennials. Other segments with above average agreement include, practicing Protestants, weekly church attenders, residents of the South, African-Americans, and households earning less than \$50K annually.

The Bible's Role in U.S. Society

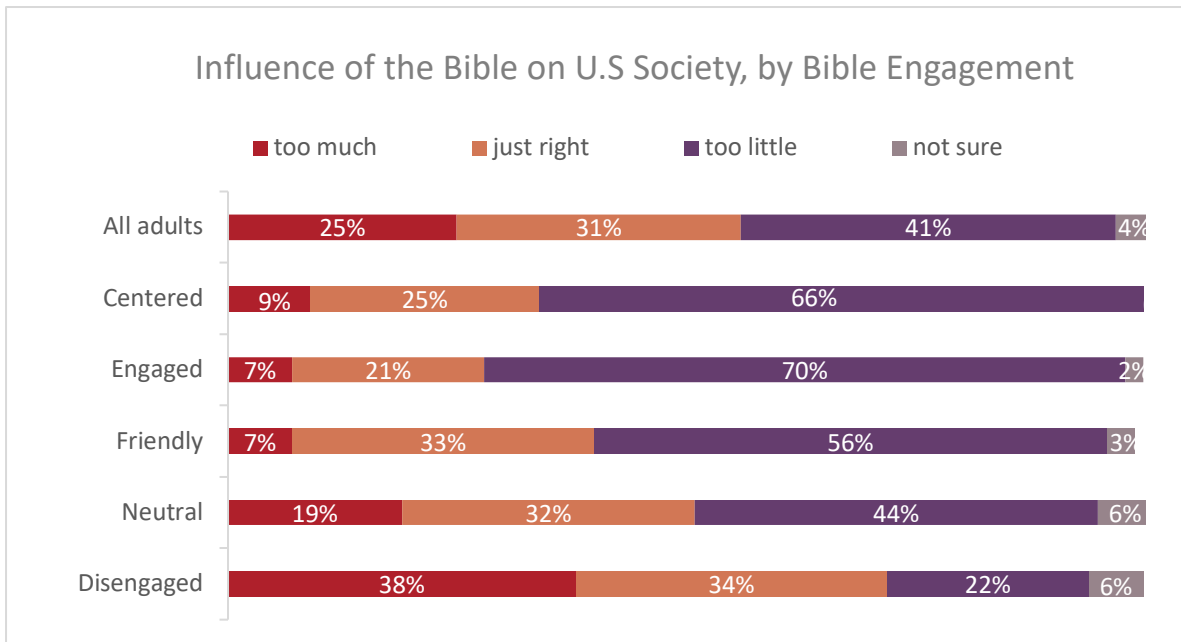
[Table 3.3, page 43]

The percent of adults who believe the Bible has too little influence in U.S. society today stands at 41%, a seven-percentage point decline from the previous year. More adults in 2018 than the previous believe it has the right amount of influence (31%, compared to 27% in 2017). Additionally, one in four adults (25%) now believe the Bible has too much influence, nearly double those who felt it was too influential in 2011 (13%).

Boomers (49%) are the most likely generation to believe the Bible has too *little* influence. One-third of Millennials (33%) believe the Bible has too *much* influence on society today. More than one in four Gen X adults (28%) also believe it has too much influence. Elders are the most likely generation to believe the Bible has just the right amount of influence (41%).

A majority of practicing Protestants (75%) and Catholics (52%) feel the Bible has too little influence, compared to 40% of Christians without a practicing faith. The amount of influence Americans are comfortable with also correlates with Bible engagement. Two out of three Centered adults (66%) and a similar proportion of Engaged (70%) believe the Bible has too *little* influence compared with 56% of those who are Friendly and 44% of Neutral.

Disengaged adults are most likely to feel the Bible has too *much* influence (38%), or just the right amount of influence (34%). A similar one-third of Neutral and Friendly also feel the Bible has just the right amount of influence in U.S. Society.



The Bible as the Moral Fabric of Our Country

[Table 3.4, page 43]

Despite the notion that our country was founded on Christian values, today a slight majority (56%) believe the U.S. Constitution itself is more important for the moral fabric of our country. Slightly less than half (44%) believe the Bible is more important. This is truer among those who hold a high view of scripture. Bible Centered (80%) and Engaged (82%) and those who are Bible Friendly (70%) are more likely to believe the Bible is more important, morally, than Neutral (40%) and Disengaged adults (24%).

Again, age is directly correlated with the belief that the Bible is the moral fabric of the country. Nearly two-thirds of Millennials (64%) believe the Constitution is the moral fabric of our country. While Gen X are also more likely to believe the Constitution is the moral fabric of our country (54%), Boomers and Elders are evenly divided between the two texts.

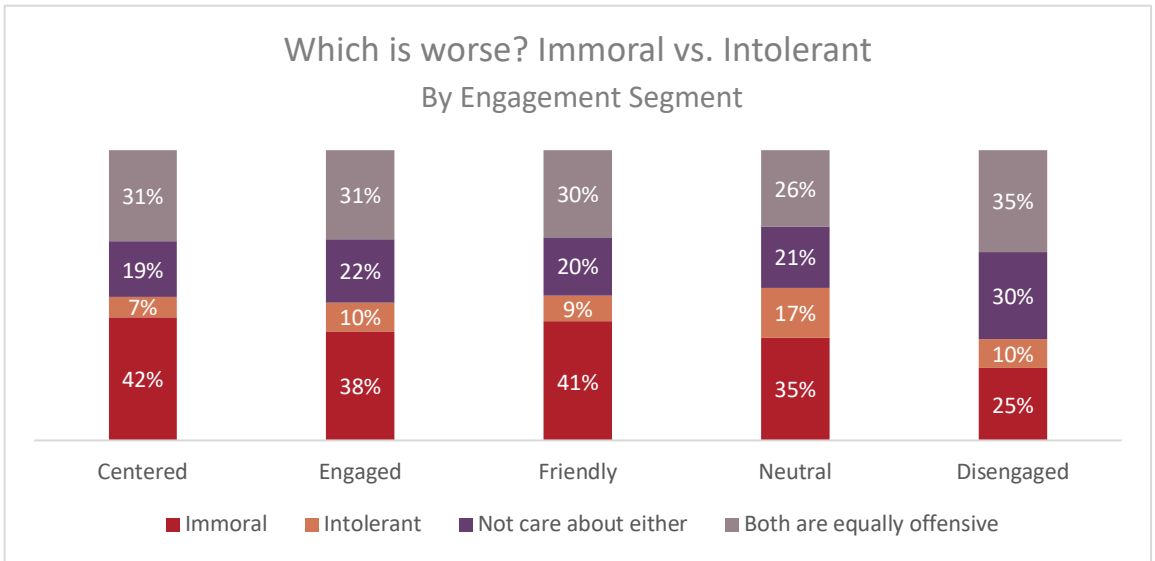
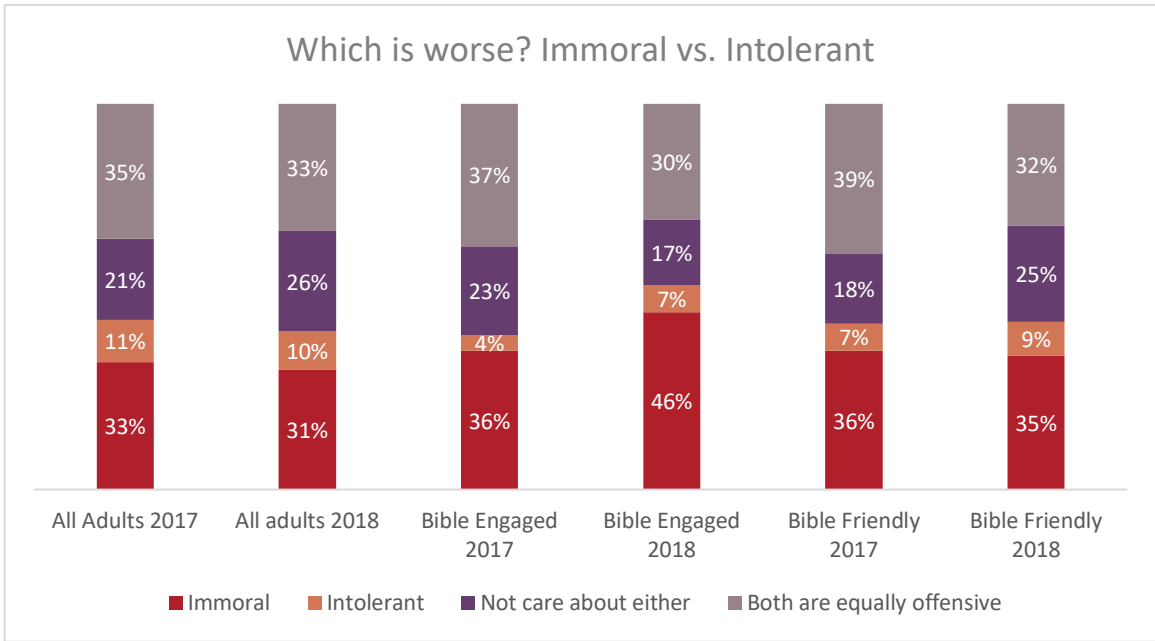
Which is Worse: Being Called Immoral or Intolerant?

[Table 3.5, page 44]

When asked if it would be more offensive to be called immoral or intolerant, three in ten adults (31%) say that being called “immoral” is the most offensive, while one in ten (10%) feel that being called “intolerant” is more offensive. One-third of adults (33%) feel that both terms are equally offensive. One in four (26%) asserts that they would not care about being called either, which is a statistically significant increase over 2017 (21%).

Millennials are the most likely generation take offense to being called intolerant (18%), unsurprisingly, given the politically correct environment in which many were raised. Gen X is more likely to be offended by being called immoral, at 36%. Elders (47%) and Boomers (40%) are more likely to find both terms equally offensive.

When it comes to Bible engagement, Disengaged adults are least bothered by being called immoral (25%). The Disengaged are also more likely than other segments to say they would not care about being called either. There are no statistical differences between the remaining Bible engagement segments.



4. Bible Literacy

Bible as Literal or Inspired Word of God

[Tables 4.1 and 4.2, pages 45-48]

Presented with five different descriptions of the Bible, more adults believe the Bible is *inspired* (with some symbolism) than *literal*. Most commonly, Americans believe the Bible is the inspired word of God and has no errors, though some verses are meant to be symbolic (32%). The view that the Bible is *inspired* rather than literal is down by three-percentage points this year.

One in five believe it to be the actual word of God and should be taken literally, word for word (22%), and one in six says it is the inspired word of God but has some factual or historical errors (16%). One in ten believe it is not inspired but rather tells how writers understood the ways and principles of God (10%), and an additional 20% say it is just another book of teachings written by men that contains stories and advice.

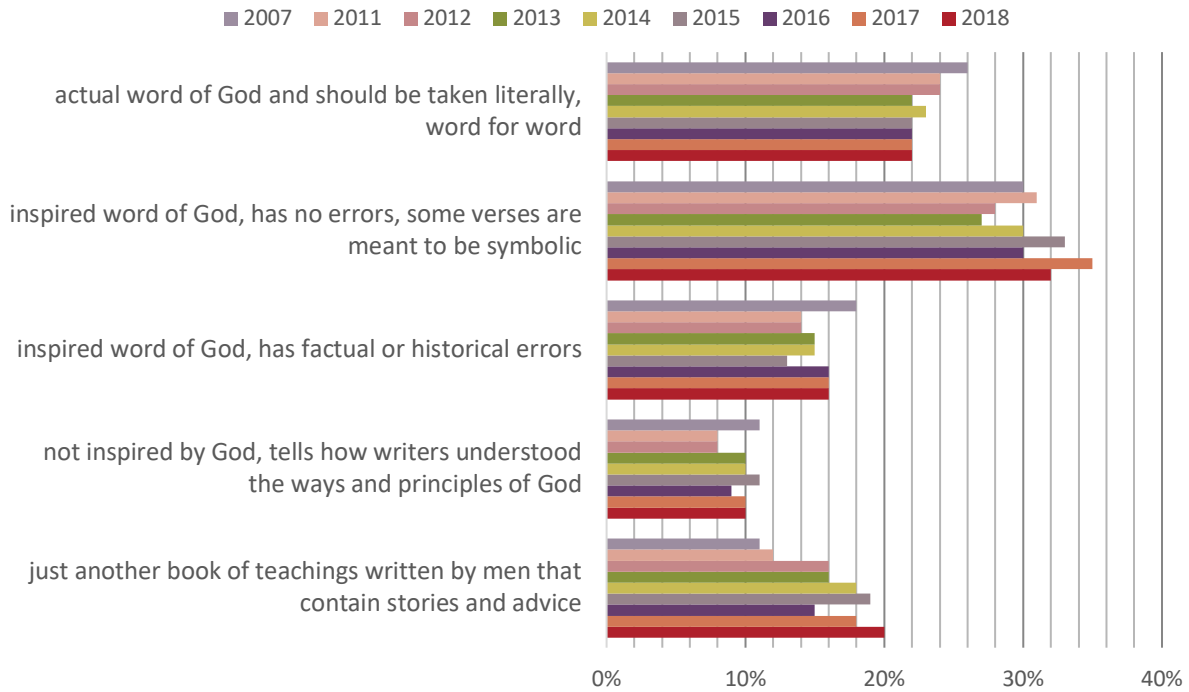
The more educated a person is, the more he or she is likely to believe it is just another book of teachings and less likely than average to believe it is the actual word of God to be taken literally. Among those who attended high school but did not go on to college, 26% believe the Bible is the *literal* word of God, compared to those who have attended college or graduated from college (18% each). In contrast, 22% of college graduates believe the Bible is just another book of teachings, compared to 16% of high school graduates and 20% of those who attended but did not graduate from college. College graduates are also more likely to believe the Bible was not inspired but tells how the writers understood the ways and principles of God.

Isolating just the Bible Engaged groups, Centered adults are split between actual versus literal (with some symbolism) compared to Bible Engaged adults, who are much more likely to view the Bible as symbolic (46%) rather than literal (37%). Among the Friendly, those who believe the Bible is literal slips to 30%, and half as many (15%) among the Neutral. Only 11% of Disengaged adults believe the Bible is the actual, literal word of God. More than one third of the Disengaged believe the Bible is just another book of teachings written by men with stories and advice.

Adults who claim that the Bible is just another book of teachings were asked a follow-up question to determine if they are skeptical about the Bible or if they have a more opposing perspective. A plurality of Disengaged adults, who represent 95% of those believe the Bible is just another book of advice, believe either strongly (44%) or somewhat (43%) that the Bible was written to control or manipulate others. Just 22% of Disengaged adults believe it was *not* written to control others. Elders are most likely to *disagree* that the Bible was written to be manipulative, then are other generations.

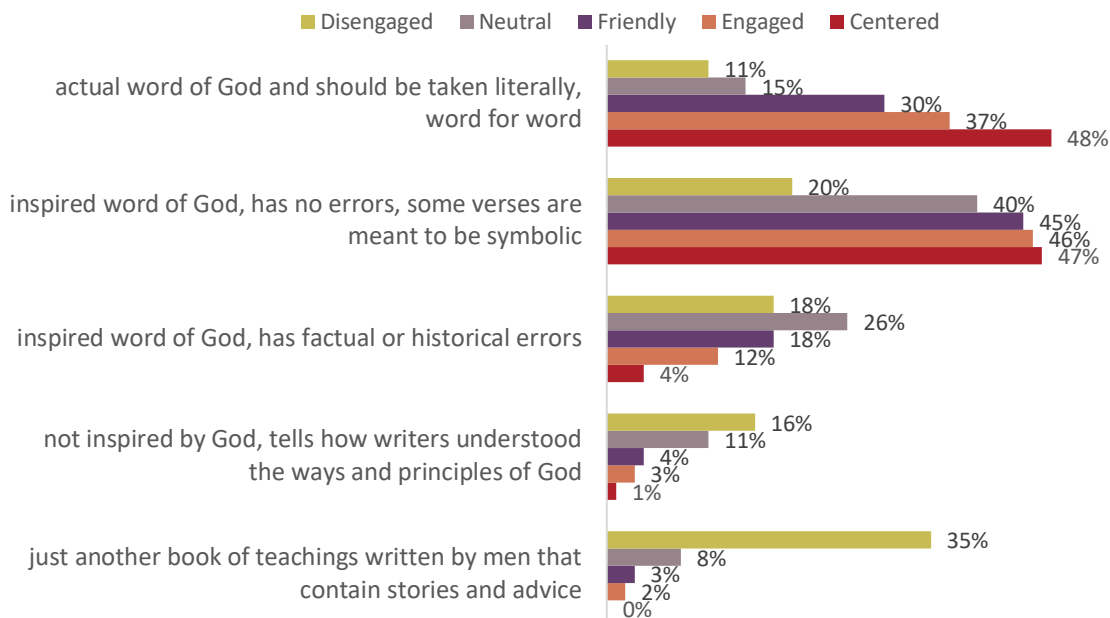
Beliefs about the Bible as the Literal or Inspired Word of God, 2007-2018

% among all adults



Beliefs about the Bible as the Literal or Inspired Word of God

% among all adults



Influence of the Bible

[Table 4.3, page 46]

The majority of Americans don't believe the Bible has much influence on social issues, the decisions they make about money, politics, or what they choose to watch on television or at the movies. Out of seven issues presented, people's perspective on abortion is most commonly influenced by the Bible, with 24% who believe it has a strong (very strongly agree or strongly agree) influence on their views. Influence over what they buy has the least amount of influence (67% disagree).

Roughly one out of four say the Bible has strong influence on their support for Israel and the city of Jerusalem (21%), and their views on LGBT issues (20%). Fewer than one in six adults strongly agree that the Bible has a strong influence on the movies or television they watch (15%), their support for refugees and people displaced by wars and conflicts (15%), what they buy (12%) and their support for wars our country fights (12%).

The less engaged a person is in Scripture, the more likely he or she is to disagree with each of the statements presented. Practicing Protestants are also more likely than practicing Catholics to believe the Bible has at least some influence in their lives when it comes to their views on LGBT issues, while practicing Catholics are more likely to feel that the Bible influences their support for wars our country fights.

5. Moral Decline

Belief that Morality Is on the Decline

[Table 5.1, page 49]

Four out of five adults (79%) believe the morals and values of America are declining, which is on par with the previous year.

Even though the majority of younger generations and adults who have little to no interaction with the Bible believe morality is declining, they are less likely to see this as a problem. Three-quarters of Millennials (74%) believe morality is declining compared to 78% of Gen X, 85% of Boomers, and 79% of Elders. Women (82%) are more likely than men (75%) to see morality declining. African-Americans (83%) and Whites (80%) are more concerned about the decline than are Hispanics and Asians (74% and 73%). Additionally, adults in the Midwest (85%) are more apt to agree that morality is declining compared to those in the South (79%), Northwest (78%) or West (72%).

While the majority of adults in all Bible Engaged segments agree that morality is on the decline (85%-89%), Disengaged adults are less likely than other segments to agree with this (71%).

Cause of Moral Decline

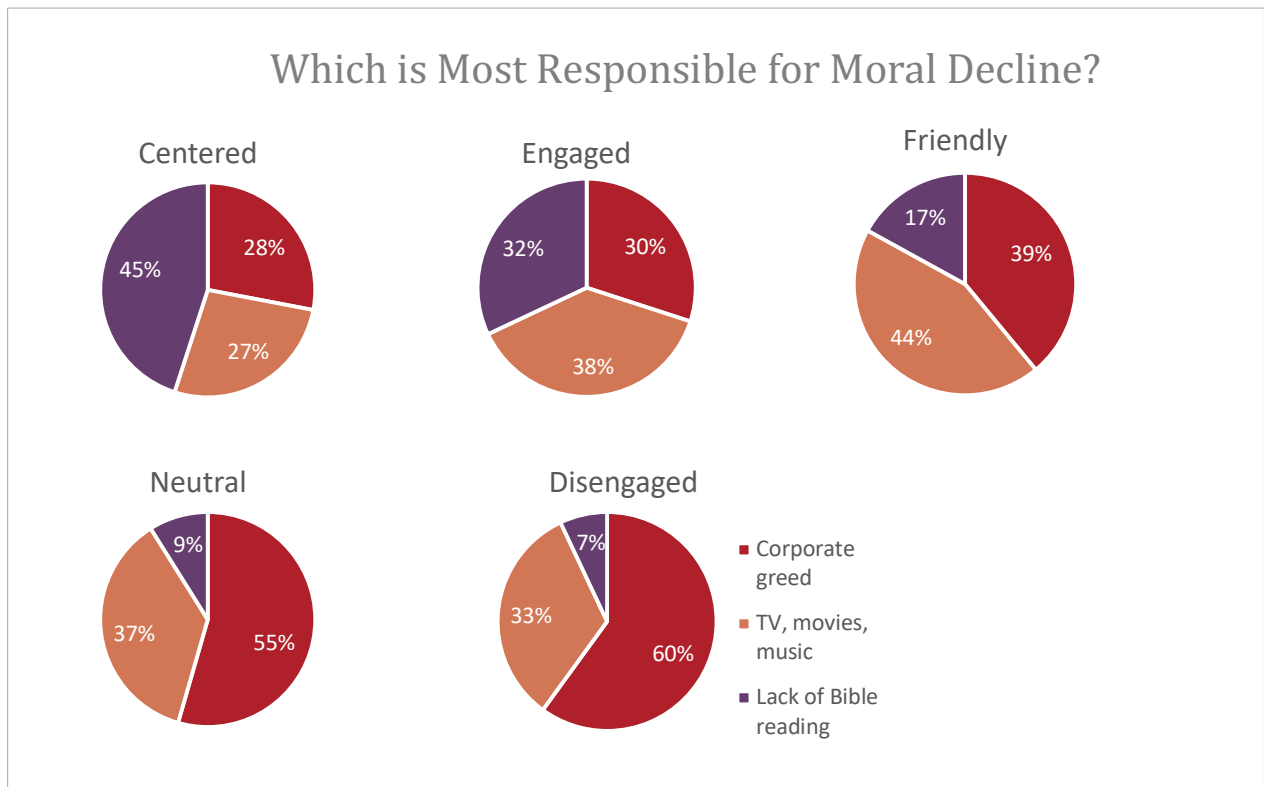
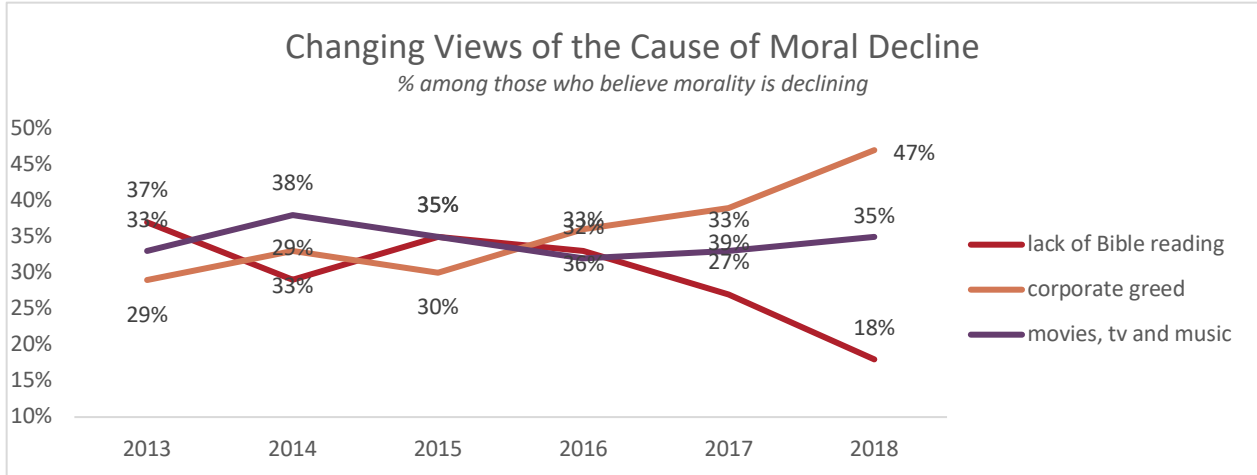
[Table 5.2, page 49]

When presented with a list of three possible causes for moral decline, nearly half of adults believe that corruption from corporate greed is the culprit (47%), a significant increase over the previous year (39%). The negative influence of movies, television and music was chosen as the cause by 35% of adults. Less than one in five (18%) believe the decline is a result of a lack of Bible reading, which is nine percentage points below 2017. In just five years, a lack of Bible reading, which was tied with corporate greed as the primary cause of declining morality, is now seen as the least common cause, dropping by more than half from 37% in 2013 to its current 18%.

Bible Centered adults are the only segment more likely to believe morality is caused by a lack of Bible reading (45%). Engaged adults are more likely to blame corruption from television, movies and music (38%), with 32% placing the blame with a lack of Bible reading. The Bible Friendly are evenly split between attributing decline to the corruption of corporate greed and television, movies and music.

Those with less confidence in the Bible are more likely to view corruption from corporate greed as the cause of moral decline. More than half of the Neutral (55%) and Disengaged (60%) fault corporate greed.

Practicing Protestants are also more likely than practicing Catholics to believe the decline in morality is impacted by lack of Bible reading (41% vs. 18%). Millennials are more likely to place the responsibility with corporate greed (61%), and to a lesser extent, so are Gen X (50%). Elders are more likely to attribute the deterioration of morality to the negative influence of movies, television and music (53%), while Boomers are split between corporate greed and movies and television (38% vs. 39%).



Influence of Church vs. Business Leaders on Morality

[Table 5.3, page 50]

Americans are more likely to listen to the opinions of church leaders who speak out on a moral issue than they are business leaders, three-to-one (37% vs. 12%). Yet the large number of adults who say they are not likely to listen to either (31%) or say they are unsure (20%) indicates a lack of confidence in both leader types.

While seven in ten Bible Centered and Engaged (70% each) and 63% of those who are Friendly toward the Bible (63%) put more stock into the opinions of church leaders than business leaders on moral issues, the Neutral (32%) and Disengaged (44%) are more inclined to disregard both.

Practicing Protestants are more likely than practicing Catholics to trust church leaders (75% vs. 60%). Millennials (21%) are more likely to listen to a business leader than other generations, yet there are no statistical differences by generation when it comes to their willingness to welcome the opinions of church leaders.

6. Hope and Fear

Fear Today and Hope for the Future

[Tables 6.1 and 6.2, page 51]

Looking back to five years ago, 42% of Americans say they are more fearful today than they were in the past. An equal proportion of adults say they are not more fearful today, while the remaining 16% report experiencing the same level of fear as they had five years ago.

Age seems to play a factor in whether or not a person experiences more fear today than in the past, with Millennials reporting more fear today (49%) than other generations. Elders are the least fearful compared to five years ago: just one in three (34%) reveal a greater fear today. More women than men sense a greater fear today (47% vs. 38%).

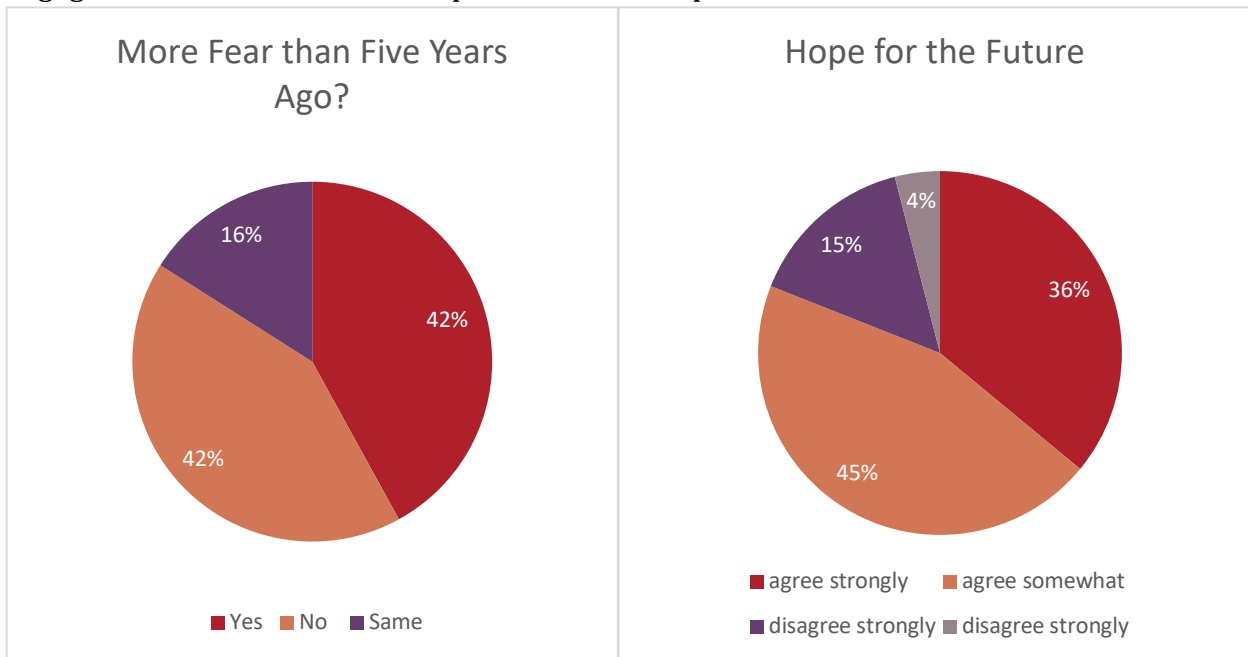
Bible engagement also seems to play a role in how fearful people are today compared to five years ago. One half of Neutral (51%) and a similar number of Disengaged (44%) report a greater fear today than do Bible Centered (33%), Engaged (41%) or Friendly (38%). Practicing Catholics (45%) also express a greater fear today than do practicing Protestants (29%).

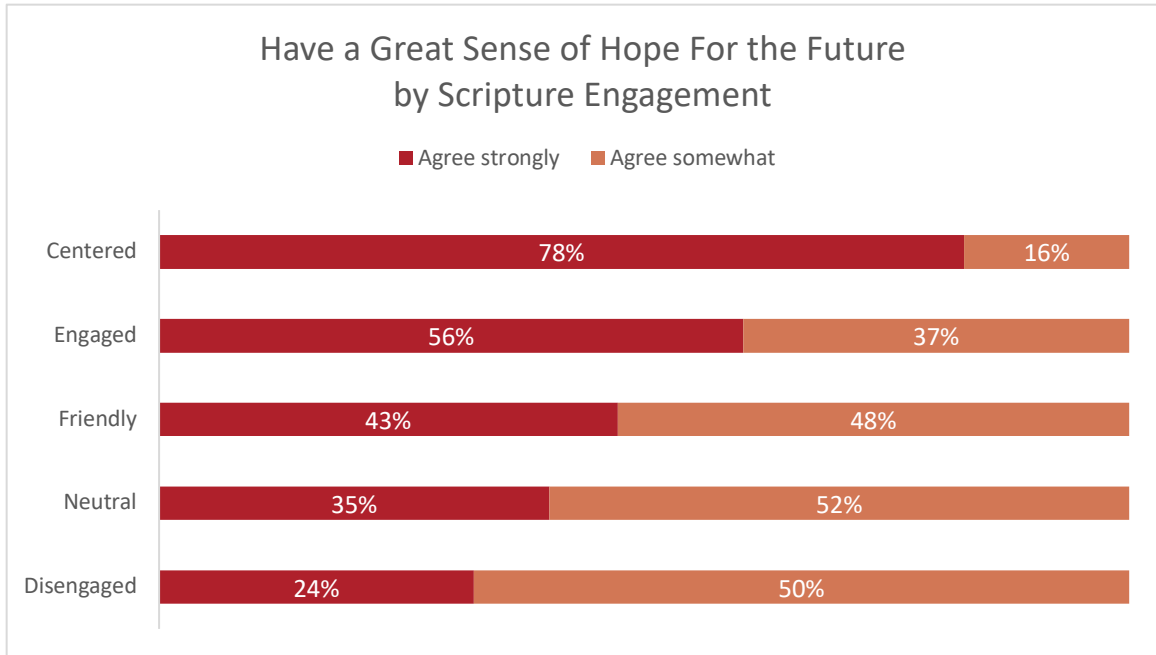
Overall, four out of five adults (81%) agree that they have a great sense of hope for the future, including 36% who strongly agree. Those who have a higher level of engagement with the Bible are more likely to affirm their hope for the future than those

who are less engaged. A large majority of Bible Centered adults (78%) agree strongly that the future is hopeful, compared to just one in four Disengaged adults (24%).

Even though Millennials are more fearful today than they were five years ago, they are the generation with the greatest sense of hope about the future (45% agree strongly), compared to 39% of Gen X, 28% of Boomers and 23% of Elders. Parents of children under 18 also have a greater sense of hope than those without minor children (53% vs. 29%). African Americans (51%) and Hispanics (45%) have more optimism about the future than do Whites (32%) or Asians (24%).

Among Disengaged adults, three in five (59%) who are more fearful than they were five years ago agree strongly or somewhat that having a great sense of hope about the future describes them. Those who are more fearful today and who have high levels of engagement tend to have more optimism about hope for the future.





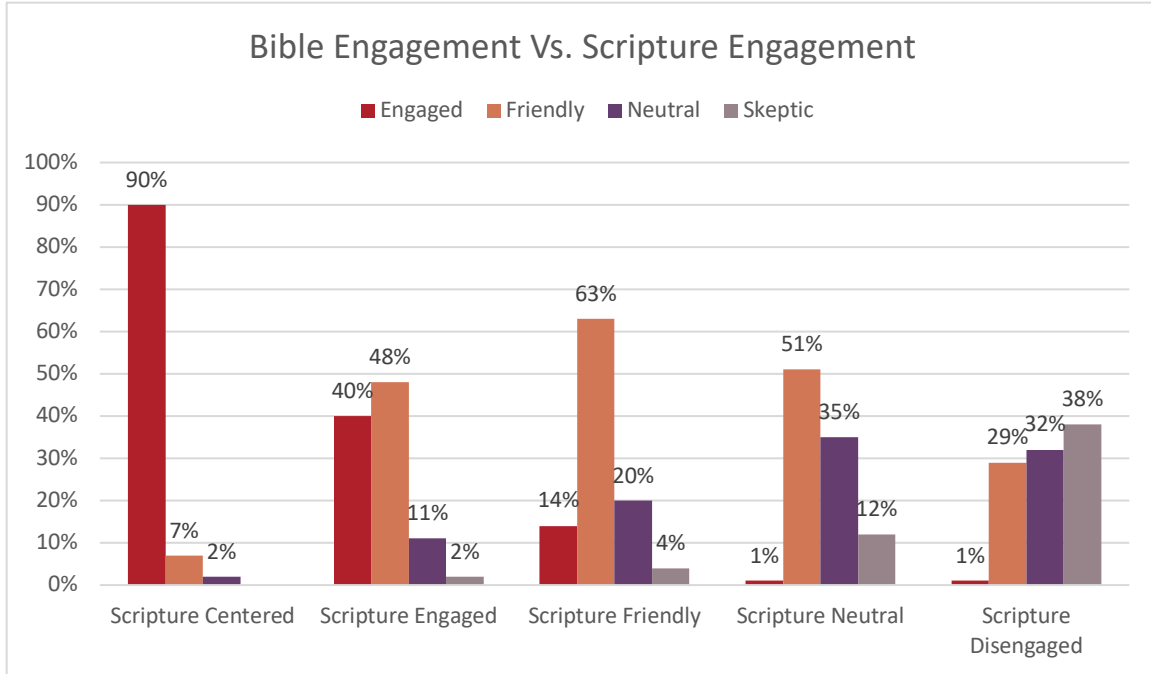
Appendix I

From 2011-2017, Bible engagement was defined using two separate questions: to determine how often adults use the Bible on their own and their view on the authority of Scripture. In 2017, a third question was added to determine if those who qualify as skeptics believe that the Bible was written to control or manipulate people, or if they were just indifferent to the teachings of the Bible. The resulting categories included the following:

- **Bible Engaged** defined as having the highest view of scripture and reading it at least 4 or more times a week.
- **Bible friendly** hold a high view of scripture but do not use the Bible at least 4 times a week.
- **Bible neutral** defined as believing the Bible has factual or historical errors or was not inspired by God. This category is not defined by how often respondents read the Bible.
- **Bible skeptics** are those who believe the Bible is just another book of teachings with stories and advice. Like the Neutral, Skeptics are not defined by how often they read the Bible. A subset of skeptics, *Hostiles*, are those who also believe the Bible was written to control or manipulate people.

Most of those (90%) who are Bible Centered fall into the Bible Engaged category. Two out of five Bible Engaged fall into the Engaged category and nearly half fall into the Bible Friendly Category— made up primarily of those who previously were categorized as Bible Friendly, yet 14% in this category are Bible Engaged, 20% are Bible Neutral, and a few are Bible Skeptic. The Disengaged category, is dominated by those who don't read the Bible and are split between Bible Friendly, Bible Neutral and Skeptic categories.

While there are similarities between the two scales, they are designed to classify people differently and therefore are not interchangeable.



1. Bible Engagement

Table 1.1 | Profile of Scripture Engagement Segments
(see definitions on pages 5-7)

	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disen- gaged
National average	9%	17%	15%	5%	54%
Generation					
Millennials (19-33)	19	27	30	37	26
Gen X (34-52)	35	31	34	30	35
Boomers (53-71)	38	32	26	26	29
Elders (72+)	8	10	10	8	10
Average age (in years)	51	47	44	38	46
Gender					
Male	57	46	50	54	49
Female	43	54	50	46	51
Education					
High school or less	39	36	45	44	43
Some college	27	36	30	26	31
College graduate	35	28	25	30	26
Marital status					
Married	64	56	51	50	43
All single	36	44	49	51	57
Never married	23	26	32	42	37
Children under 18 at home					
Yes	35	38	38	37	26
No	65	62	63	63	74
Military family					
Yes (active or retired)	23	26	16	25	19
No	77	73	84	75	81
<i>Online + telephone sample n =</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>297</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>1,096</i>

Table 1.1 | Profile of Bible Engagement Segments (cont'd)

	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disen- gaged
National average	9%	17%	15%	5%	54%
Geographic location					
City	36	33	34	35	29
Suburb	28	28	32	24	37
Small town / rural	37	40	33	42	33
Region					
Northeast	16	18	18	22	25
Midwest	23	23	25	27	22
South	40	41	34	25	30
West	21	17	23	25	23
Ethnicity					
White alone, not Hispanic	64	62	60	65	66
Black alone, not Hispanic	15	16	16	14	9
Hispanic (any)	13	14	16	15	14
Asian	2	3	4	5	6
All non-white	36	38	40	35	34
Household income					
under \$50K	53	49	48	50	53
\$50K to \$99K	27	32	35	27	32
\$100K or more	20	18	17	23	15
Practicing Christian					
Practicing Protestant	44	35	20	6	2
Practicing Catholic	25	19	17	13	4
Christian, not practicing	16	28	52	66	46
Non-Christian / no faith	11	10	9	16	48
Church attendance					
Within the past week	80	70	47	42	13
Within the past month, not week	11	10	16	13	6
Within the past 6 months, not past month	3	8	12	7	8
Unchurched	6	13	25	38	73
<i>Online + telephone sample n =</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>297</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>1,096</i>

Table 1.2 | Overall Bible Use

Realistically, how often do you use the Bible?

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disengaged
Never	30%	0%	0%	1%	3%	56%
Less than once a year	12	0	0	2	6	21
Once or twice a year	8	0	1	8	24	10
Three or four times a year	7	0	3	13	21	6
Once a month	6	0	6	16	19	2
Once a week	9	2	16	26	17	2
Several times/4+ times a week	13	18	41	25	10	0
Every day	15	80	33	10	0	1
<i>Online + telephone sample n =</i>	<i>2,024</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>295</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>1,081</i>

Table 1.3 | Bible Users

How often do you use the Bible on your own, not including times when you are at a large church service or Mass?

	All Adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disengaged
Never	32%	0%	0%	0%	0%	60%
Less than once a year	12	0	0	0	0	22
Once or twice a year	8	0	2	7	34	9
Three or four times a year	8	0	2	17	21	7
Once a month	6	1	7	21	23	1
Once a week	8	3	20	21	12	0
Several times/4+ times a week	13	16	39	26	8	1
Every day	14	80	29	8	1	1
<i>Online + telephone sample n =</i>	<i>2,024</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>297</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>1,079</i>

Table 1.3 | Bible Users (cont'd)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017*	2018*
Never	25%	26%	26%	26%	28%	27%	32%	32%
Less than once a year	13	10	12	9	10	14	10	12
Once or twice a year	11	10	10	11	10	9	8	8
Three or four times a year	8	9	9	8	6	8	6	8
Once a month	8	8	7	8	9	7	7	6
Once a week	8	7	8	9	8	8	7	8
Several times/4+ times a week	15	13	13	13	14	14	14	13
Every day	11	13	13	15	14	13	16	14
Not sure	3	5	1	2	1	2	<1	<1
Online + telephone sample =	2,014	2,011	2,068	2,027	1,997	2,008	2,030	2,024

* 2011-2016 only asked about Bible readership. 2017 and 2018 was revised to ask about total exposure on one's own.

Table 1.4 | The Bible as a Necessity in Daily Life

Now what must you have during the day?

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disengaged
Coffee	37%	20%	27%	29%	36%	43%
Something sweet	28	4	16	28	35	34
Social media	19	15	14	22	21	21
The Bible	16	61	43	21	9	2
Online sample n =	1,036	75	159	144	45	612

Table 1.5 | Desire for Bible Use

Do you wish that you used the Bible more or not?

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disengaged
Yes	57%	89%	90%	83%	70%	32%
No	40	10	9	16	29	63
Don't know	3	1	1	1	1	4
Online + telephone sample n=	2,040	187	350	297	111	1,096

Table 1.5 | Desire for Bible Use (cont'd)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017*	2018*
Yes	67%	60%	61%	62%	61%	61%	58%	57%
No	31	38	37	36	38	36	41	40
Don't know	2	2	2	2	1	3	2	3
<i>n=</i>	1,011	1,020	1,005	1,012	1,010	1,008	2,030	2,040

***In 2011-2016, adults were asked if they wanted to read the Bible more. The 2017 and 2018 survey asked about desire to read or listen to the Bible more.**

Table 1.6 | Level of Bible Use

Would you say that your own personal use of the Bible has increased, decreased, or is about the same as one year ago?

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disen-gaged
Stayed the same	65%	35%	47%	63%	61%	77%
Increased	21	61	44	22	21	6
Decreased	12	3	8	14	18	14
Not sure	2	1	1	1	0	4
<i>Online + telephone sample n=</i>	2,040	187	350	297	111	1,096

	2012	2013	2014*	2015*	2016*	2017*	2018*
Stayed the same	58%	63%	71%	66%	66%	67%	65%
Increased	27	26	18	22	23	21	21
Decreased	12	9	9	12	8	10	12
Not sure	3	2	1	1	3	2	2
<i>n=</i>	1,020	1,005	2,027	2,005	2,007	2,026	2,040

Table 1.7 | Curiosity about Jesus and the Bible

For each of the following statements, please indicate if you agree or disagree.

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Explorer	Browser	Disen- gaged
I am curious to know more about who Jesus Christ is						
Disagree strongly	21%	0%	0%	3%	5%	34%
Disagree somewhat	16	3	3	6	10	23
Agree somewhat	32	16	23	52	59	30
Agree strongly	31	81	73	39	25	13
I am curious to know more about what the Bible says						
Disagree strongly	19	5	2	4	0	30
Disagree somewhat	15	6	2	6	14	22
Agree somewhat	37	17	29	49	69	38
Agree strongly	29	73	68	42	17	10
<i>Online sample n=</i>	1,036	75	159	144	45	612

2. Bible Impact

Table 2.1 | Impact on Thoughts and Behaviors

Think about your Bible experience in the past month. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. As a result of using the Bible, I...?

% who used the Bible in the past month	All adults	Centered	Egnaged	Friendly	Neutral
Am more generous with my time, energy or financial resources					
Disagree	4%	0%	2%	5%	25%
Somewhat disagree	5	1	2	10	16
Somewhat agree	17	2	13	33	44
Agree	29	10	38	37	12
Strongly agree	22	27	30	11	2
Very strongly agree	20	56	14	3	1
Not sure	2	4	1	1	0
Show more loving behavior towards others					
Disagree	3%	1%	1%	2%	20%
Somewhat disagree	2	0	0	3	11
Somewhat agree	13	0	6	28	37
Agree	28	4	30	44	28
Strongly agree	27	26	38	20	3
Very strongly agree	27	67	24	3	1
Not sure	0	1	0	0	0
Feel more willing to engage in my faith					
Disagree	2	0	0	2	10
Somewhat disagree	2	0	0	4	4
Somewhat agree	10	0	4	22	40
Agree	29	2	29	52	32
Strongly agree	29	27	43	17	11
Very strongly agree	27	70	24	3	2
Not sure	1	1	0	1	1
Online sample n =	827	187	334	226	50

Segmentation not shown for Disengaged due to limited sample.

Table 2.2 | Impact on Relationship with God
When I use the Bible, I experience the following...?

% among Bible users	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disen- gaged
A sense of connection to God						
Never	3%	0%	0%	1%	11%	13%
Rarely	2	0	0	3	7	8
Occasionally	18	2	13	27	42	18
Most of the time	31	15	33	41	29	29
All of the time	47	83	53	29	10	33
Curiosity to know God better						
Never	2	0	1	0	6	12
Rarely	3	1	1	2	7	11
Occasionally	16	2	6	25	55	23
Most of the time	32	12	37	43	25	24
All of the time	48	86	56	30	6	30
Awareness of how much I need God						
Never	2	0	0	0	8	12
Rarely	2	0	1	1	10	9
Occasionally	10	2	2	18	34	15
Most of the time	29	11	28	43	42	19
All of the time	57	87	69	39	8	46
<i>Online + telephone sample n=</i>	<i>972</i>	<i>185</i>	<i>342</i>	<i>275</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 2.3 | The Bible's Message

Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. The Bible is....

% among Bible users	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disen- gaged
A letter from God expressing his love and salvation for me						
Disagree	3%	0%	0%	2%	14%	17%
Somewhat disagree	3	0	2	3	10	10
Somewhat agree	10	0	2	19	36	11
Agree	24	1	21	42	34	21
Strongly agree	24	19	33	22	2	23
Very strongly agree	36	81	42	12	5	18
A way to know what God expects from me						
Disagree	3	0	0	1	12	14
Somewhat disagree	2	0	0	2	6	7
Somewhat agree	11	0	1	16	51	18
Agree	23	1	17	45	26	19
Strongly agree	26	20	38	24	4	21
Very strongly agree	36	79	44	12	2	22
<i>Online sample n =</i>	<i>974</i>	<i>185</i>	<i>340</i>	<i>274</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>102</i>
A rulebook or guide on how to live my best life						
Disagree	2%	0%	1%	2%	3%	12%
Somewhat disagree	3	1	1	3	16	8
Somewhat agree	11	1	4	18	39	16
Agree	25	2	22	42	32	22
Strongly agree	25	20	32	26	6	18
Very strongly agree	34	78	40	10	4	25
<i>Online sample n=</i>	<i>975</i>	<i>185</i>	<i>343</i>	<i>275</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>100</i>

3. Bible Perceptions

Table 3.1 | Sacred Literature

To start with, what books, if any, do you consider sacred literature or holy books? (MULTIPLE RESPONSE)

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disengaged
Bible	79%	99%	97%	95%	85%	65%
Torah	17	14	10	15	16	21
Koran	16	9	9	15	19	20
Book of Mormon	12	8	11	12	15	13
Other	1	1	2	1	2	1
None	18	0	2	3	12	30
Not sure	2	1	0	1	0	2
<i>Online and telephone sample n=</i>	2,040	187	350	297	111	1,096

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Bible	86%	82%	80%	79%	79%	80%	82%	79%
Koran	10	10	8	12	10	11	21	16
Torah	4	6	4	7	7	6	20	17
Book of Mormon	4	5	3	5	4	4	11	12
Other	3	3	4	5	5	2	4	1
None	7	11	12	13	13	14	13	18
Not sure	3	3	6	4	4	4	2	2
<i>n=</i>	1,011	1,020	1,005	1,012	1,010	1,008	2,030	2,040

Table 3.2 | Beliefs about the Bible

I would like to read some statements about sacred literature and would like to know whether you agree or disagree with each statement.

% agree strongly	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disengaged
The Bible contains everything a person needs to know to live a meaningful life*						
Agree strongly	42%	89%	80%	54%	31%	19%
The Bible, the Koran, and the book of Mormon are all different expressions of the same spiritual truths						
Agree strongly	18	34	17	24	7	15
<i>Telephone + online sample n=</i>	2,040	187	350	297	111	1,096
<i>Online sample n=</i>	1,036	75	159	144	45	612

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
The Bible contains everything a person needs to know to live a meaningful life*								
Agree strongly	53%	48%	47%	50%	49%	45%	44%	41%
Agree somewhat	22	21	19	19	20	21	25	26
Disagree somewhat	11	15	14	16	16	15	15	16
Disagree strongly	12	12	17	14	14	18	15	16
Not sure	2	5	3	2	2	2	1	2
The Bible, the Koran, and the book of Mormon are all different expressions of the same spiritual truths								
Agree strongly	17	15	16	18	16	16	17	18
Agree somewhat	33	31	31	29	32	29	39	39
Disagree somewhat	17	18	19	15	16	16	21	19
Disagree strongly	28	28	28	29	28	30	22	24
Not sure	6	8	7	9	9	9	<1	0
<i>*Online + telephone sample n=</i>	1,982	1,969	2,030	2,008	1,976	2,008	2,030	2,040
<i>Online sample n=</i>	1,011	1,020	1,005	1,012	1,010	1,008	1,028	1,036

Table 3.3 | The Bible's Role in U.S. Society

Some people believe that the Bible should have a greater role in U.S. society today, while others believe that the Bible should have less influence. Do you think the Bible has too much, too little, or just the right amount of influence in U.S. society today?

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disengaged
Too little influence	41%	66%	70%	56%	44%	22%
Just right	31	25	21	33	32	34
Too much influence	25	9	7	7	19	38
Not sure	4	0	2	3	6	6
<i>Online + telephone sample n=</i>	2,040	187	350	297	111	1,096

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Too little influence	54%	47%	56%	50%	51%	46%	48%	41%
Just right	28	29	26	30	27	30	27	31
Too much influence	13	16	13	16	19	19	22	25
Not sure	5	7	6	6	3	5	3	4
<i>n=</i>	1,011	1,020	1,005	1,012	1,010	1,008	2,030	2,040

Table 3.4 | Moral Fabric of our Country

Which is more important for the moral fabric of our country?

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disengaged
The U.S Constitution	56%	20%	18%	30%	60%	76%
The Bible	44	80	82	70	40	24
<i>Online sample n=</i>	1,036	75	1559	144	45	612

	2017	2018
The U.S Constitution	53%	56%
The Bible	47	44
<i>n=</i>	1,011	1,036

Table 3.5 | Being Called Immoral or Intolerant

Would you consider it more offensive to be called immoral or intolerant?

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disengaged
Immoral	31%	42%	38%	41%	35%	25%
Intolerant	10	7	10	9	17	10
Would not care about being called either	26	19	22	20	21	30
Both are equally offensive	33	31	31	30	26	35
<i>Online sample n=</i>	<i>1,036</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>159</i>	<i>144</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>612</i>

	2013	2017	2018
Immoral	38%	33%	31%
Intolerant	8	11	10
Would not care about being called either	21	21	26
Both are equally offensive	33	35	33
<i>n=</i>	<i>431</i>	<i>1,024</i>	<i>1,036</i>

4. Bible Literacy

Table 4.1 | Bible as Literal or Inspired Word of God

Which of the following statements comes closest to describing what you believe about the Bible?

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disen- gaged
Actual word of God and should be taken literally, word for word	22%	48%	37%	30%	15%	11%
Inspired word of God, no errors, some verses symbolic	32	47	46	45	40	20
Inspired word of God, has factual or historical errors	16	4	12	18	26	18
Not inspired, tells how writers understood the ways and principles of God	10	1	3	4	11	16
Just another book of teachings written by men that contain stories and advice	20	0	2	3	8	35
<i>Online and telephone sample n=</i>	<i>1,971</i>	<i>184</i>	<i>346</i>	<i>289</i>	<i>105</i>	<i>1,046</i>

	2007*	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Actual word of God and should be taken literally, word for word	25%	27%	27%	25%	24%	22%	24%	22%	22%
Inspired word of God, no errors, some verses symbolic	31	34	31	30	32	34	33	35	32
Inspired word of God, has factual or historical errors	20	16	16	17	15	14	17	16	16
Not inspired, tells how writers understood the ways and principles of God	13	9	9	11	10	11	10	10	10
Just another book of teachings written by men that contain stories and advice	11	14	18	17	19	19	17	18	20
<i>n=</i>	<i>952</i>	<i>2,025</i>	<i>1,794</i>	<i>1,831</i>	<i>1,911</i>	<i>1,935</i>	<i>1,855</i>	<i>1,993</i>	<i>1,971</i>

Research conducted by Barna in 2007 in OmniPollSM

Note: Historical data collected by telephone interviews; 2011-2018 data collected by telephone and online surveys.

Table 4.2 | Bible Used to Manipulate or Control People

For the following statement, please tell me if you agree or disagree: The Bible was written to control or manipulate other people.

% the Bible is just another book of teachings written by men that contain stories and advice	All adults	Disen-gaged
Agree strongly	43%	44%
Agree somewhat	34	34
Disagree somewhat	15	14
Disagree strongly	9	8
Online and telephone sample n=	385	364

Other segments not shown due to limited sample size.

% the Bible is just another book of teachings written by men that contain stories and advice	2017	2018
Agree strongly	41%	43%
Agree somewhat	37	34
Disagree somewhat	13	15
Disagree strongly	9	9
n=	343	385

Table 4.3 | Influence of the Bible

The Bible has a lot of influence on...?

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disen-gaged
What I buy						
Disagree	54%	1%	18%	39%	77%	77%
Somewhat disagree	13	4	13	28	18	9
Somewhat agree	10	9	21	16	3	5
Agree	12	24	28	14	2	5
Strongly agree	7	32	15	2	0	2
Very strongly agree	5	30	5	1	0	2
The movies and television I choose to watch						
Disagree	49	0	10	31	71	73
Somewhat disagree	12	1	9	27	19	10
Somewhat agree	11	4	19	20	10	7
Agree	12	16	30	17	1	6
Strongly agree	9	38	24	3	0	2
Very strongly agree	6	40	8	2	0	1

Table 4.3 | Influence of the Bible (cont'd)

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disen- gaged
My views on LGBT issues						
Disagree	47	2	12	20	50	68
Somewhat disagree	9	4	7	17	16	8
Somewhat agree	12	3	18	21	17	10
Agree	11	10	22	19	11	7
Strongly agree	9	18	20	17	5	4
Very strongly agree	11	63	21	6	1	4
<i>Online sample n=</i>	<i>1,036</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>159</i>	<i>144</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>612</i>
My support for wars our country fights						
Disagree	46%	11%	17%	19%	45%	65%
Somewhat disagree	14	6	11	22	29	13
Somewhat agree	14	12	19	23	19	10
Agree	14	18	32	27	3	7
Strongly agree	5	13	11	5	5	2
Very strongly agree	7	41	11	4	0	3
My views on abortion						
Disagree	43	4	10	12	41	64
Somewhat disagree	10	4	6	15	12	10
Somewhat agree	10	3	7	17	19	10
Agree	13	5	26	30	14	7
Strongly agree	10	22	23	12	9	5
Very strongly agree	14	62	28	13	5	4
My support for Israel and the city of Jerusalem						
Disagree	40	6	8	12	35	60
Somewhat disagree	10	0	3	16	29	11
Somewhat agree	15	2	16	27	19	13
Agree	14	17	28	22	11	8
Strongly agree	10	22	23	15	3	5
Very strongly agree	11	54	22	8	2	4

Table 4.3 | Influence of the Bible (cont'd)

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disen- gaged
Your support for refugees and people displaced by wars and conflicts						
Disagree	38	5	8	13	29	57
Somewhat disagree	11	0	9	16	19	11
Somewhat agree	17	5	16	30	34	15
Agree	18	19	35	26	11	12
Strongly agree	8	32	21	11	7	2
Very strongly agree	7	40	11	4	0	3
<i>Online sample n=</i>	<i>1,036</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>159</i>	<i>144</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>612</i>

Caution: a change in wording for this question affects the comparability of this data.

	2016	2017	2018*
Views on abortion			
A lot / Strong agreement	28%	29%	24%
Some / Moderate agreement	13	14	23
Your support for Israel and the city of Jerusalem			
A lot / Strong agreement	20	24	21
Some / Moderate agreement	16	17	29
The decisions you make about finances and money (2017 / What I buy (2018))			
A lot / Strong agreement	16	18	12
Some / Moderate agreement	17	18	22
Your support for refugees and people displaced by wars and conflicts			
A lot / Strong agreement	14	19	15
Some / Moderate agreement	21	22	35
Your support for wars our country fights			
A lot / Strong agreement	11	12	12
Some / Moderate agreement	17	19	28
Your views on LGBT issues			
A lot / Strong agreement	NA	21	20
Some / Moderate agreement	NA	16	23
	<i>n=</i>	<i>981</i>	<i>1,025</i>
			<i>1,036</i>

* In 2018, different response options were offered. Strong agreement in 2018 includes

“very strongly agree or strongly agree; moderate agreement includes “agree or somewhat agree.”

5. Moral Decline

Table 5.1 | Belief that Morality is on the Decline

Do you believe the values and morals of America are declining or not?

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disen-gaged
Yes	79%	88%	89%	87%	85%	71%
No	18	9	9	11	11	25
Not sure	3	3	2	1	4	4
<i>Online + telephone sample n=</i>	<i>2,040</i>	<i>187</i>	<i>350</i>	<i>297</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>1,096</i>

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Yes	77%	81%	80%	76%	81%	79%
No	19	16	17	20	18	18
Not sure	4	3	3	4	1	3
<i>n=</i>	<i>1,005</i>	<i>1,012</i>	<i>1,010</i>	<i>1,008</i>	<i>2,030</i>	<i>2,040</i>

Table 5.2 | Cause of Moral Decline

Which of the following do you think is most responsible for the moral decline in America?

% believe values and morals are declining	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disen-gaged
Corruption from corporate greed	47%	28%	30%	39%	55%	60%
Negative influences of movies, television and music	35	27	38	44	37	33
Lack of Bible reading	18	45	32	17	9	7
<i>Online + telephone sample n=</i>	<i>1,481</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>290</i>	<i>239</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>713</i>

Table 5.2 | Cause of Moral Decline (cont'd)

% believe values and morals are declining	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Lack of Bible reading	37%	29%	35%	33%	27%	18%
Negative influences of movies, television and music	33	38	35	32	33	35
Corruption from corporate greed	29	33	30	36	39	47
<i>n=</i>	673	716	714	687	1,556	1,481

2013-2016 percentages calculated without 'don't know' and 'something else' for comparability with 2017

Table 5.3 | Influence of Church Leaders vs. Business Leaders

Are you more likely to listen to the opinion of a business leader or church leader who speaks out on a moral issue?

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disen-gaged
Church leader	37%	70%	70%	63%	27%	18%
Business leader	12	10	6	7	11	16
Neither	31	10	12	12	32	44
Not sure	20	10	12	19	29	22
<i>Online sample n =</i>	1,036	75	159	144	45	612

6. Hope and Fear

Table 6.1 | More Fearful Today

Are you more fearful today than you were five years ago?

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disen- gaged
Yes	42%	33%	41%	38%	51%	44%
No	42	56	42	45	44	39
Same	16	11	17	17	5	17
<i>Online sample n=</i>	1,036	75	159	144	45	612

Table 6.2 | Hope for the Future

Please indicate your agreement with the following: I have a great sense of hope about the future.

	All adults	Centered	Engaged	Friendly	Neutral	Disen- gaged
Agree strongly	36%	78%	56%	43%	35%	24%
Agree somewhat	45	16	37	48	52	50
Disagree somewhat	15	5	4	8	12	21
Disagree strongly	4	1	2	2	1	5
<i>Online sample n=</i>	1,036	75	159	144	45	612

Appendix II

Methodology

Two methods of data collection, telephone interviews and online surveys, were used for this study.

Telephone

The telephone survey included 1,004 interviews conducted among a representative sample of adults 18 and older from all 50 of the United States. The survey was conducted from January 4 through January 11, 2018. The sampling error for this study is +/-3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The research included 400 interviews conducted by contacting respondents on their cell phone.

Survey calls were made at various times during the day and evening so that every individual selected for inclusion was contacted up to five separate days, at different times of the day, to maximize the possibility of contact. This is a quality-control procedure that ensures those in the sampling frame have an equivalent probability of inclusion within the survey, thereby increasing the survey reliability. All of the interviews were conducted by experienced, trained interviewers; interviewers were supervised at all times; and every interviewer was monitored during the course of their work on this project. The telephone survey was conducted through the use of a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) system. This process ensures that question skip patterns are properly administered by interviewers and that survey data are recorded accurately.

The cooperation rate for the telephone survey was 73%. A high cooperation rate significantly raises the confidence we may place in the resulting statistics. In every survey, there are a variety of ways in which the accuracy of the data may be affected. The cooperation rate is one such potential cause of error in measurement; the lower the cooperation rate, the less representative the respondents interviewed may be of the population from which they were drawn, thereby reducing the accuracy of the results. Other sources of error include question-design bias, question-order bias, interviewer mistakes, sampling error and respondent deception. Many of these types of errors cannot be accurately estimated. However, having a high cooperation rate enhances the reliability of the information procured.

Based on U.S. Census data sources, regional and ethnic quotas were designed to ensure that the final group of adults interviewed reflected the distribution of adults nationwide and adequately represented the three primary ethnic groups within the U.S. (those groups which comprise at least 10% of the population: white, black and Hispanic).

Online

The online portion of the study covered a subset of core questions that were also used in the telephone questionnaire as well as some questions that were unique to the online study. This study included 1,036 surveys conducted among a representative random sample of adults 18 and older within all 50 states and was conducted January 9 through January 18, 2018 recruited and surveyed through a national consumer panel. The panel is representative by age, gender, region and socioeconomic grade, and no other screening criteria were applied. The sampling error for a sample of this size is +/-2.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Aggregated Data

Data for core questions included in both the telephone and online studies was aggregated. The sampling error for the combined data (n=2,040) is +/-1.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Guide to Survey Data

The range of sampling error indicates the accuracy of the results, and it is dependent on two factors: 1) the sample size and 2) the degree to which the result you are examining is close to 50 percent or to the extremes, 0 percent and 100 percent.

You can estimate the accuracy of your survey results using the table below. First, find the column heading that is closest to your sample size. Next, find the row whose label is closest to the response percentages for a particular question from your survey. The intersection of the row and column displays the number of percentage points that need to be added to, and subtracted from, the result to obtain the range of error. There is a 95 percent chance that the true percentage of the group being sampled is in that range.

Result	100	200	300	400	500	600	800	1,000	1,200	1,500	2,000	2,500
05% or 95%	4.4	3.1	2.5	2.2	2.0	1.8	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.1	.96	.87
10% or 90%	6.0	4.3	3.5	3.0	2.7	2.5	2.1	2.0	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.2
15% or 85%	7.1	5.1	4.1	3.6	3.2	2.9	2.5	2.3	2.1	1.9	1.6	1.4
20% or 80%	8.0	5.7	4.6	4.0	3.6	3.3	2.6	2.5	2.3	2.1	1.8	1.6
25% or 75%	8.7	6.1	5.0	4.3	3.9	3.6	3.0	2.8	2.5	2.3	1.9	1.7
30% or 70%	9.2	6.5	5.3	4.6	4.1	3.8	3.2	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.0	1.8
35% or 65%	9.5	6.8	5.5	4.8	4.3	3.9	3.3	3.1	2.8	2.5	2.1	1.9
40% or 60%	9.8	7.0	5.7	4.9	4.4	4.0	3.4	3.1	2.8	2.5	2.2	2.0
45% or 55%	9.9	7.0	5.8	5.0	4.5	4.1	3.5	3.2	2.9	2.6	2.2	2.0
50%	10.0	7.1	5.8	5.0	4.5	4.1	3.5	3.2	2.9	2.6	2.2	2.0

Note that the above statistics only relate to the sampling accuracy of survey results. When comparing the results of two subgroups (e.g., men versus women), a different procedure is followed and usually requires a greater sample size. Further, there is a range of other errors that may influence survey results (e.g., biased question wording, inaccurate data tabulation)—errors whose influence cannot be statistically estimated.