

## African-Americans Most Bible Engaged in the US—PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 1, 2018

### BIBLE TOPS COFFEE, SWEETS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

African-Americans have higher levels of Bible engagement than the general U.S. population, which is demonstrated by their beliefs and practices, according to the latest [State of the Bible](#) survey by American Bible Society. For many African-Americans it is more important to start the day with the Bible than coffee, as 37 percent chose the Bible over coffee (17 percent), sweets (26 percent) and social media (20 percent). Of those considered Bible Centered<sup>1</sup>, 60 percent use the Bible every day.

African-Americans with higher levels of Bible engagement are also more likely to desire even more interaction with the Bible (more than 90 percent of both Bible Centered and Bible Engaged<sup>2</sup>). And half of all African-Americans say they always feel more connected to God when they read the Bible, while 75 percent usually or always experience a curiosity to know God better when reading the Bible.

*"African-Americans know that Bible engagement can impact all areas of their lives for the better,"* said Roy Peterson, president and CEO of American Bible Society. *"The Bible is the source of ultimate hope and joy. People who devote time in it can [discover for themselves](#) how the Word of God can help make sense of life."*

African-Americans who use the Bible at least once a month were found to:

- Feel more willing to engage with their faith (96 percent)
- Be more generous with time, energy or financial resources (94 percent)
- Show a more loving behavior toward others (98 percent)

Church attendance is also positively correlated with Bible engagement. There is a jump in Bible engagement with any church attendance in the past six months for African-Americans.

The Bible also impacts African-Americans' beliefs. Nearly half—45 percent—of African-Americans believe the Bible has too little influence on society. Eighty-three percent of African-Americans are concerned about the decline in morality compared to 79 percent of all Americans. Many cite the lack of Bible reading as the reason for the decline (23 percent). However, 51 percent of African-Americans are more optimistic about the future than Whites (32 percent) or Asians (24 percent). Moreover, half believe the Bible strongly discourages pornography and prostitution, while as a group they are less certain about what the Bible says about politics and public life than other topics. Even so, 92 percent say elected leaders should display peace, kindness, gentleness and self-control, while 80 percent do not believe elected officials are doing this. Finally, 61 percent believe the Bible is the moral fabric of the U.S. compared to 39 percent who believe the U.S. Constitution is.

When African-Americans sit down to read the Bible, many cite feeling peaceful (43 percent) and encouraged (39 percent) as a result.

African-Americans ranked higher than other Americans in:

- Listening to a church leader (48 percent) versus a business leader (9 percent)
- Owning at least one Bible in their homes (93 percent)

- Wishing they read the Bible more (74 percent)
- Downloading or using a Bible app on a smartphone (52 percent)
- Increasing Bible reading in the last year (26 percent)

## **SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

The *State of the Bible* 2018 report contains the findings from a nationwide study commissioned by American Bible Society and conducted by Barna Research (a division of Barna Group). Two research methodologies were used for the study: the first included 1,004 telephone interviews (including cellphone interviews) with adults in all 50 states in the U.S., and the second consisted of 1,063 online surveys using a nationally representative panel. The use of two methodologies provided a larger sample size for key questions and ensured even greater representation among all age groups. The telephone interviews were conducted Jan. 4 - 11, 2018, and included U.S. adults 18 years of age or older. The online surveys were conducted Jan. 9 - Jan. 18, 2018.

## **ABOUT AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY**

Since 1816, American Bible Society has worked to make the Bible available to every person in a language and format each can understand and afford, so all people may experience its life-changing message. One of the nation's first and most enduring ministries, today's American Bible Society provides resources across a variety of platforms, enabling first-time readers and seasoned theologians alike to engage with the best-selling book of all time. For more information, visit [American.Bible](http://American.Bible).

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<sup>1</sup> Bible Centered indicates those who interact with the Bible frequently. It is transforming their relationships and shaping their choices; 11 percent of African-Americans are considered Bible Centered.

<sup>2</sup> Bible Engaged indicates those who interact with the Bible frequently, and for whom and the Bible is transforming to their relationship with God and others; 26 percent of African-Americans are considered Bible Engaged.