

Study Finds Young People Less Likely to Read the Bible

✖ A recent Barna Group found that many young adults are skeptical about the Bible.

In a study exploring how attitudes toward the Bible are changing from generation to generation, the California-based research organization found that only 67 percent of adults ages 18 to 25 viewed the Bible as a sacred text. More than 80 percent of 26- to 41-year-olds and 91 percent of those older than 42 held that view.

“[The] central theme of young people’s approach to the Bible is skepticism,” said David Kinnaman, the director of the Barna study. “They question the Bible’s history as well as its relevance to their lives, leading many young people to reject the Bible as containing everything one needs to live a meaningful life.”

Only 30 percent of adults under age 25 said the Bible is totally accurate in the principles it teaches, while 58 percent of those over 64 agree with this statement.

The study also found that 56 percent of young people were likely to have a universal perspective on the Bible. Only 30 percent of those over age 64 believed the truths found in the Bible could also be found in other religious texts.

Young adults were also less likely to read the Bible, with 40 percent claiming to have read it in the past week compared with 53 percent of those in retirement age. The study found that young people are less likely to read the Bible, but it notes that a majority of all respondents said they’d read the Bible for at least 15 minutes in the last week.

Kinnaman said the silver lining in the study is that 19

percent of those under 25 expressed a desire to grow in their knowledge of the Bible, as opposed to only 9 percent of those older than 64 who expressed the same desire.

“Perhaps young people want to participate more in the process of learning, not simply attend Bible lectures or be trained in classrooms,” Kinnaman said.

“[Those ages 18 to 41] have come to expect experiences that appear unscripted and interactive, that allow them to be open and honest with their questions, that are technologically stimulating, that are done alongside peers and within trusted relationships, and that give them the chance to be creative and visual,” he continued. “Their expectations may or may not be entirely healthy, but without considering these issues, the Bible will continue to lose hold on the next generation.”