

1 in 5 Americans Have Read Whole Bible

You hear someone announce, “I just signed up for a marathon!” and your jaw instantly drops in awe for what they’re about to dive into.

Or maybe you’re the one who goes through the vigorous training required to cover all 26.2 miles of a marathon.

It’s a large feat, but staying the course and finishing the race is the best feeling. And it really brings people together.

Bible Pathway Ministries hosted another type of marathon that requires just as much commitment. But it has bonded believers in a unique way—both to each other and to the Lord.

The Bible Reading Marathon by Bible Pathway was held June 9-13 in several churches around the world. People took turns reading God’s Word aloud from Genesis to Revelation over 90 hours.

“People will say, ‘I don’t know if I can read 15 minutes,’ and then after 30 minutes you have to tap them on the shoulder and say, ‘Would you let somebody else read?’ Something happens when you read it out loud. It is really getting into our spirits, and it’s becoming living to us, so we see that people from all denominations come together,” says Karen Hawkins with Bible Pathway.

A recent study by The Barna Group shows that 20 percent of Americans have read the Bible cover-to-cover, and it’s not just Christians. In comparison, only 15 percent of Americans have read *The Hobbit*, and 12 percent have read *Twilight*.

Bible Pathway encourages a routine for reading the entire

Bible in a year with just 15 minutes a day. Hawkins says, "Every time you read it, you're in a different place spiritually. Sometimes those words just jump off the page and you go, 'Wow, when did God put that there?' Well, it's been there all along. You may even have it highlighted. But that's when it becomes 'the sword.' That's what we use against the devil."

Hawkins shares how simple Bible reading has had a huge impact for God across the world. "A pastor in Liberia started a church just by handing out daily devotions from Bible Pathway and saying, 'Read this Bible.' People said, 'I don't have one,' and he'd say, 'Come join me.' He has now held Bible Reading Marathons in 7 of the 11 counties of Liberia."

It also spans generations. People aged 7 to 87 came out to read God's Word at the Bible Reading Marathons.

"It's really important that we get young people into the Word because I heard a really shocking statistic just the other day: 98 percent of young people who have been in the church drop out of church within two years after getting out of high school," says Hawkins. "We have to get them so grounded in the Word."

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