

Study Finds Bible-Reading Is Better Self-Care Than Exercise

A study by the American Bible Society (ABS) finds that reading the Bible has better self-care outcomes than exercising, meditating, or even spending time with friends.

The State of the Bible report examined the impact of common self-care activities, including exercising, volunteering in the community, meditating, and praying, on individuals' levels of stress, anxiety, loneliness, and hope. They then compared how reading Scriptures impacted those same feelings.

And although people who read Scriptures tended to participate equally in most self-care activities, except exercise, than those who did not, researchers found that reading the Word of God had a positive impact on stress, anxiety, loneliness, and hope.



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“Our research confirms that all the things that people do to improve their general well-being – exercise, seeing friends, and so on – are statistically associated with fuller lives. So is Bible reading,” said John Plake, ABS chief innovation officer and editor-in-chief of the State of the Bible series. “In fact, the Bible’s connection to lower stress, anxiety, and loneliness is stronger than that of meditation, spending time with a friend, or even exercise.”

The results of the study were based on a scale, which rated stress from 0-40, anxiety from 0-20, and 5-20 for loneliness, with lower numbers better. Higher numbers were better in the case of rating hope, which went from 3 to 24.

Individuals who read the Bible weekly, or even more frequently, experienced stress levels of 8, compared to 9.6 for those who didn't read Scripture.

Anxiety registered 4.3 among readers compared to 4.8 for non-readers for those who read the Bible at least weekly.

Loneliness came in at an 11.1 on average, compared to 11.8 among non-readers. And readers registered 18.6 on the hope scale, compared to 16.8 for non-readers.

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