

Survey: Bible Readers Prefer One Translation, Consult Many

Among regular **Bible** readers, more than a third indicate they read it nearly every day and typically use one primary version of the Bible.

In addition to their personal study, 75 percent of regular Bible readers also read along with others each month as Scripture is read in church **worship** services, 49 percent read it as part of Christian education or Sunday school classes at a church, and 42 percent do so as part of a small group Bible study or prayer group.

When asked, "About how often do you read the Bible either by yourself or together with family members as part of a private activity?" 37 percent said nearly every day. Twenty-two percent read it three to five times a week while another 22 percent read it once or twice a week. Approximately one in five is a more sporadic Bible reader: 11 percent read it two or three times a month, and 8 percent read the Bible about once a month.

On average, Bible readers in the United States personally own 3.6 copies of Scripture. Eighty-four percent of readers have more than one Bible.

Three-quarters of Bible readers (74 percent) have one primary Bible that they use most of the time while the other 26 percent tend to use different Bibles for different situations. Among those who use a variety of Bibles, 75 percent consult varying translations.

Together, these two questions indicate 80 percent of regular Bible readers stick with one translation all or most of the time and only 20 percent use a variety.

The higher the reader's education and household income, the less likely they are to use one primary Bible most of the time, the study revealed. Seventy-nine percent of readers with an annual household income less than \$30,000 use one primary Bible compared to 68 percent of readers with income of \$100,000 or more. Eighty-three percent of readers whose highest level of education is high school have one primary Bible compared to 66 percent of readers with a graduate degree.

"When people say 'my Bible,' that has a meaning that includes translation," said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research. "Bible readers usually have multiple Bibles but three out of four have one physical Bible that they use most of the time."

When it comes to how a preferred translation is selected, 75 percent of regular Bible readers personally chose the version they use most while 19 percent had it selected for them by someone else. Six percent do not remember how they arrived at their preferred version.

Yet preferring one translation does not mean they have an exclusive commitment to it. While 26 percent of Bible readers are only willing to use one specific translation, 74 percent identify themselves as "open to using different translations of the Bible."

Nine out of 10 Bible readers are satisfied with the version they use most for personal reading. That includes 56 percent who are completely satisfied and 35 percent who are mostly satisfied. Only 2 percent are mostly dissatisfied with the translation they use, and 4 percent are completely dissatisfied.

The study also revealed regular Bible readers are often involved in other religious activities. In a typical month, 85 percent attend worship, 72 percent read religious books, 53 percent attend Sunday school or Christian education classes,

51 percent attend a small group, 50 percent read religious magazines, and 47 percent are volunteer leaders.

Stetzer concluded, "We learn from this study among American Bible readers that owning multiple Bibles is much more prevalent than regularly investing time in reading it."