

**News and Current Events :: 4 in 10 Americans read Bible digitally****4 in 10 Americans read Bible digitally - posted by ccchhrrriiss () , on: 2013/9/4 11:49**

Internet Bible reading surges

Now 4 in 10 read God's words digitally

BY PAUL BEDARD

WASHINGTON TIMES

SEPTEMBER 4, 2013

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/internet-bible-reading-surges-now-4-in-10-read-gods-words-digitally/article/2535148>

God is still great in the eyes of Americans, even on the internet. While an amazing 88 percent of the nation's homes own a Bible, more and more are switching to the internet, cell phones and iPad for their weekly inspiration, according to a sweeping new survey of Bible use.

In their latest survey of Bible use, the American Bible Society finds that 41 percent of Americans used the internet to read the good book on a computer. Some 29 percent said they searched Bible verses on a cell phone and 17 percent said they read an electronic version of the Bible on a Kindle or iPad.

The trend is similar in the news business, with the readers shifting to digital over paper.

"The data shows a continual shift to digital content. The number of Bible readers who use their smart phone or cell phone to search for Bible content has increased each year, with a 6 percent increase in the use of this format from 2012," said the Society. "Use of internet to find Bible content has also increased, up 4 percent from 2011," they added.

And, said the survey of 2,083, the most read and searched version of the Bible was the King James version. Thirty-eight percent preferred that over the New King James version, which just 14 percent prefer.

Americans also said that the Bible is king over the Koran, with 80 percent calling the Bible sacred, with just 8 percent citing the Koran. That was followed by the Torah, at 4 percent, and Book of Mormon at 3 percent.

With more people tapping into the Bible for direction and inspiration, the most read book in the world is also having a bigger influence in American politics. More than two-thirds, or 69 percent, said their personal faith has at least a little influence in political issues. And the percentage of those who said their faith influences their political leanings has increased from 27 percent last year to 31 percent this year.

Other findings:

- 77 percent believe that morality in America is on the decline, with a third blaming the lack of bible reading.
- 66 percent believing teaching the Bible in public schools is important.
- 54% of adults agreed with the statement, "the Bible and politics do not mix."
- 22% of adults believe the Bible should be taken literally, word for word

<http://washingtonexaminer.com/internet-bible-reading-surges-now-4-in-10-read-gods-words-digitally/article/2535148>

**Re: 4 in 10 Americans read Bible digitally - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2013/9/4 22:13**

I find the 22% who do not believe the Bible should be taken literally strange when you have over double that many saying the book is important.

Chris, you hobnob with the professionals - can you offer an explanation or do these numbers reflect the opinions of the less educated?

ginnyrose

**Re: - posted by ccchhrrriiiss (), on: 2013/9/4 23:57**

Hi Sister Ginnyrose,

Quote:

-----  
Chris, you hobnob with the professionals - can you offer an explanation or do these numbers reflect the opinions of the less educated?  
-----

I think that many educated individuals place varying degrees of "trust" in the words of the Bible on the basis of what they think that they know of this world.

In my experience, I have met different kinds of people who react to faith in different ways.

There are angry, bitter atheists who hate the very notion of "God" and Christians and look down upon those who embrace faith as "less intelligent" and even "gullible" human beings.

There are agnostics who are almost as bitter about God and "religion" as the militant atheists, but they are willing to concede that there "could" be something to spiritualism or even the Bible.

There are "honest atheists" (actually agnostics) who will admit that they don't know one way or the other in terms of faith and religion. However, to the best of their understanding, the things found in the Bible are incompatible with what they believe from science and history.

Next, you have people who claim to believe in something, but they just aren't sure what it is. They believe that "God" exists, but they are unsure whether or not that "God" is the God of the Bible, Jesus, Allah or any other named "higher power" -- or if that everyone is simply calling that same perceived "higher power" by a particular sectarian name.

Then, you have people who do believe in God and that the Bible, more or less, is his sacred book. They believe Jesus existed too. However, they are less inclined to believe in the miracles of the Bible and see much of the teachings, history, anecdotes and doctrines as more or less "allegory" written for those times. They see the Bible as a "moral" book rather than a literal history and set of doctrinal truths.

There are also people who believe in Jesus, believe in life after death and even the miracles of the Bible; however, they doubt the authenticity of the standards found in the Bible (e.g., place faith in and live for Jesus or burn eternally in the Lake of Fire). They perceive God as a "loving God" who would only be more gracious and forgiving than they are, so they can't see it as "fair" that such a loving God punishing anyone for all of eternity.

There are also individuals who believe in the Word of God yet struggle with weighing what is found in the Word of God with what they have been taught in school, life, etc... They don't voice such inner wrestling in public or among believers, but they wrestle with doubt about both the existence of God and the validity of His Word.

Of course, there are people who believe in the existence of the God of the Bible and everything written within it, but still do not live for God -- fully -- due to the fact that they are trapped by the lusts and enticements of this world.

Finally, you have believers. They have converted to the faith and trust God -- no matter what this world tries to tell them. God is first and foremost of importance in their lives. They search for, find and realize the hope that is found from God's

Word and applied in their daily lives.

There are many people who might be a combination of several of the above types.

In general, I think that many highly educated people have difficulty with trusting the Bible because they trust themselves and what they believe what they were told to believe by teachers, professors, parents, etc... Many individuals that I have spoken to have said that they know Christians who fit into those silly stereotypes perpetrated by this world (e.g., the unintelligent, the gullible, those needing a crutch, etc...).

Ironically, I have also met and interacted with believers who almost boast in their ignorance or lack of intelligence. They point to how the apostles were mocked by those in Jerusalem for Pentecost as being "ignorant and unlearned" and then almost seek a similar accusation as some sort of badge of honor. I have tried to reason with such individuals that many Christians have been educated and/or intelligent.

While the apostles may have been "unlearned" (in terms of formal Pharisaical education), most had accomplished "trades" (the training of their day) and could read and write (which was exceptionally rare in the world). Moreover, there have been missionaries and preachers who were exceptionally "learned" and intelligent men.

History is filled with educated believers who discovered planets, mapped continents, plotted solar activity, practiced medicine, invented machines and, of course, translated the Bible into other languages (such as English). Yet, I will be the first to admit that the stereotype of "ignorant" and "gullible" Christians exists because some of the loudest Christians continue to speak about things (and even misrepresent them) when it would be better for them to not speak of things that they know little about.

I have met people who do not believe in the completely literal nature of the Bible while pointing out those who are hypocrites, hateful, uncaring, gossipers, prideful or holding to other sins in the Church and they wonder how those "believers" could ever question their eternal condition given their own hypocrisies.

I suppose that many people don't believe that the Bible should be taken literally because they honestly don't believe everything in it OR they don't see many Christians live like they take it all literally either.

Someone on the forum posted something about a television show called Duck Dynasty this week. I clicked on the links to learn more. One of those links had a man named Phil Robertson share his testimony.

<http://gnli.christianpost.com/video/interview-duck-dynastys-si-robertson-on-life-marriage-proposals-and-his-unwavering-belief-in-the-creator-15619>

While I am not very knowledgeable about his Christian background (and I read what seemed to be much discussion about the validity of it here on the SermonIndex forums), something that he said did strike my wife and I as a very profound yet simple truth about those who find hope in the Son of God and those who "hope" for something else.

Mr. Robertson said, "If you're not a believer and you don't believe God exists at all, about the only hope that you have is that he not be there. That's your hope."

I think that there is a real truth in this. Those who don't believe -- or those who only PARTIALLY believe -- only have one real "hope" for the end of their life. They hope that either God doesn't exist after all OR that the Bible is not completely true. If God DOES exist and the Bible IS completely true, then those individuals are facing eternal consequences for living life for themselves and neglecting their Creator and His Word.

So, no, I don't think that the opinion about taking God's Word literally reflects the opinions of the less educated. I have sat under and worked alongside highly educated individuals who took God's Word to contain 100% literal truth.

In addition, I think that the Western World -- with its longstanding historic dominance of the Christian religion -- has approached the concept of faith and inspiration of Scriptures (and those who embrace such a belief) with a measure of contempt that is unseen in other parts of the world and with other religions.

There are scientists, engineers and doctors who are Muslims yet embrace a literal view of Islam and the Koran. There are highly educated Hindus who take their religious beliefs seriously. They are not treated with consternation that is direc

ted as professing Christians (or "fundamentalists") in America, Canada, the U.K., Europe, Australia, etc...

I'm not quite sure of the reason for such ridicule and dismissal of apparent intelligence of Christians in America. However, I do think that there is a "consensus peer pressure" in academia and science today where atheists are "loud and proud" and will generally dismiss the mind of anyone "gullible" enough to believe in God. It is sort of akin to the "consensus peer pressure" of professional climatologists who endeavor to find man-made links to global warming or biologists and anthropologists pressured to embrace the notion of inherent homosexuality from birth (e.g., gays are "born this way").

I suppose that it doesn't help when Christians often reinforce negative stereotypes -- often gladly.

So, I do think that the numbers of individuals who believe in God yet not a literal interpretation of the Bible is at least partially due to what is really an honest lack of "faith" in what is written in the Word of God -- as well as a lack of "faith" in the very people who claim to follow the literal interpretation of that God and His Word.

I know that I was a bit long with my response but I do hope that I was clear with my opinion in regard to your question.

**Re: - posted by rjennings (), on: 2013/9/5 8:49**

Chris,  
Thank you for the thoughtful response. I believe it is a good breakdown of the different mindsets. I'm an IT guy myself and interact with folks who are well educated and a number claim to be Christians but aren't "practicing". As you say, they think the Bible to be a good book of morals and contain truth but don't believe it to be absolute truth -- much of it is to be taken allegorically. It is interesting to challenge them on which parts should be taken as truth versus allegories. Some have questioned the canonization of the Bible and why were some books included and others not. Others have said it is a book written by men on behalf of God and therefore can't be 100% accurate as men are involved. And some have pointed to biblical stories such as the Genesis account and said it isn't isolated to the Bible but shared across many religions and therefore while the Bible contains truth it shares truth among other spiritual works. Quite a number hold evolution as fact.

I have had success in sharing with these folks. I worked with Richard, a database administrator who actually sang in the choir at his church but was quite liberal in his Christian beliefs. God truly put him on my heart to challenge with the truth of scripture. I spent a good amount of time dialoging with him and I honestly wasn't sure if I was making an impact at all since his position didn't change. However, after the birth of a child he brought the new baby and his wife into the office to show off their new addition to the family. They stopped by my cubicle and moved along and then I heard someone trying to get my attention behind me and turned around to see his wife. She whispered "I have prayed for God to send someone like you to work with Richard and I want you to know that you are making a difference. He comes home and shares what you talk about all the time." I just knew it was confirmation that God was at work and continued to pray and talk with him. But rather than to soften, he became more firm in his stance and more argumentative to the extent I backed off. He left the company and I told him as he was leaving that God is working in his heart and I wanted to be tops on the list of folks he contacts when God becomes real to him. About six months past and my phone rang at about 11:00 one night. It was Richard, he was crying and said "I got saved tonight and wanted you to be the first to know. Thank you for not giving up on me".

It's moments like that keeps us pressing on regardless of how dark this world becomes. He is more than able!

**Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiisss (), on: 2013/9/5 18:36**

Hi rjennings,

That is a wonderful and remarkable testimony!

I understand what you said about meeting others who point at the Genesis account of creation as an allegory. I've heard many point at it too (especially in obvious discrepancies with science or even "common sense" -- particularly in plant life created and existing a day before the creation of the Sun, Moon and stars). It can be difficult explaining possible reasons for what seems to be a fallacy of sequence; however, I always point out that God is not confined to the laws of nature.

I've also heard the argument that the story of creation in Genesis is shared or echoed in other religious writings. In addition

ion, you hear many atheists point out that the story of the flood is very similar to the story of Gilgamesh (which they incorrectly claim was written prior to the Book of Genesis).

When sharing the Lord with intellectuals, I do point out that I understand the discrepancies that they point out. In fact, I tell them that I had also saw such things as a barrier to believing in God. However, I came to believe in Christ and place my faith in Him despite the "knowledge" or understanding that I had regarding such matters. I would explain to them why and let them make up their mind if my reasoning made any sense.

I do know that many atheists, agnostics, scientists and "intellectuals" take offense to Christians who almost look down at them for embracing such concepts as evolution or a vast, ancient universe that appears much older than the timeline of Genesis. I have heard Christians use such mockery and ridicule at unbelievers along with a "you just don't get it" argument. I think that this is very damaging to the potential impact of Christianity upon those hearts. Those people believe as they do because, more than likely, they actually believe what they say they believe. We can see their views as incorrect without meandering into the realm of ridicule.

Anyway, I do appreciate the testimony that you shared! I know that God reached my very skeptical heart; therefore, I know that He can reach the hearts of other skeptics who are honestly seeking for truth about the existence of God and other issues of eternity.