

American Views on Bible Reading

A SURVEY OF 1,200 AMERICANS

Lifewayresearch

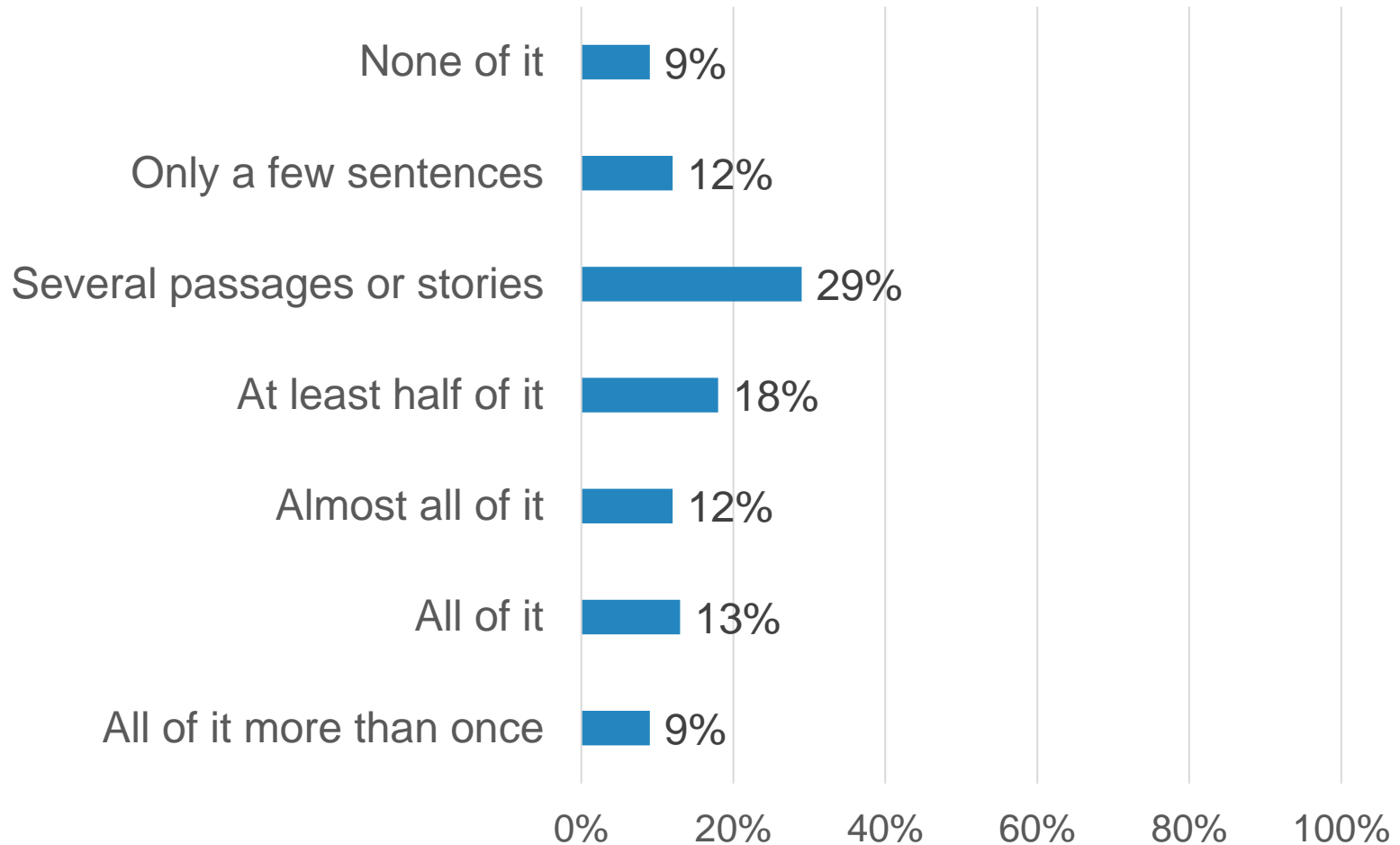
Methodology

- The online survey of 1,200 Americans was conducted August 14-30, 2024, using a national pre-recruited panel
- Quotas and slight weights were used to balance gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, religion, and evangelical beliefs to more accurately reflect the population
- The sample includes an over-sample of Americans with Evangelical Beliefs providing additional reliability for breakouts of this group. Totals for all Americans reduce these responses to their correct proportion through weighting
- The completed sample is 1,200 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error from the panel does not exceed $\pm 3.3\%$ This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups
- Comparisons are made to an online survey conducted by Lifeway Research Sept. 27 – Oct. 1, 2016 of 1,000 Americans.

Definitions

- **Christians** are those with a religious preference of Catholic, Protestant, Non-denominational Christian, or Orthodox
- **Evangelical Beliefs** are defined using the NAE Lifeway Research Evangelical Beliefs Research Definition based on respondent beliefs
- Respondents are asked their level of agreement with four separate statements using a four-point, forced choice scale (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). Those who strongly agree with all four statements are categorized as having Evangelical Beliefs
 - The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe
 - It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior
 - Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin
 - Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation

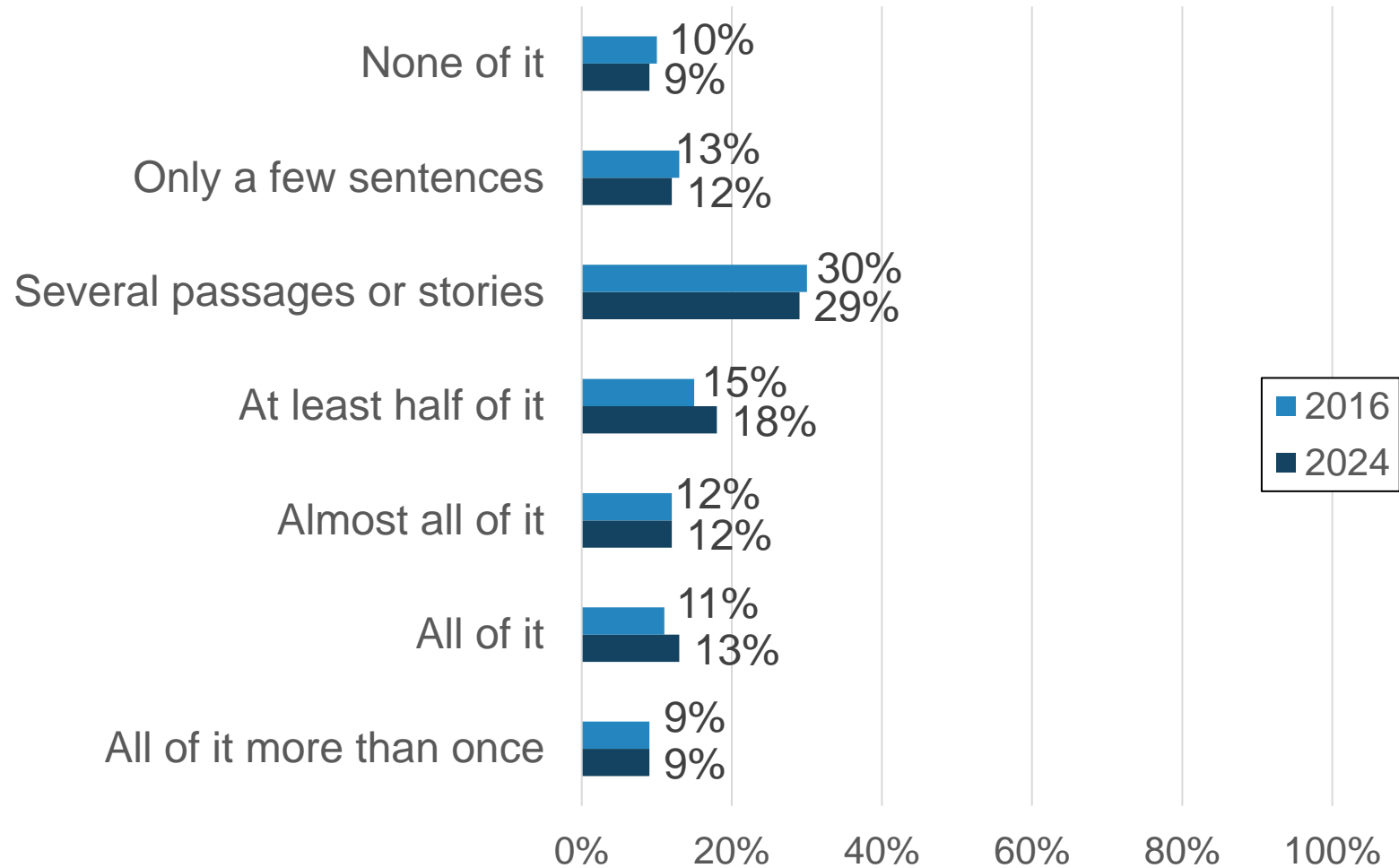
66% of Americans have read half of the Bible or less



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Q: "How much of the Bible have you personally read? (Select One)" n=1,200

The amount of the Bible Americans have read hasn't changed much in the last eight years

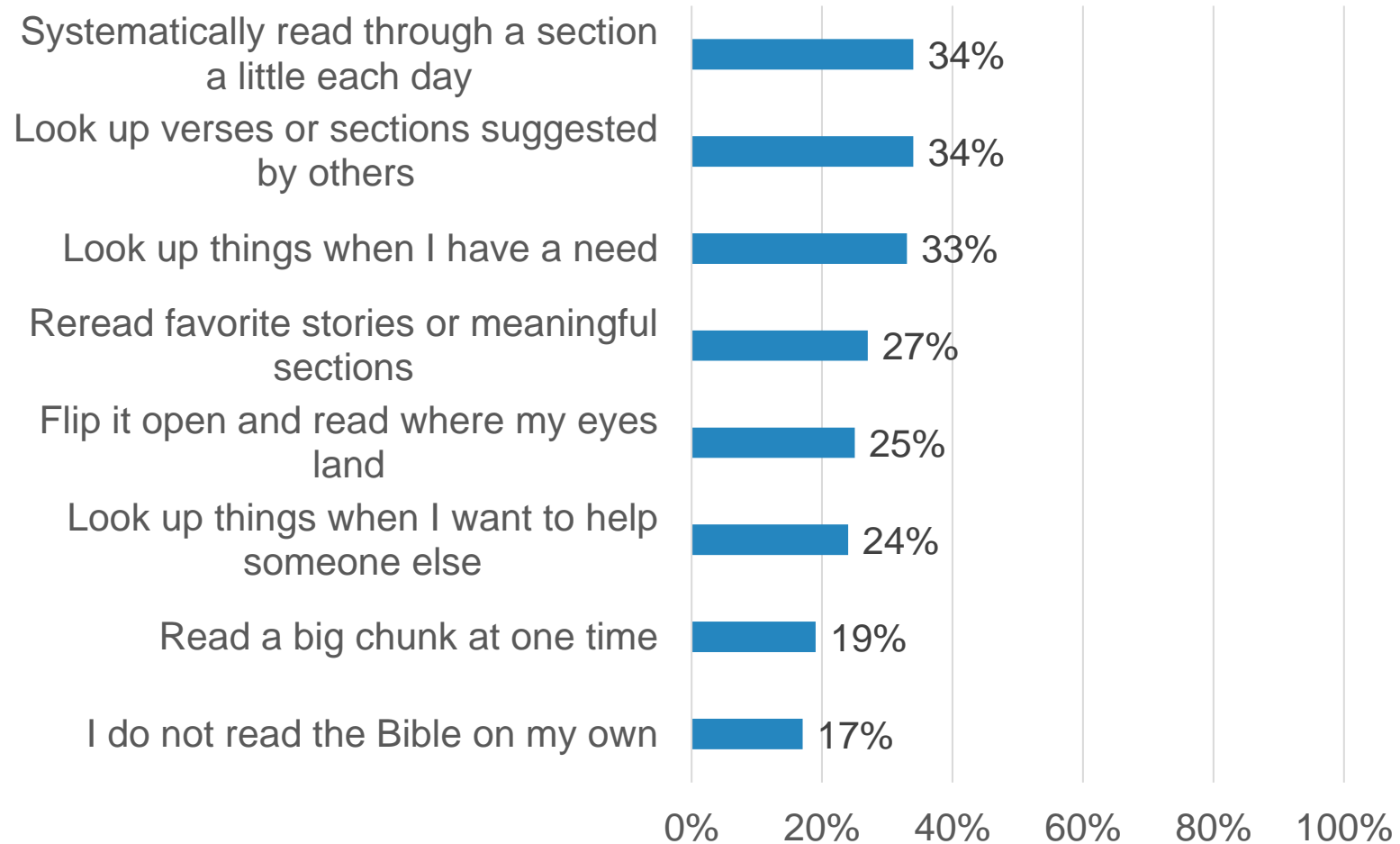


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Q: "How much of the Bible have you personally read? (Select One)"

“How have you typically approached reading the Bible on your own?”

Among those who have read part of the Bible

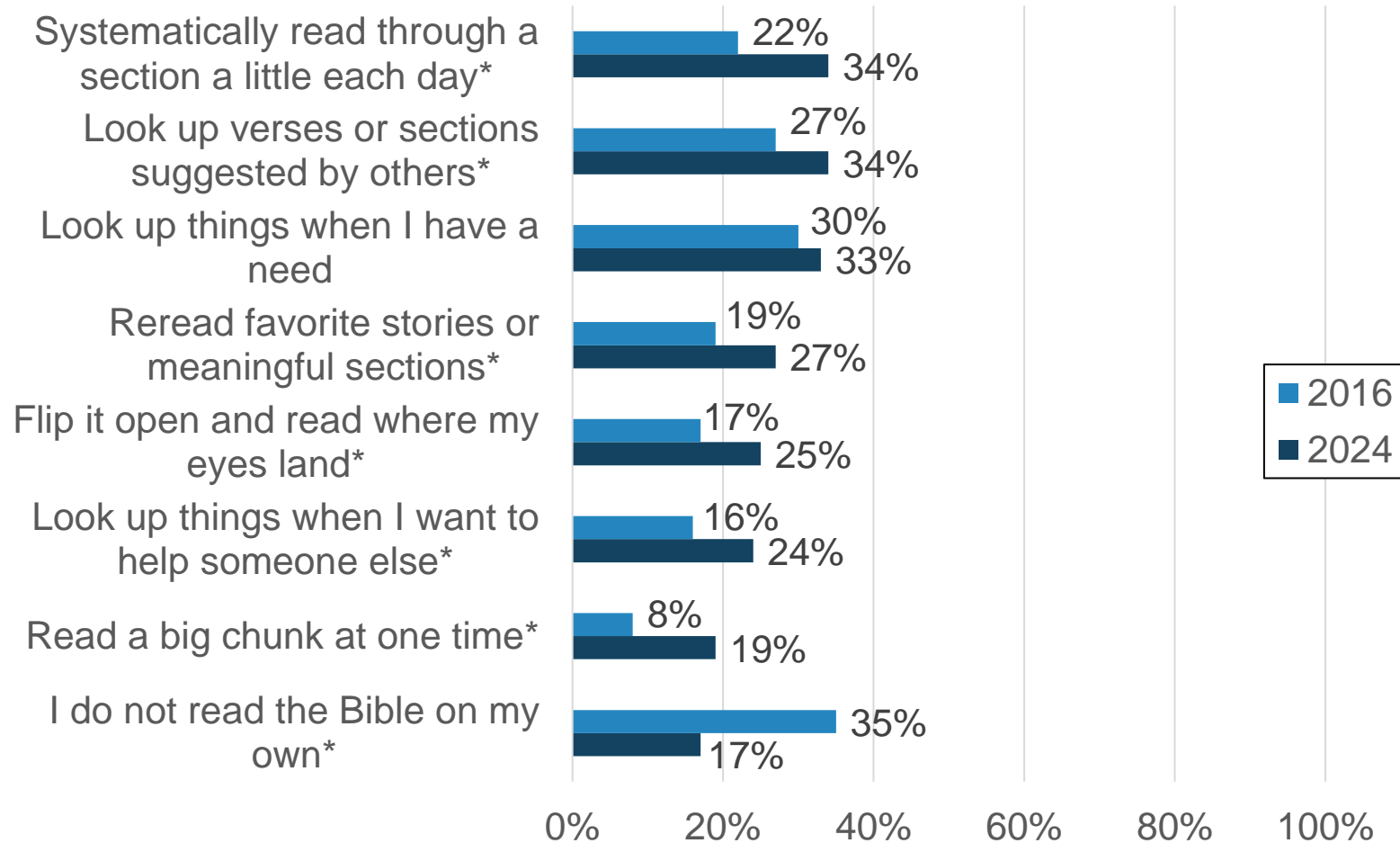


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Q: “How have you typically approached reading the Bible on your own?. (Select all that apply)” n=1,137 Asked how much of the Bible have you read ≠ None of it.

Half as many Americans say they don't read the Bible on their own (17% v. 35%), boosting almost all Bible reading approaches compared to 2016

Among those who have read part of the Bible

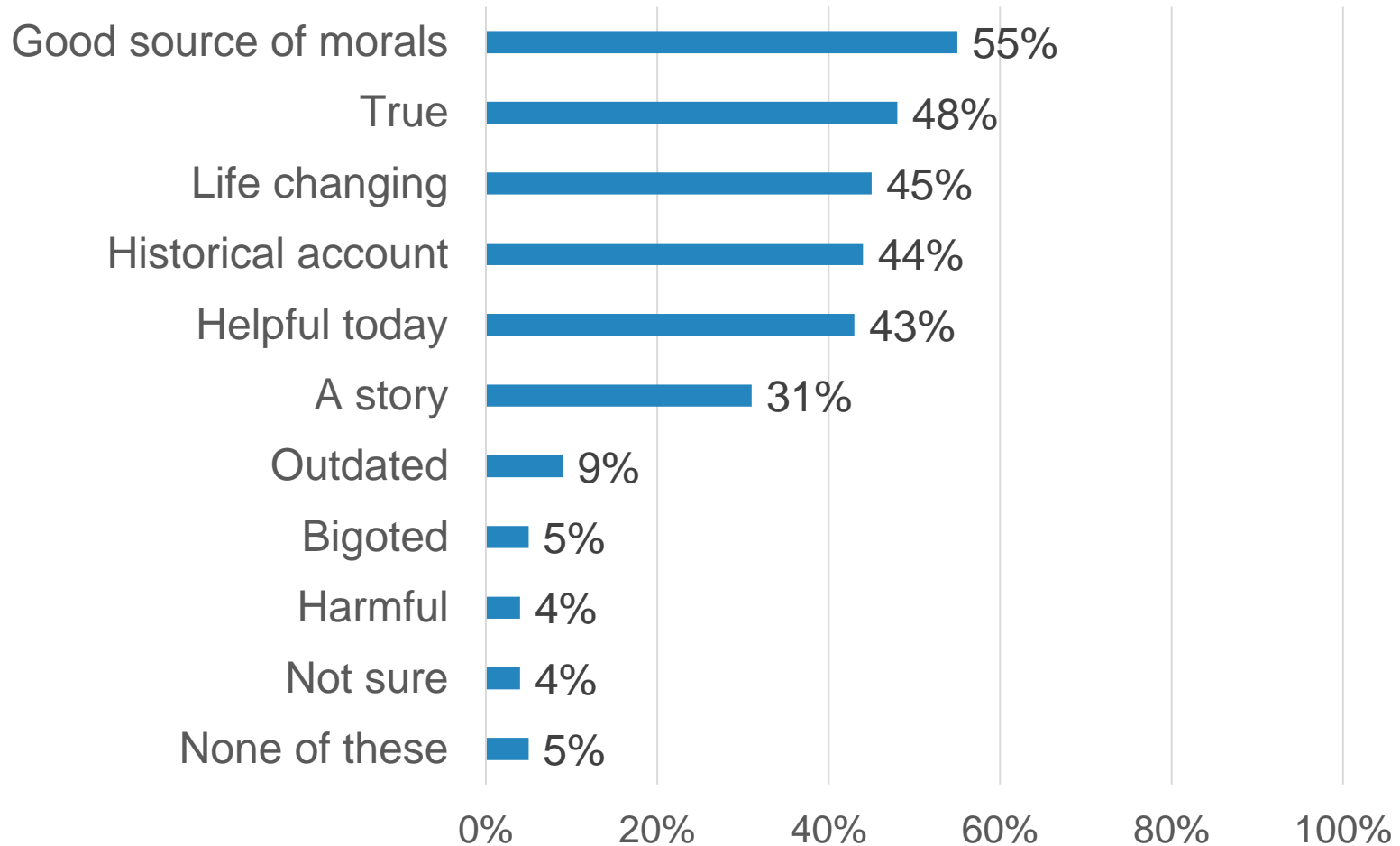


*Statistically significant difference

Lifewayresearch

Q: "How have you typically approached reading the Bible on your own?. (Select all that apply)" Asked how much of the Bible have you read ≠ None of it.

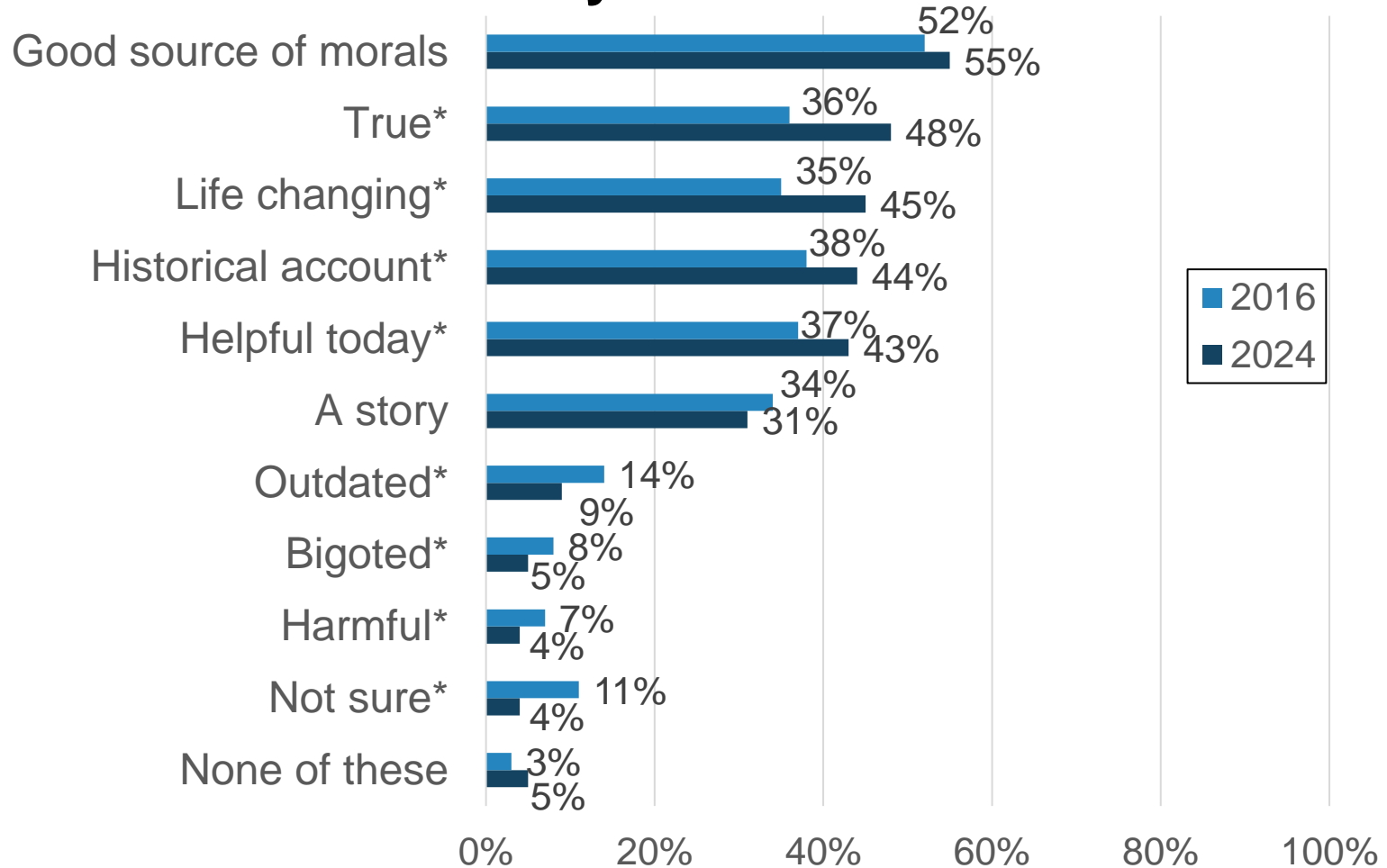
“Which of the following describe the Bible?”



Lifewayresearch

Q: “Which of the following describe the Bible? (Select all that apply)” n=1,200

Americans are more likely to describe the Bible as True, Life Changing, Historical Account, and Helpful Today than in 2016

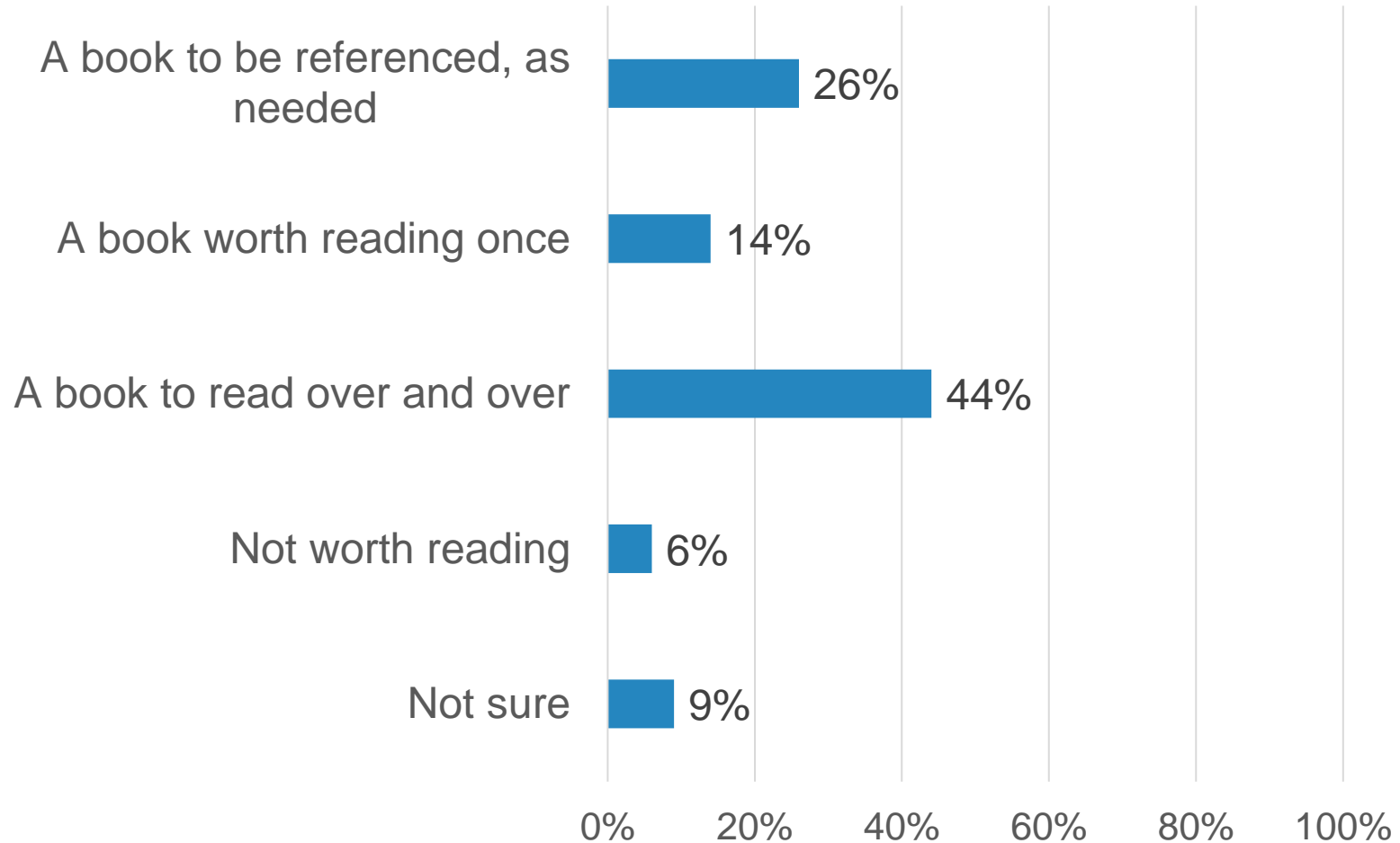


*Statistically significant difference

Lifewayresearch

Q: "Which of the following describe the Bible? (Select all that apply)"

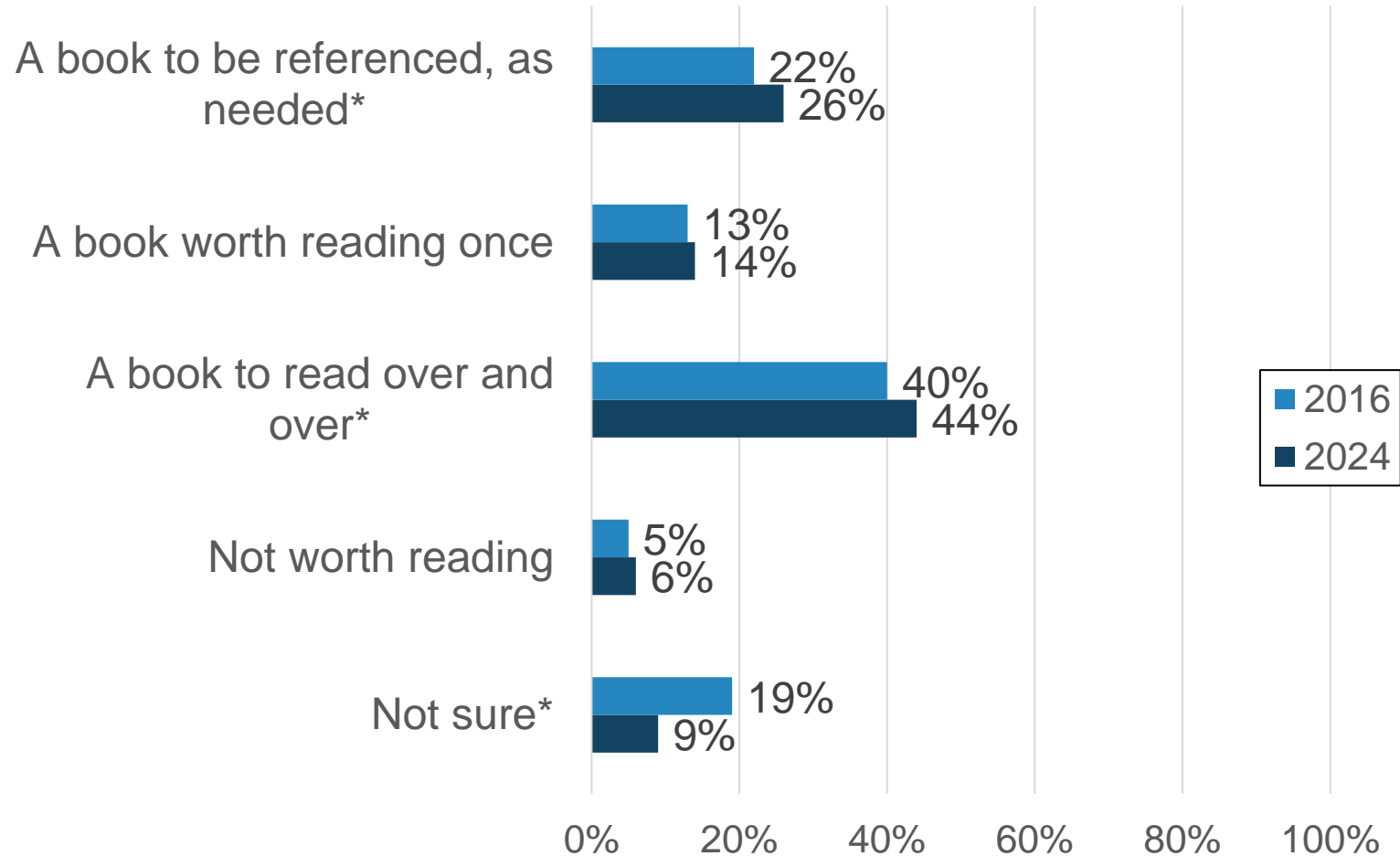
44% say that the Bible is book to be read over and over



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Q: "Which of the following best describes the Bible? (Select One)" n=1,200

More Americans have an opinion on whether the Bible is worth reading or referencing than in 2016

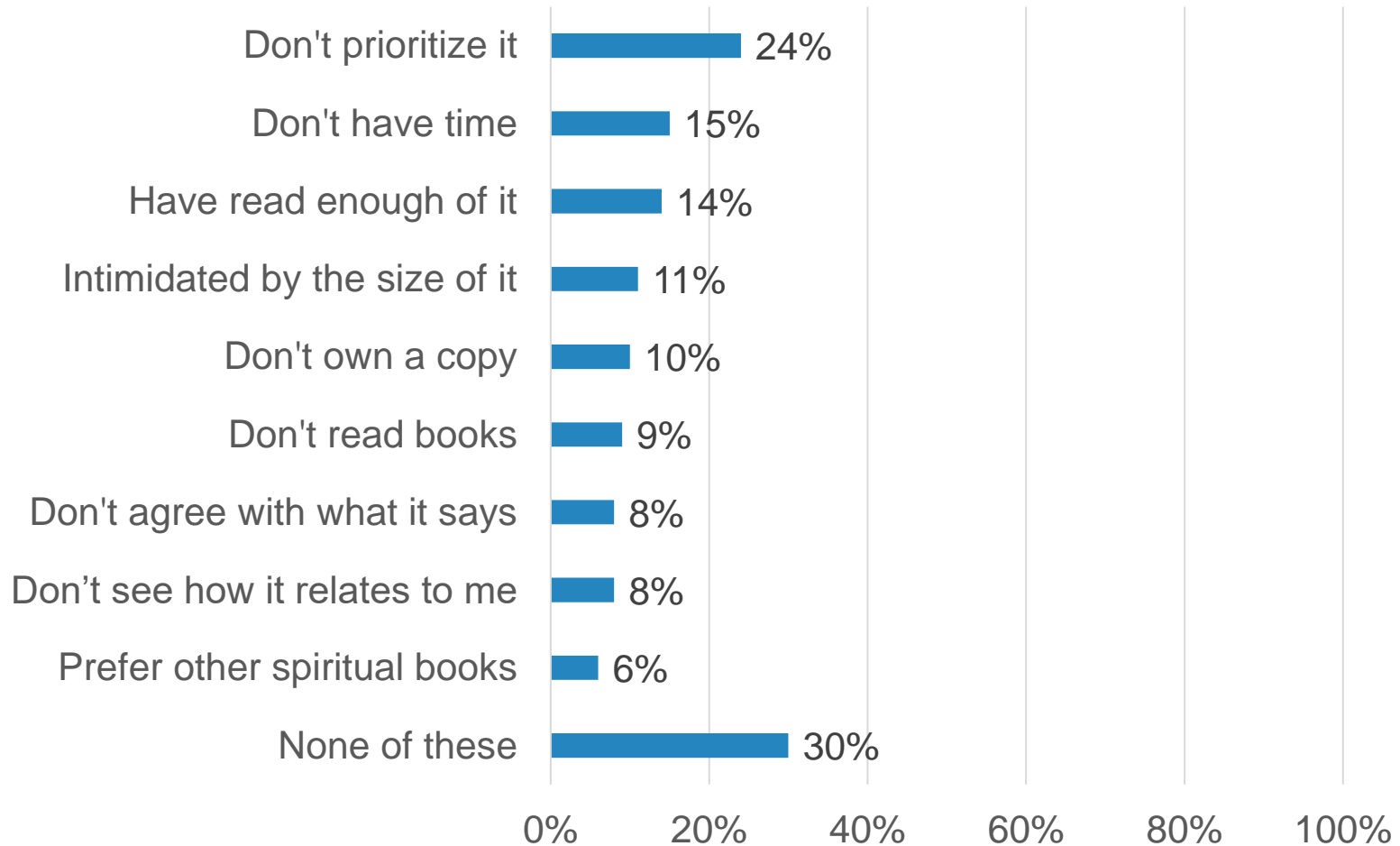


*Statistically significant difference

Lifewayresearch

Q: "Which of the following best describes the Bible? (Select One)"

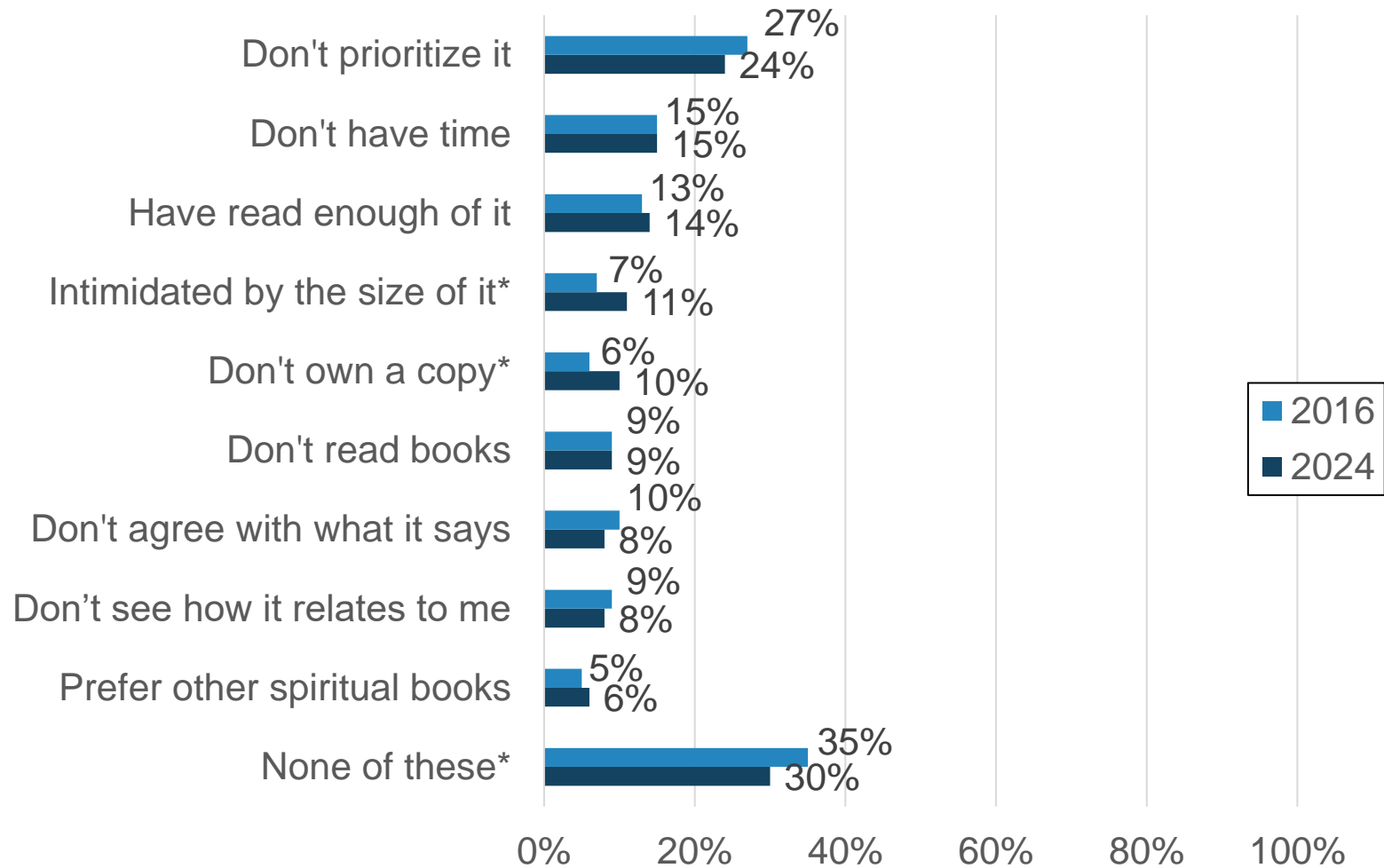
“Why have you not read the Bible more?”



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Q: “Why have you not read the Bible more? (Select all that apply)” n=1,200

Americans are more likely to say not owning a copy is why they haven't read the Bible more than in 2016



*Statistically significant difference

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Q: "Why have you not read the Bible more? (Select all that apply)" n=1,200

Significant Differences

Gender

Age

Ethnicity

Region

Education Level

Religion

Religious Service Attendance

Evangelical Beliefs

Significant Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among gender, age, ethnicity, region, and education.

GENDER	AGE	ETHNICITY	REGION	EDUCATION
Male	18-34	White	Northeast	High School graduate or less
Female	35-49	African American	Midwest	Some college
	50-64	Hispanic	South	Bachelor's Degree
	65+	Other Ethnicities	West	Graduate Degree

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among religion, religious service attendance, and evangelical beliefs.

RELIGION	RELIGIOUS SERVICE ATTENDANCE	EVANGELICAL BELIEFS
Catholic	More than once a week	Yes
Protestant	About once a week	No
Other Religions	Once or twice a month/ Only on religious holidays	
Unaffiliated	Rarely/Never	

“How much of the Bible have you personally read?”

- Females are more likely to select “Several passages or stories” than males (33% v. 24%)
- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “None of it” (15%)
- African Americans are the most likely to select “Several passages or stories” (40%)
- Those in the Midwest (36%) are more likely to select “Several passages or stories” than those in the South (28%) and West (23%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to select “Only a few sentences” (16%)
- Protestants (21%) and Other Religions (22%) are more likely to select “At least half of it” than Catholics (11%)
- Those who are Unaffiliated are the most likely to select “None of it” (19%)

“How much of the Bible have you personally read?” *Continued*

- Those who attend a religious service more than once a week are the most likely to select “All of it” (35%)
- Those who attend a religious service more than once a week (24%) or about once a week (17%) are more likely to select “All of it more than once” than those who attend once or twice a month/only on religious holidays (4%) or rarely/never attend (5%)
- Those who rarely/never attend a religious service are the most likely to select “Only a few sentences” (16%) and “None of it” (15%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “All of it” than those without evangelical beliefs (22% v. 10%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “All of it more than once” than those without evangelical beliefs (18% v. 7%)

“How have you typically approached reading the Bible on your own?”

Systematically read through a section a little each day

- Those age 18-34 are the most likely to select (47%)
- African Americans (45%) and Hispanics (43%) are more likely to select than Whites (29%)
- Those in the South (39%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (27%)
- Other Religions are the most likely to select (49%) followed by Protestants (38%)
- Those who attend a religious service more than once a week are the most likely to select (67%) followed by about once a week (51%), once or twice a month/only on religious holidays (32%), and rarely/never (20%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (53% v. 28%)

“How have you typically approached reading the Bible on your own?”

Read a big chunk at one time

- Those age 18-34 are the most likely to select (29%)
- African Americans (26%) are more likely to select than Whites (18%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (21%) are more likely to select than those with a Bachelor's Degree (15%)
- Those who attend a religious service more than once a week (28%) or about once a week (22%) are more likely to select than those who rarely/never attend (16%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (25% v. 17%)

“How have you typically approached reading the Bible on your own?”

Look up things when I have a need

- Females are more likely to select than males (37% v. 29%)
- Those age 35-49 are the most likely to select (42%)
- African Americans (40%) are more likely to select than Whites (32%)
- Those in the West (38%) are more likely to select than those in the South (30%)
- Religiously Unaffiliated are the least likely to select (13%)
- Protestants are more likely to select than Catholics (45% v. 30%)
- Those who rarely/never attend a religious service are the least likely to select (24%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (50% v. 28%)

“How have you typically approached reading the Bible on your own?”

Look up things when I want to help someone else

- Those age 18-34 (30%) and 35-49 (29%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (21%) and 65+ (16%)
- African Americans (30%) and Hispanics (35%) are more likely to select than Whites (20%)
- Protestants (28%) and Other Religions (28%) are more likely to select than Catholics (18%)
- Those who attend a religious service more than once a week are the most likely to select (51%) followed by about once a week (36%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (45% v. 18%)

“How have you typically approached reading the Bible on your own?”

Flip it open and read where my eyes land

- Those age 18-34 are the most likely to select (38%)
- African Americans (34%) and Hispanics (37%) are more likely to select than Whites (20%) and Other Ethnicities (15%)
- Those in the South (28%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (21%)
- Those who attend a religious service more than once a week (37%) are more likely to select than those who attend about once a week (23%) and rarely/never attend (23%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (34% v. 22%)

“How have you typically approached reading the Bible on your own?”

Look up verses or sections suggested by others

- Females are more likely to select than males (39% v. 29%)
- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select (25%)
- African Americans (46%) and Hispanics (38%) are more likely to select than Whites (30%)
- Those in the South (36%) and West (39%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (27%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree (42%) are more likely to select than those with some college (31%)
- Religiously Unaffiliated are the least likely to select (22%) followed by Catholics (31%)
- Those who rarely/never attend a religious service are the least likely to select (21%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (47% v. 30%)

“How have you typically approached reading the Bible on your own?”

Reread favorite stories or meaningful sections

- Females are more likely to select than males (30% v. 24%)
- Those age 35-49 (32%) are more likely to select than those 65+ (21%)
- African Americans (35%) are more likely to select than Whites (24%)
- Those in the West (32%) are more likely to select than those in the South (25%)
- Other Religions are the most likely to select (46%) followed by Protestants (35%), Catholics (22%), and the Unaffiliated (6%)
- Those rarely/never who attend a religious service are the least likely to select (17%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (42% v. 22%)

“How have you typically approached reading the Bible on your own?”

I don't read the Bible on my own

- Those age 18-34 are the least likely to select (5%)
- Whites (23%) and Other Ethnicities (22%) are more likely to select than African Americans (8%) and Hispanics (6%)
- Those in the West (20%) are more likely to select than those in the South (14%)
- Those with a Bachelor's Degree (22%) are more likely to select than those who are High School Graduates or less (14%)
- Catholics (22%) and Religiously Unaffiliated (28%) are more likely to select than Protestants (12%) and Other Religions (9%)
- Those who rarely/never attend a religious service are the most likely to select (30%)
- Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those with evangelical beliefs (22% v. 2%)

“Which of the following describe the Bible?”

Historical account

- Those age 50-64 are the most likely to select (55%)
- Those in the South (48%) and West (45%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (35%)
- Those with some college (47%) or a Graduate Degree (51%) are more likely to select than those who are High School Graduates or less (38%)
- Religiously Unaffiliated are the least likely to select (25%)
- Those who rarely/never attend a religious service are the least likely to select (35%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (58% v. 39%)

“Which of the following describe the Bible?”

Outdated

- Whites (12%) and Other Ethnicities (13%) are more likely to select than African Americans (4%) and Hispanics (1%)
- Those in the South are the least likely to select (3%)
- Those with some college (13%) are more likely to select than those who are High School Graduates or less (6%)
- Religiously Unaffiliated are the most likely to select (24%)
- Those who rarely/never attend a religious service are the most likely to select (15%)
- Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those with evangelical beliefs (11% v. 3%)

“Which of the following describe the Bible?”

Helpful today

- Those age 50-64 (48%) are more likely to select than those 18-34 (39%)
- African Americans (52%) are more likely to select than Whites (41%)
- Those in the South (46%) and West (46%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (36%)
- Those with a Bachelor's Degree (48%) or a Graduate Degree (51%) are more likely to select than those who are High School Graduates or less (38%)
- Protestants are the most likely to select (61%)
- Those who rarely/never attend a religious service are the least likely to select (30%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (66% v. 36%)

“Which of the following describe the Bible?”

Good source of morals

- Those age 50-64 (59%) are more likely to select than those 35-49 (51%)
- African Americans (71%) are more likely to select than Whites (52%) and Hispanics (50%)
- Those in the Midwest (56%) and South (59%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (47%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree (63%) are more likely to select than those who are High School Graduates or less (51%)
- Protestants are the most likely to select (71%) followed by Other religions (60%), Catholics (50%) and the Unaffiliated (31%)
- Those who rarely/never attend a religious service are the least likely to select (45%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (69% v. 51%)

“Which of the following describe the Bible?”

Harmful

- Males are more likely to select than females (7% v. 2%)
- Those age 50-64 are the least likely to select (1%)
- Whites (6%) are more likely to select than Hispanics (2%) and Other Ethnicities (0%)
- Those with some college (6%) are more likely to select than those with a Bachelor's Degree (2%)
- Religiously Unaffiliated are the most likely to select (11%)
- Those who attend a religious service about once a week are the least likely to select (1%)
- Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those with evangelical beliefs (5% v. 2%)

“Which of the following describe the Bible?”

True

- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select (37%)
- African Americans (67%) are more likely to select than Whites (43%) and Hispanics (50%)
- Those in the South are the most likely to select (58%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (53%) are more likely to select than those with a Bachelor's Degree (43%)
- Religiously Unaffiliated are the least likely to select (26%)
- Those who attend a religious service about once a week are the most likely to select (73%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (78% v. 39%)

“Which of the following describe the Bible?”

Life changing

- African Americans (59%) and Hispanics (57%) are more likely to select than Whites (38%)
- Those in the South (52%) are more likely to select than those in the Northeast (34%) and Midwest (39%)
- Religiously Unaffiliated are the least likely to select (16%)
- Those who rarely/never attend a religious service are the least likely to select (29%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those without evangelical beliefs (81% v. 34%)

“Which of the following describe the Bible?”

Bigoted

- Males are more likely to select than females (6% v. 4%)
- Those age 18-34 (8%) are more likely to select than those 50-64 (4%) and 65+ (2%)
- African Americans (10%) are more likely to select than Hispanics (2%) and Other Ethnicities (2%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (6%) are more likely to select than those with a Graduate Degree (2%)
- Religiously Unaffiliated are the most likely to select (11%)
- Those who attend a religious service once or twice a month/only on religious holidays (9%) are more likely to select than those who attend about once a week (4%) or rarely/never attend (4%)

“Which of the following describe the Bible?”

A story

- Those age 65+ (38%) are more likely to select than those 35-49 (27%) and 50-64 (26%)
- African Americans (36%) are more likely to select than Hispanics (26%)
- Those in the Northeast (38%) and West (33%) are more likely to select than those in the South (26%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree (40%) are more likely to select than those who are High School Graduates or less (27%) or with some college (29%)
- Catholics (34%) and Religiously Affiliated (36%) are more likely to select than Protestants (26%)
- Those who attend a religious service once or twice a month/only on religious holidays (36%) or rarely/never attend (35%) are more likely to select than those who attend more than once a week (22%) or about once a week (23%)
- Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those with evangelical beliefs (33% v. 24%)

“Which of the following best describes the Bible?”

- Males are more likely to select “A book to be referenced, as needed” than females (31% v. 22%)
- Those age 35-49 (31%) are more likely to select “A book to be referenced, as needed” than those 65+ (23%)
- African Americans are the most likely to select “A book to be read over and over” (58%)
- Those in the South are the most likely to select “A book to be read over and over” (51%)
- Those in the West are the most likely to select “Not worth reading” (14%)
- Those with a Graduate Degree (51%) are more likely to select “A book to be read over and over” than those with some college (39%)

“Which of the following best describes the Bible?” *Continued*

- Catholics are more likely to select “A book to be referenced, as needed” (37%) and “A book worth reading once” (21%)
- Catholics are the least likely to select “A book to read over and over” (33%)
- The Unaffiliated are the most likely to select “Not worth reading” (20%)
- Those who attend a religious service more than once a week are the most likely to select “A book to be read over and over” (74%) followed by about once a week (63%), once or twice a month/only on religious holidays (54%), and rarely/never (26%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “A book to be read over and over” than those without evangelical beliefs (77% v. 34%)

“Why have you not read the Bible more?”

Intimidated by the size of it

- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select (6%)
- African Americans (15%) are more likely to select than Other Ethnicities (6%)
- Religiously Unaffiliated are the least likely to select (6%)

“Why have you not read the Bible more?”

Prefer other spiritual books

- Those age 18-34 are the most likely to select (12%)
- African Americans (12%) are more likely to select than Whites (5%) and Other Ethnicities (3%)
- Those in the Northeast (9%) are more likely to select than those in the West (4%)
- Protestants are the least likely to select (2%)
- Those who rarely/never attend a religious service are the least likely to select (2%)

“Why have you not read the Bible more?”

Don't prioritize it

- Whites (28%) are more likely to select than Hispanics (14%) and Other Ethnicities (17%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the least likely to select (16%)
- Protestants (26%) and Religiously Unaffiliated (26%) are more likely to select than Other Religions (18%)
- Those who attend a religious service once or twice a month/only on religious holidays (28%) or rarely/never attend (28%) are more likely to select than those who attend more than once a week (15%) or about once a week (18%)
- Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those with evangelical beliefs (27% v. 16%)

“Why have you not read the Bible more?”

Don't have time

- Females are more likely to select than males (17% v. 13%)
- Those age 65+ are the least likely to select (7%)
- African Americans (21%) are more likely to select than White (14%)
- Those in the Northeast (21%) are more likely to select than those in the South (14%) and West (13%)
- Those who attend a religious service once or twice a month/only on religious holidays (19%) are more likely to select than those who attend more than once a week (10%)

“Why have you not read the Bible more?”

Don't agree with what it says

- Males are more likely to select than females (10% v. 6%)
- Those age 18-34 (12%) are more likely to select than those 35-49 (4%) and 50-64 (7%)
- Other Ethnicities are the least likely to select (1%)
- Those in the Northeast (11%) and South (10%) are more likely to select than those in the Midwest (4%)
- Religiously Unaffiliated are the most likely to select (22%)
- Those who attend a religious service more than once a week (16%) are more likely to select than those who attend about once a week (2%) and once or twice a month/only on religious holidays (6%)

“Why have you not read the Bible more?”

Don't own a copy

- Those age 18-34 (13%) are more likely to select than those 65+ (8%)
- Those in the South are the least likely to select (5%)
- Protestants are the least likely to select (4%)
- Those who rarely/never attend a religious service are the most likely to select (15%)
- Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those with evangelical beliefs (11% v. 6%)

“Why have you not read the Bible more?”

Don't see how it relates to me

- Males are more likely to select than females (10% v. 5%)
- Those age 18-34 (10%) and 65+ (11%) are more likely to select than those 35-49 (3%)
- Other Ethnicities (16%) are more likely to select than Whites (7%) and Hispanics (5%)
- Those in the West are the most likely to select (14%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the least likely to select (5%)
- Religiously Unaffiliated are the most likely to select (20%)
- Those who rarely/never attend a religious service (11%) are more likely to select than those who attend more than once a week (4%) or about once a week (5%)
- Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those with evangelical beliefs (10% v. 1%)

“Why have you not read the Bible more?”

Have read enough of it

- Males are more likely to select than females (17% v. 11%)
- Those age 18-34 (18%) are more likely to select than those 65+ (10%)
- African Americans (19%) are more likely to select than Other Ethnicities (8%)
- Those in the Midwest (18%) and South (16%) are more likely to select than those in the West (9%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (16%) or with a Bachelor's Degree (17%) are more likely to select than those with some college (9%)
- Those without evangelical beliefs are more likely to select than those with evangelical beliefs (15% v. 10%)

“Why have you not read the Bible more?”

Don't read books

- Those age 50-64 (12%) and 65+ (11%) are more likely to select than those 18-34 (7%) and (7%)
- Whites (10%) are more likely to select than Other Ethnicities (3%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (11%) are more likely to select than those with a Bachelor's Degree (6%)
- Catholics (13%) are more likely to select than Protestants (7%) and Other Religions (6%)
- Those who attend a religious service once or twice a month/only on religious holidays (11%) or rarely/never attend (10%) are more likely to select than those who attend more than once a week (2%)

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