

A young boy with short dark hair is sitting up in bed, reading a large, dark-colored Bible. He is holding the book with both hands. The Bible is open, and the pages are yellowed with age. The text on the pages is partially visible, including "ISAIAH 51:20" and "461". The boy's face is partially obscured by the book. The background is a dark wood headboard. The bed is covered with a white, patterned blanket. The overall scene is warm and intimate.

LIVING WORD / ETERNAL WORD

*foundations for
life and faith*

Can I really trust the Bible?

And other questions about Scripture, truth and how God speaks



Barry Cooper

"This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

Luke 24:44

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God."

Colossians 3:16

Psalm 119: Teth ו

65 You have dealt well with your servant,
O LORD, according to your word.

66 Teach me good judgment and knowledge,
for I believe in your commandments.

67 ¶ Before I was afflicted I went astray,
but now I keep your word.

68 ¶ You are good and do good;
teach me your statutes.

69 ¶ The insolent smear me with lies,
but with my whole heart I keep your precepts;

70 their heart is unfeeling like fat,
but I delight in your law.

71 ¶ It is good for me that I was afflicted,
that I might learn your statutes.

72 ¶ The law of your mouth is better to me
than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

Good **בִּטּוֹ** you have dealt with your servant Lord,
according to your word. Vs 65

Good **בִּטּוֹ** judgement and knowledge teach me,
for in your commands I have believed. Vs 66

Good בִּטּוֹ you are and good **בִּטּוֹ** you do,
teach me your statutes. vs 68

Good **בִּטּוֹ** it is for me that I have been afflicted,
that to the end I might learn your statutes. Vs71

Good **בִּטּוֹ** is the law to me from your mouth,
than thousands of silver and gold. Vs 72

1) The goodness of God

Good **בִּיט**you have dealt with your servant Lord,
according to your word. Vs 65

Good **בִּיט**you are and good **בִּיט**you do,
teach me your statutes. vs 68

2) The goodness of affliction

Good בִּטּוֹ it is for me that I have been afflicted,
that to the end I might learn your statutes. Vs71

3) The goodness of the Word

Good בִּיט is the law to me from your mouth, than thousands of silver and gold. Vs 72

A Consolation in Affliction

by Thomas Watson

(c. 1620 – 1686)

"You have dealt well with your servant, O Lord,
according unto your word."

Psalm 119:65

Question: In what ways does God deal well with his people?

Answer: In enriching them with varied mercies; his paths "drop fatness" (Psalm 65:11); he feeds, adopts, and crowns them! Is not this dealing well with them?

Objection:

But how does God deal well with the saints, when he lays his hand so heavy upon them in affliction? His pen is full of gall, and he writes bitter things against them! "All the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning" (Psalm 73:14). How does God deal well with his people—when it fares ill with them?

Answer:

It must be held as an undoubted maxim—that when the Lord severely chastises the saints, he deals well with them. But we are ready to question this truth, and say as Mary to the angel, "How can this be?" Therefore I shall demonstrate it, that, when it goes badly with the righteous—yet God deals well with them.

1. When the Lord afflicts the saints—yet he deals well with them, because he is their God. David was in the depths of sorrow (Psalm 131:1)—yet he could say the Lord was his portion (Psalm 16:5). God is an "exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15:1). He is a whole paradise of delight! He who has God for his God—all his estate lies in jewels!..... here is enough to compensate for all their troubles. What can God give—more than himself!

2. When it goes badly with the godly—yet God deals well with them because, while he is inflicting evil upon them, he is doing them good.

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted"
(Psalm 119:71).

David does not say, "It is good for me that I have been in prosperity"—but "that I have been afflicted".

a. Affliction makes the godly grow wiser.

Affliction is a school of wisdom. Affliction reveals pride, earthliness, unmortified passion, which they could not have believed was in their hearts. Affliction cures the eyesight—to see one's self.

b. Affliction promotes holiness.

The more the diamond is cut, the more it sparkles! "That we might be partakers of his holiness" (Heb. 12:10). When prosperity makes grace rust—God scours us with affliction!

God by the wholesome discipline of the cross, makes them more humble, and more conformed to Christ's image. The sharp frosts of affliction bring on the spring flowers of grace. Now if God, while he is chastising, is doing us good—then surely he deals well with us.

3. When God puts his children to the school of the cross—yet he deals well with them because he does not leave them without a promise.

"God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." (1 Cor 10:13).

...he will not lay a giant's burden upon a child's back. God will not stretch the strings of his violin too hard, lest they break. If God should strike with one hand, he will support with the other hand. (Song of Sol. 8:3). Either he will make our yoke lighter—or our faith stronger. This promise is honey at the end of the rod.

4. God deals well with his people when he afflicts, because afflictions are preventative.

a. Afflictions prevent SIN. "To keep me from getting puffed up, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger from Satan to torment me and keep me from getting proud." (2 Cor. 12:7).

Prosperity, like opium, is ready to make men fall asleep in sin. God awakens them by the voice of the rod, and so prevents a spiritual lethargy.

b. Afflictions prevent HELL. "We are chastened of the Lord—that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Cor. 11:32).

Is it not goodness in God, when he lays upon us light affliction—and saves us from wrath to come (2 Cor. 4:17) What is a drop of sorrow which the godly taste—compared to the bottomless sea of wrath the wicked must drink!

5. When God corrects he deals well with his people, because all he does is in love.

Afflictions are sharp arrows—but they are shot from the hand of a loving father!

God's chastising the godly is in love.

"As many as I love—I rebuke and discipline."

(Rev. 3:19).

When God has the look of an enemy—he has the heart of a father! When Abraham lifted up his hand to sacrifice Isaac—he loved him. Just so, when God sacrifices the comforts of his children—he loves them.

6. When God afflicts, he deals well with his people, because he takes away nothing from them—but he gives them that which is better.

What damage can it be to a man to lose his pennies—and have gold given him? If God takes away health—he gives holiness. If he takes away a child—he gives a Christ! Is not this better? God takes away a flower—and gives a jewel!

7. When God afflicts his children he deals well with them, because he gives them his divine presence. "I will be with him in trouble!" (Psalm 91:15).

God never promised us a charter of exemption from trouble—but he has promised to be with us in trouble. Better be in a prison and have God's presence—than on a throne and lack it!

8. God in afflicting deals well with his children, because he gives them that which makes amends for their afflictions.

He drops in the oil of gladness; he makes them gather grapes from thorns: "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy!" (John 16:20).

"As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds by Christ (2 Cor. 1:5). Paul had his prison songs! (Acts 16:25). This bird of paradise could sing in winter! God turns the bitter waters of Marah into wine! He keeps his cordials for cases of fainting.

When the saints taste most of the wrath of men—they shall feel most of the love of God. Thus the Lord candies his wormwood with sugar!

9. When God corrects his children he deals well with them, because these afflictions, or hot trials, do not last long. After the clouds—the sun appears. "I will punish the descendants of David because of Solomon's sin—though not forever!" (1 Kings 11:39). God will love forever—but not afflict forever! He will before long give his people a writ of ease. A sinner's best, and a saint's worst—are but short! Affliction is called a cup. (Ezek. 23:32). The wicked drink a sea of wrath; the godly only sip of the cup of affliction! And God will shortly say, "Let this cup pass away from them!" "Sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10). As affliction has a sting to torment—so it has a wing to fly!

God will love forever—but not afflict forever! He will before long give his people a writ of ease. A sinner's best, and a saint's worst—are but short!

Affliction is called a cup. (Ezek. 23:32). The wicked drink a sea of wrath; the godly only sip of the cup of affliction! And God will shortly say, "Let this cup pass away from them!" "Sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isaiah 35:10). As affliction has a sting to torment—so it has a wing to fly!

10 . When God puts his children to the school of the cross he deals well with them, because these afflictions lead them by the hand to heaven. By the cross—we mount to heaven! "Our light affliction works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!" (2 Cor. 4:17).

Upon the dark color of affliction—God lays the golden color of glory! O weeping saint, what a blessed change you shall shortly have! You shall change your pilgrimage—for paradise. You shall have your wish. Are riches desirable? You shall have gates of pearl. Is honor desirable? You shall have white robes. Is pleasure desirable? You shall enter into the joy of the Lord!

Oh, think what it will be to be sweetly immersed in the River of Life, and bathe in the honey-streams of God's love forever!

Think what the beatific vision will be!....Oh, what a compensation this will be for all a Christian's trials! A sight of this bliss will make him forget his sufferings! One sunbeam of glory will dry up the water of his tears!

Oh, let us take heed of having harsh thoughts of God!

The patient has no cause to think badly of the physician, when he prescribes him a bitter potion—seeing it is in order to a cure! God's afflictive providences are the strokes of a father—not the wounds of an enemy! God smites—that he may save. Out of the bitterest affliction—God distills his glory, and our happiness!

3) The goodness of the Word

Good **בִּיט** is the law to me from your mouth, than thousands of silver and gold. Vs 72

Good **בִּיט** judgement and knowledge teach me, for in your commands I have believed. Vs 66

Good **בִּיט** you are and good **בִּיט** you do, teach me your statutes. vs 68

Good **בִּיט** it is for me that I have been afflicted, that to the end I might learn your statutes. Vs71

My comfort in my suffering is this: Your
promise preserves my life.

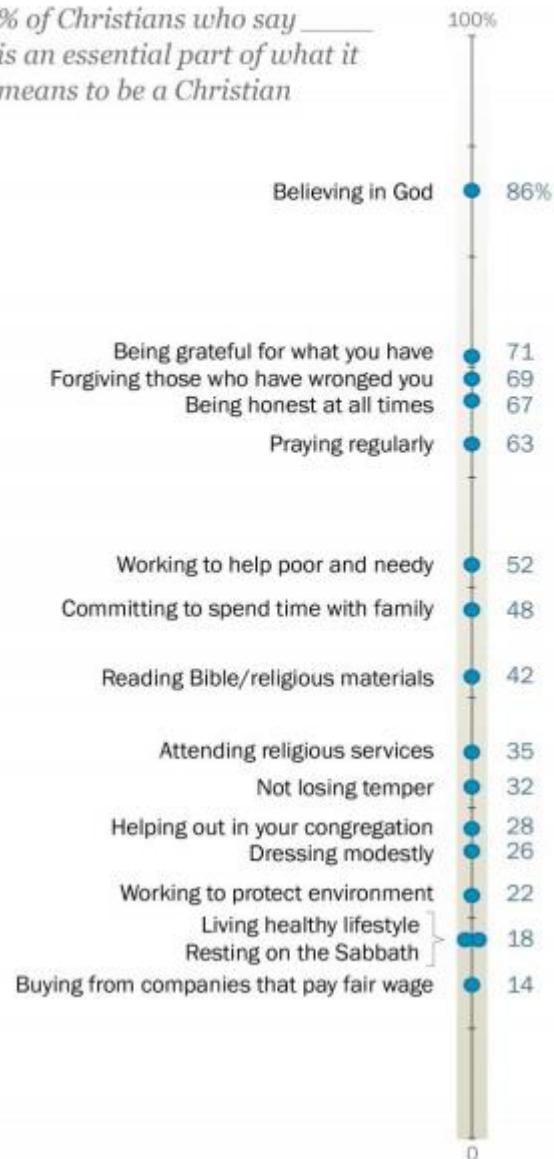
Ps 119:50

If your law had not been my delight,
I would have perished in my affliction.

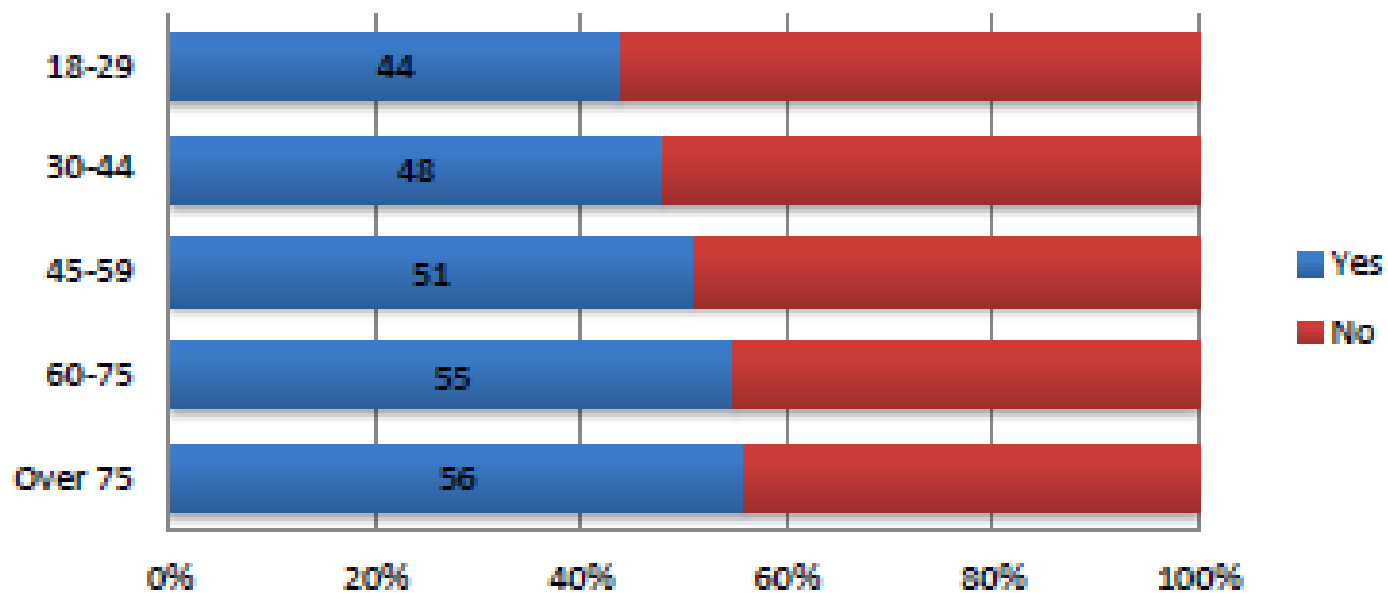
Ps 119:92

Belief in God, gratitude, forgiveness and honesty top 'essentials' of what it means to be a Christian

% of Christians who say _____ is an essential part of what it means to be a Christian



Ages of Those Reading Scripture in Past Year





THE BIBLE IS SUFFICIENT FOR MEANINGFUL LIVING

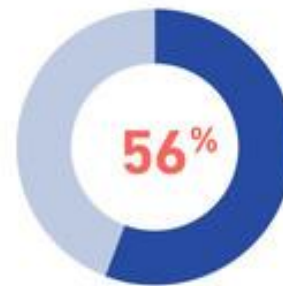
% "strongly agree" among U.S. adults 18+



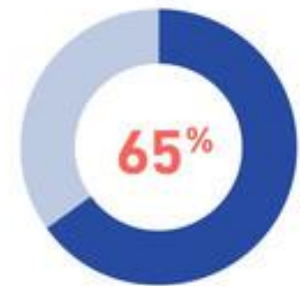
Millennials



Gen-Xers



Boomers



Elders

Read the Bible at Least Once in Past Year

