

Engaging with God's Word 4 or more times a week can change everything.

Did you know that reading or reflecting on Scripture just four times a week leads to measurable spiritual growth, stronger faith, and positive life choices? It's not a gimmick — it's backed by research from [Center for Bible Engagement](#), and we see it in real life every day.

At First English Lutheran Church (FELC), we want the Power of 4 to be part of everyone's life. Here's how we can help you build a habit of Bible engagement, supported by your church family:

Worship with us

Sundays at 10:30 AM

Hear the Word preached, sung, prayed, and proclaimed as we gather together.

Join a Bible Study

- Sundays at 9:00 AM – Pericope Study (walk through the week's readings)
- Wednesdays at 7:00 PM – Evening Bible Study with discussion and fellowship

Daily Devotions at Your Fingertips

Visit <https://www.firstenglish701.org/main/> — our homepage has a link to fresh, Christ-centered devotions every day.

Portals of Prayer

Free devotion booklets available to all FELC members and guests — perfect for your morning coffee or evening wind-down.

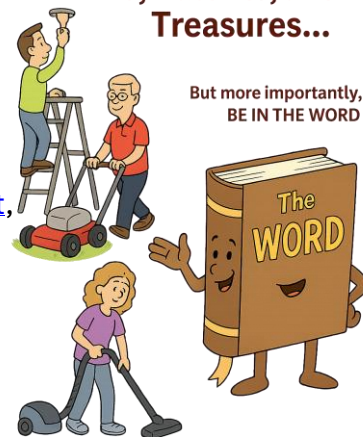
Global Bible Study with Pastor Bryan Wolfmueller

Looking for something online? Watch Pastor Wolfmueller's free, engaging Bible studies at your pace: <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDuiZ9TONKRSjH0ELSax1HxBVoVveGe6u&feature=shared>

Let God's Word shape your week — and your life.
Whether it's worship, a study group, a quiet devotion, or a YouTube playlist, there are so many ways to stay in the Word. Don't wait — start your Power of 4 today.

FELC — Serving Northeast Colorado since 1927
Rooted in Scripture. Grounded in Grace. Growing in Christ.

**FELC Needs Your
Time, Talents, and
Treasures...**



Your time, talents, and treasures are a gift to FELC — but most importantly, we want you in Worship and the Word.

Bible Engagement and "The Power of 4": A Key to Spiritual Growth

Updated: Jun 17 2025

What difference does engaging the Bible make in a person's life? Over a span of eight years, the Center for Bible Engagement (CBE) surveyed more than 100,000 people from around the world about their spiritual lives and *consistently* found that engaging the Bible four or more days a week has a profound impact on an individual's life. In fact, for Christ-followers, regularly hearing from God through His Word is the single most powerful predictor of spiritual growth.

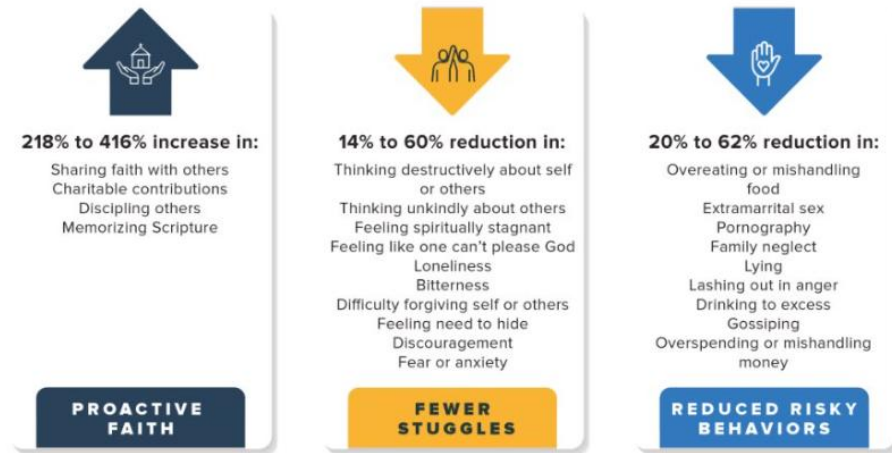


The following is a synthesis of CBE research, known as "The Power of 4," addressing frequent Bible engagement as a predictor of spiritual growth. During the course of this work, CBE researchers measured multiple aspects of spiritual growth including moral behavior, emotional struggles, proactively living out the Christian faith, and self-perceived growth. Below are key findings from this research:

- **Engaging Scripture most days of the week produces a more proactive faith among Christians.** Controlling for age, gender, church attendance, and prayer practices, individuals engaged in the Bible have significantly higher odds of giving financially, memorizing Scripture, and sharing their faith with others.
- **People's perceptions of their own spiritual growth are also impacted by how often they hear from God through the Bible.** Those who engage Scripture most days of the week are less likely to feel spiritually stagnant and to feel that they can't please God.
- **Receiving, reflecting on, and responding to God's Word four or more times a week decreases a person's odds of struggling with select issues**, such as feeling bitter, thinking destructively about self or others, having difficulty forgiving others, and feeling discouraged.
- **A person who engages the Bible four or more times a week is much less likely to give into certain temptations**, such as drinking to excess, viewing pornography, lashing out in anger, gossiping, and lying.

THE POWER OF 4

Engaging in the Bible 4+ days per week is related to:



Source: Center for Bible Engagement (CBE) White Paper, *Bible Engagement as the Key to Spiritual Growth: A Research Synthesis* (2012)

In sum, the powerful effects of Bible engagement on spiritual growth have been reliably demonstrated across many of our earlier studies (reported in [2006](#), 2009 [\[1\]](#) [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#), and [2012](#)). In addition, organizations such as the Willow Creek Association (Hawkins & Parkinson, 2007) and Lifeway Research (Geiger, Lekkey, & Nation, 2012) have reported similar findings, as well. Together these independent lines of research lead to one simple conclusion:

Engaging the Bible most days of the week is critically needed to grow in the Christian faith.

The next section (taken from our [2012 white paper](#)) summarizes CBE's "Power of 4" research over an eight-year period and makes the case for why Bible engagement is a key to spiritual growth. Of all the Bible practices we've considered in our research, *none* have been able to predict spiritual growth as reliably as Bible engagement does.

What We Did

To synthesize the research, we drew on data from internet-based surveys of more than 108,196 individuals ranging in age from eight years to more than 80. Some of our surveys were of random samples of the general population in the United States and 20 other countries. Other surveys were of non-random samples of self-identified Christ-followers in settings such as churches and parachurch ministries.

To get the most complete picture possible, CBE researchers included a mix of both close-ended and open-ended questions, covering topics such as:

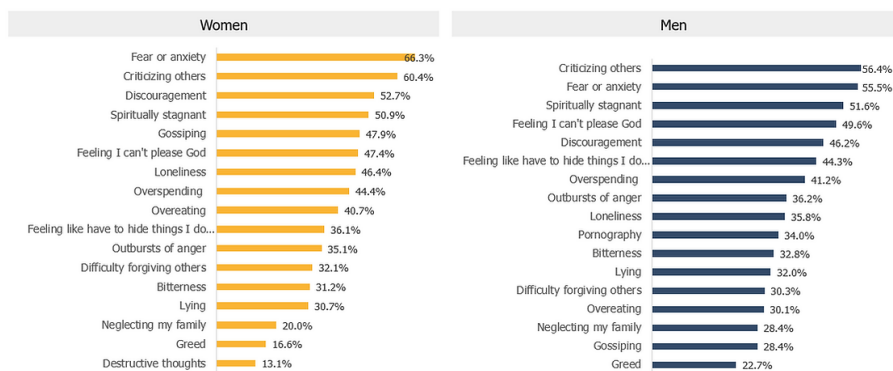
- Religious preference and beliefs
- Beliefs about communicating with God
- Beliefs about spiritual growth and maturity
- Religious service attendance
- Engagement in prayer and with the Bible
- Involvement in other spiritual disciplines and religious activities
- Daily temptations, struggles, and moral behavior

Measuring spiritual growth presents a daunting challenge. Theologians disagree on how to define spiritual growth or formation, and even more, how to measure it. Conceptually, our definition of spiritual growth is quite simple: Spiritual growth is “becoming less of the person I was before I committed my life to following Jesus” and “more like Christ in my thoughts, words and deeds.” We took a two-prong approach to measuring spiritual growth. First, our researchers considered moral behavior and emotional struggles. Although behavior is important, only the individual knows his/her true spiritual condition. Thus, we also included a self-assessment component in the measure of spiritual growth. This addressed not only how respondents would describe their current spiritual life, but also how often they felt spiritually stalled.

Bible Engagement, Moral Behavior, & Personal Struggles

The graph below shows how often people who attend church regularly struggle with various behaviors, attitudes, and emotions. For the majority of men and women, fear or anxiety, unkind thoughts about others, and feeling spiritually stagnant are something they struggle with at least monthly.

Struggles Among Christ-Followers Who Attend Church Monthly



Source: Center for Bible Engagement (CBE) White Paper, *Bible Engagement as the Key to Spiritual Growth: A Research Synthesis* (2012)

We expect to give in to temptation less as we grow spiritually. The assumption is that spiritual practices such as attending church, praying, participating in small groups, and engaging the Bible foster spiritual growth. Many of these practices are indeed correlated with each other. For example, those who attend church are more likely to pray and engage the Bible than those who don't. Statistical models that separate out the effects of each are needed to understand how each spiritual practice is uniquely related to spiritual growth.

About the Power of 4

Across surveys, CBE researchers repeatedly examined the relationship between spiritual practices, moral behavior, and struggles. Logistic regression analyses controlling for factors such as age,

gender, church attendance, and prayer practices have consistently shown that Bible engagement uniquely predicts how often people of varied demographics give into temptations and struggles. Summarizing all of the studies, we found that if a person engages the Bible four or more times a week, their odds of giving in to these temptations decreases:

- Drinking to excess -62%
- Viewing pornography -59%
- Having sex outside marriage -59%
- Gambling -45%
- Lashing out in anger -31%
- Gossiping – 28%
- Lying -28%
- Neglecting family -26%
- Overeating or mishandling food -20%
- Overspending or mishandling money -20%

Bible engagement also produces more peace and joy in a person's life by reducing the frequency of various emotional struggles. Receiving, reflecting on, and responding to God's Word four or more times a week decreases a person's odds of struggling with these issues:

- Feeling bitter -40%
- Thinking destructively about self or others -32%
- Feeling like they have to hide what they do or feel -32%
- Having difficulty forgiving others -31%
- Feeling discouraged – 31%
- Experiencing loneliness – 30%
- Overeating or mishandling food – 20%
- Having difficulty forgiving oneself -26%
- Thinking unkindly about others – 18%
- Experiencing fear or anxiety -14%

Bible Engagement & Proactive Faith

The definition of spiritual growth as becoming more like Jesus includes more than just refraining from certain behaviors and attitudes. It also includes proactively living out that faith. With Jesus as our example, it means showing love and concern for others and their spiritual growth.

Across surveys, we found that among Christians engaging Scripture most days of the week strongly predicts a more proactive faith. Specifically, controlling for age, gender, church attendance, and prayer practices, the person engaged in the Bible has significantly higher odds of:

- Giving financially to a church +416%
- Memorizing Scripture +407%
- Discipling others +231%
- Sharing their faith with others +228%
- Giving financially to causes other than their church +218%

Bible Engagement & Self-Perceived Spiritual Growth

CBE focused the first part of our research on the relationship between Bible engagement and behavior. We addressed the second part of the spiritual growth measure, whether the individual feels like he or she is growing spiritually, through respondents' self-assessments.

Surveys of church congregations across the country revealed that most people frequently feel they are not growing spiritually. In fact, nine out of ten regular church attenders feel like they are not growing spiritually at least once a year. They spend an average of three to four months of the year spiritually “stuck.”

Receiving, reflecting on, and responding to what God says in the Bible emerges again as the most powerful determinant of spiritual growth. Those who engage Scripture four or more days a week have significantly lower odds of:

- Feeling spiritually stagnant ~60%
- Feeling like they can't please God ~44%

Over the years, CBE asked respondents about virtually every spiritual practice common in Christianity. The practices we've considered included prayer, Bible engagement, meditation, fasting, church attendance, Sunday school/Bible study, small groups, reading non-fiction books, reading fiction books, listening to Christian music, mission trips, and Christian schools. *None* of these

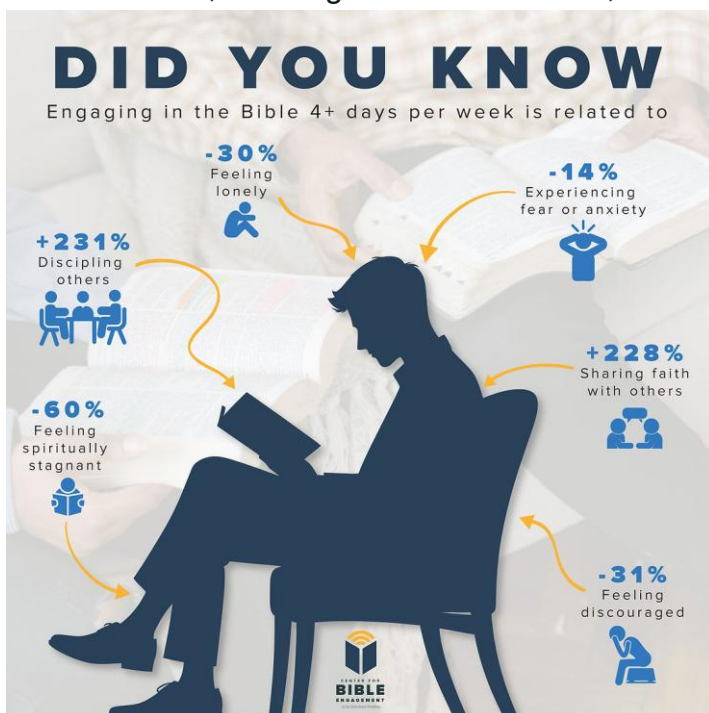
practices have been able to predict spiritual growth the way Bible engagement does.

Source: Center for Bible Engagement (CBE) White Paper, *Bible Engagement as the Key to Spiritual Growth: A Research Synthesis* (2012)

What the Bible Says

Although the research does not allow us to conclude that Bible engagement *causes* decreases in negative behaviors and increases in proactive behaviors, we know from the Bible that God's Word is a primary means for the Holy Spirit to transform His people: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is

useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16).



The supernatural power of God's living Word is directed at every believer to bring about transformation. Because of this, CBE's definition of Bible engagement is: *Reading (or receiving), reflecting on, and responding to God's Word to create "Holy Spirit opportunities" for spiritual growth and fruitfulness, and for His conviction, leading, and gifting.*

The "3 Rs" in the definition loosely separates what we do as believers from what God does through His supernatural Word and Spirit. Bible engagement and "The Power of 4" demonstrate predictable transformational results that the Bible itself promises. Psalm 1, for example, figuratively describes a person who delights in God's Torah (law) and meditates on it "day and night." This person is like a tree planted by a river, producing fruit in season.

Research Limitations

As we've shown, Bible engagement through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit is a reliable method to measure spiritual growth; however, it is not the *only* method. Below are questions we've received over the years regarding "The Power of 4" research:

- **Does "The Power of 4" reflect a strictly *behavioral* understanding of spiritual growth?**

To assess the impact of Bible engagement on an individual's life, we used a two-prong approach to measure spiritual growth—behavioral analysis and self-assessments—then followed the data to the most predictive practices. "The Power of 4" evidence should not, however, support a superstitious or "magical" view of the Bible, nor an exclusively behaviorist approach to spiritual maturity, as if engagement is a formula with automatic and guaranteed results. Neither is this research promoting "works-righteousness." The research simply points to the best predictive practice we can leverage for true spiritual fruit, and then measure the results (cf Matthew 7:20). Because we know spiritual growth is complex, future CBE research will look more fully at the role of emotion, motivation, and community as contributing factors.

- **Does "The Power of 4" reflect a strictly *individualistic* understanding of spiritual growth?**

While the research discovered the single most predictive practice for an individual's growth, a communal dimension to spiritual growth is likely vital; however, it simply hasn't been studied enough to show its predictive capacity. Future research in Disciple-Making Movements will give us fresh data to mine.

- **Does this research reflect a *particular* understanding of spiritual growth?**

The theological terms for spiritual growth include holiness and sanctification. CBE research is compatible with any orthodox doctrine of sanctification. “The Power of 4” frame of reference is simply isolating the role of Scripture as a primary means the Spirit uses for growth.

As significant as “The Power of 4” research is in measuring spiritual growth, no one should think this research has uncovered something new. Rather, it has supported what the Bible says about itself and what millions of followers have discovered in their journey of faith through the centuries. The research reinforces the importance of the biblical norm of *frequent* engagement with God’s Word. This research provides a way to understand, measure, and track spiritual growth so that churches and ministries can more effectively support people in their spiritual journey.

Conclusions

The science of research requires patience and diligence. One study demonstrating a certain effect or relationship is not enough. Instead, the goal is to verify the reliability of the finding through multiple studies over time. This post summarized eight years of research into the spiritual lives of more than 100,000 people around the world. Consistent across all of these individual studies is the finding that engaging the Bible four or more times a week is the strongest and most reliable predictor of spiritual growth. Bible engagement impacts both the behavioral aspects of spiritual growth (i.e. a life that looks more like Jesus’) and self-perception. The relationship also holds when researchers control for other spiritual practices, such as church attendance and prayer.

Although we approached the topic of spiritual growth from different directions, our findings are remarkably similar to those of the [Willow Creek Association](#). **They also concluded from their multi-year, multi-church study that there is little relationship between involvement in church activities and spiritual growth. Moreover, they concluded that engaging the Bible is the most powerful predictor of growth.** [Lifeway Research](#) reached similar conclusions, as well.

Together these independent lines of research lead to one simple conclusion: **Engaging the Bible most days of the week is critical to grow in the Christian faith.** The implications of this conclusion are wide-reaching and profound for Christian pastors and leaders, churches, schools, and evangelistic ministries. Those serious about helping people grow in a relationship with Jesus Christ need to carefully consider where they are investing their energies and if those activities are producing lifelong impacts by getting people engaged in the Word.