

The effect of Bible study on wellbeing

Background: There is little prospective data available analyzing the utility of the study of Christian scripture on personal well-being.

Objective: To evaluate the effect of a Bible study method training program on the well-being within a Christian community environment.

Methods: Wellbeing surveys were conducted before and after a 4-week Bible study program.

Results: Fifty subjects were randomized and 46 completed this study, of whom 33 were in the active-intervention and 13 in the control group. When both groups were compared to baseline there were differences in the active group consisting of improved general well-being, confidence and ability to study the Bible, as well as several individual items of knowledge derived from the study materials related to improved comfort and security in the subject's relationship with God.

Discussion: This study suggests increases in short-term well-being can be achieved by studying scripture. More research is needed to explore the results in a sick population.

In total, 50 subjects were randomized and 46 completed the study of whom 33 were randomized to the active-intervention and 13 to the control-intervention group. Four subjects did not complete due to scheduling difficulties (n=2), moved living location (n=1) and did not complete the final survey (n=1). The pre-and post-survey results can be found online (supplemental material). The subject characteristics are shown in Table 1. Both treatment groups showed a trend of increased knowledge and well-being. When compared to baseline there were no statistical differences. However, there were differences after a Bonferroni correction in the active group, which had more subjects. These differences consisted of general well-being, confidence and ability to study the Bible as well as several individual items of knowledge about scripture related to improved comfort and security in the subject's relationship with God ($P \leq 0.01$; Table 2).

Table 1: Subject characteristics

Characteristic	Detail	Active		Control		P-value
		N	%	N	%	
Age	18-25	23	70	6	46	0.49
	26-30	3	9	2	15	
	31-35	5	15	3	23	
	36-40	2	6	2	15	
Race	Caucasian	30	91	12	92	0.81
	Hispanic	2	6	1	8	
	Native American	1	3	0	0	
Gender	Female	20	61	6	46	0.37
	Male	13	39	7	54	
Employment	Full-time employed or self-employed	17	52	7	54	0.77
	Full-time homemaker	1	3	0	0	
	Full-time student	11	33	3	23	
	Part-time employed or student	2	6	2	15	
	Part-time employed or self-employed	1	3	1	8	
	Part-time employed, self-employed or homemaker	1	3	0	0	
Education	College graduate	17	52	6	46	0.71
	Post-graduate program	2	6	2	15	
	Some college	13	39	5	38	
	Trade school	1	3	0	0	

N = number; % = percentage

Table 2: Active group significant survey responses when comparing pre-survey to post-survey

Questions and responses	P-values
As a Christian my position with God through Christ is:	
I am chosen by God	0.02
I am sealed as God's by the Holy Spirit	0.006*
I am seen as sinless and innocent by God	0.01*
The plan of salvation was created by God:	
For the praise of God's glory	0.002*
For God's good pleasure	0.01*
Was done completely to satisfy God	0.04

*Significant after a Bonferroni correction

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