

Record

LIVES CHANGED BY GOD'S WORD

2026

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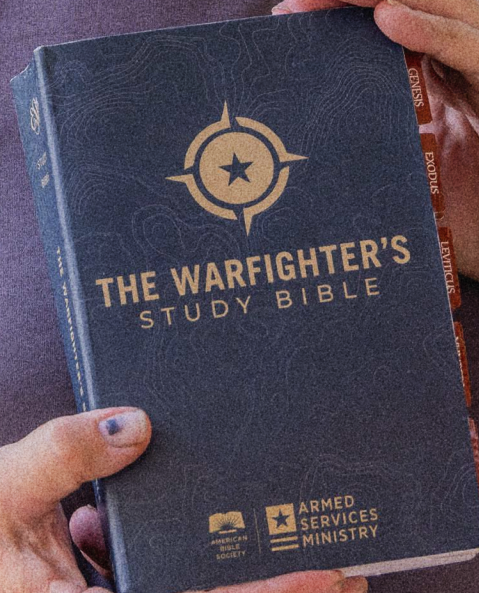
YOU HELPED
A VETERAN
HEAR
GOD'S VOICE

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“I am telling you the truth:
those who hear my words
and believe in him who sent
me have eternal life. They will
not be judged, but have already
passed from death to life.”

📖 JOHN 5:24



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ABOUT THE COVER

You helped a Desert Storm veteran hear God's voice! Through our Armed Services Ministry, your gift of Scripture helps military members like John know they're never alone.

At American Bible Society, we help people encounter the life-changing Word of God by making the Bible accessible to all. American Bible Society is a member of United Bible Societies, a fellowship of Bible Societies throughout the world cooperating to make Scriptures available to people everywhere in their own language.

Published since 1818, American Bible Society's *Record* is the official periodical of American Bible Society and the second-oldest continuous publication in the United States. It is sent to as many of our supporters as budget allows. Postage is paid in Philadelphia, PA, and additional mailing offices.

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When God Speaks, Lives Change!

A greeting from President and CEO Dr. Jennifer Holloran

Dear Friend,

I'm excited to share our 2026 edition of *Record* Magazine with you. Each story within these pages is evidence of God at work through people like you. From Luanda, Angola to Lake Butler, Florida, this year you've helped people encounter God through Scripture. Thank you!

Ministry-wide, it has been a big year at American Bible Society. We've been reflecting on and dreaming about our mission and God's will for us moving forward. One thing that's been made clear is that God isn't finished yet.

Even as we, along with other partner ministries, move closer to our goal of translating Scripture into every language on earth by 2033, the need for God's Word continues to grow. In our fast-paced, digital age, we've seen that even when people have physical access to a Bible, many still struggle to see how God speaks into their pain, their questions, and their everyday lives through it.

That's why we are stepping into 2027 with a sharpened mission statement: **We help people encounter the life-changing Word of God by making the Bible accessible to all.**

That means removing every barrier that keeps people from engaging with Scripture and encountering Jesus. Those barriers still include language, format, and availability—as the story of the Umbundu people shows (page 6). But a Bible in hand can still be out of reach. For people like John Lindsey (page 10) and the next generation, difficulty understanding Scripture and seeing its relevance can also be a barrier.

That is why our work to advance the Word of God continues—until every person can access Scripture and experience God speaking through it. Because when God speaks, lives change!

We're grateful that you are part of this movement. As you invest in helping others encounter God, we pray that our ministry and resources will also help you grow closer to him.

As a small thank-you, we've included a special Daily Bible Reading resource on pages 28 and 29. We hope it's a blessing to you!

Gratefully yours,

Jennifer Holloran
President and CEO

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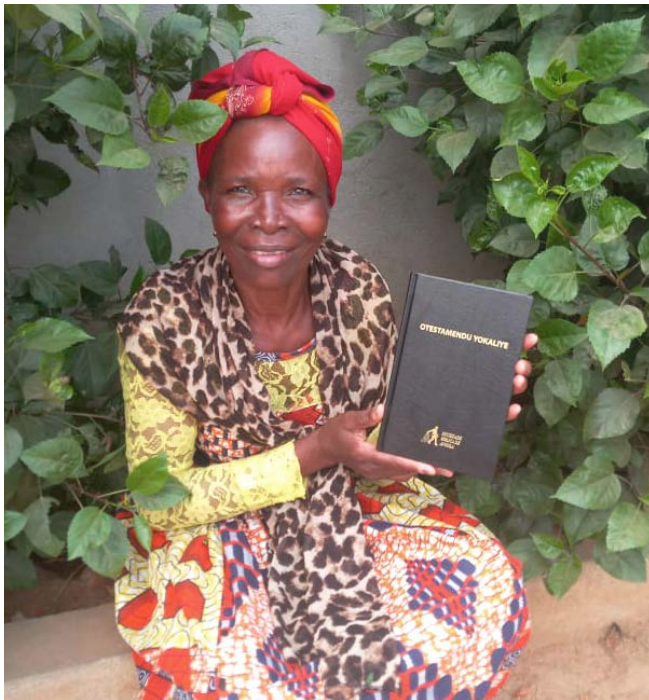
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COVER: Taylor Fedena, American Bible Society / PRIOR SPREAD: Alex Baker, BFBS

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A Joy Completed

A Translation Journey Reaches the Finish Line



A Joy Completed

You Walked Alongside a Translation Team to Bring God's Word to Umbundu Speakers.

BY ASHTON VESTRAND

“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”

JOHN 15:11

Each Bible translation project begins with a belief: **that every person should have the opportunity to encounter God through his Word.**

For the Bible Society in Angola, that belief led to a long journey to translate Scripture into Umbundu, the heart language of nearly 7 million Angolans.

Several years ago, we shared the story of the New Testament's arrival. Today, thanks to you, the full translation—and the joy of Umbundu speakers waiting for God's Word—is complete!

PHOTO CREDITS: Bible Society in Angola

7 MILLION PEOPLE STRUGGLED TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE.

The Bible is a beautiful yet complex book. For many of us, even with a study Bible in front of us and the help of a wise community, understanding certain passages can be difficult. But imagine trying to understand the Bible when most of the words are in a foreign language.

That was the reality for Umbundu speakers: a partial Bible in Portuguese, with no additional content to help them interpret its message. Without a Bible they could understand, thousands of people struggled to hear God's voice through Scripture.

“The old version was lacking,” says Beatriz Hupa, General Secretary of the Bible Society in Angola. “If we want people to be transformed, the translation should be in the language they understand most.”

YOU CHANGED LIVES WITH THE NEW TESTAMENT.

When the translation team started in 1999, they had few resources. They shared a single computer and often worked by candlelight.

But because of your support, the Bible Society in Angola received the training, computers, and translation software they needed. In partnership with local pastors, native Umbundu speakers, and translation experts, your generosity helped accelerate the team's progress.

“First, we finished, printed, and gave out the Gospels,” says Beatriz. “Then in 2017, we completed the New Testament, which is what the communities are currently using.”

Augusta, an agricultural worker, received her very own copy of the Umbundu New Testament when it was first printed.

“The New Testament in Umbundu brings great joy to me,” she shared. “Now, at any moment I can read it by myself and with my family.”



Through your prayers and support, a team of believers in Angola translated the full Bible into their heart language of Umbundu.



The Umbundu community in Angola rejoiced when they received the New Testament in 2017. Because of you, they'll hold the full Bible in the language of their hearts in 2027. Thank you!

In addition to printed Scripture, you helped the Bible Society reach communities with audio Bibles. As word spread about the New Testament, people eager to hear Scripture in their mother tongue gathered around audio devices. Beatriz can still remember seeing families in the community transformed after they heard the truth of the gospel in their heart language.

But Umbundu speakers—and the translation team—knew that the story wasn't complete without the Old Testament.

YOU WALKED BESIDE
THE TRANSLATION
TEAM THROUGH THEIR
DARKEST VALLEY.

Inspired by the excitement around the New Testament, the team began translating the Old Testament. Then the Covid-19 pandemic hit

Angola, claiming the life of the beloved Reverend Nunes, the Bible Society's project coordinator.

"The death of our coordinator was very difficult," Beatriz remembers. "All of us were afraid. And at the time, not a lot of progress had been made on the Old Testament."

The team's grief and the pandemic restrictions added to the already heavy burden of translation work. But, driven by a deep desire to see Umbundu communities hear God speak and upheld by your partnership, the team continued forward. As they translated each sacred word, they experienced the comfort and peace of God.

"We were translating, but we were also listening to God speak to our own hearts," translator Jeremia says.

In their darkest valley, your prayers and support kept the team moving toward the finish line. And through you, Beatriz says, "God helped us overcome."

“ We were translating, but we were also listening to God speak to our own hearts.”

YOU MADE THEIR JOY
COMPLETE!

In June of 2026, the translation team finished their work. Now they're looking forward to hosting a celebration in early 2027, where they'll honor the legacy of people like Reverend Nunes and thank God for you, the faithful partners who gave and prayed so that Umbundu communities could finally hear God's voice.

One team member says, "Our joy will be complete when we see people using the Umbundu Bible and hear testimonies about how God's Word is transforming their lives."

And a local pastor has a special message for you: **"We thank the donors who support a project in a language they don't understand, for a people they don't know, living in a distant country. For that we are very grateful!"** 🙏

Bless more people through Bible translation:
[Give.Bible/Translation](#)

Help More Communities Receive
God's Word in Their Heart Language

Did you know that more than 1.5 billion people still lack access to the full Bible in the language they know best?

American Bible Society is connecting churches like yours with local teams of believers serving 20 Scripture translation projects. With your support, we can finish and launch Scripture for each of these communities—and bless millions by helping them hear God's voice—by 2028.

Learn how your church can sponsor a Bible translation today:

[ABS.Bible/FinishandLaunch](#)

From Death *to* Life

You changed a
veteran's life by helping
him hear *God's voice*.

By Elisabeth Trefsgar
Photos by Taylor Fedena



As a veteran whose military experience spanned three decades, John Lindsey's life has been full of changes.

What he witnessed on the battlefield changed him. The visible and invisible wounds he carries changed him. And like all of us, difficult moments of loss and grief in his personal life changed him.

But nothing has changed John's life more than God's Word. Your gift made that possible!





John's first encounter with God's Word came on the infamous "Highway of Death" between Kuwait and Iraq. So many of our U.S. heroes start to ponder death and eternity during their service, which makes the military such a fertile mission field for American Bible Society.

A Soldier Hears God's Voice in the Wilderness

The first time John heard God speaking, he was on the infamous "Highway of Death" between Kuwait and Iraq.

Just three years into his Army career, John was deployed to Iraq in Desert Storm. His crew manned one of the tanks on the road that became known as the Highway of Death. He was just 20 years old.

"In a tank, you're the biggest target on the battlefield," John says. When his tank was hit by an enemy round, it felt like his whole world was shaking. But the sights and sounds of war shook something deeper in John and his crew.

"We found ourselves talking about the Lord," John remembers. "We had a lot of questions. We talked about the darkness we saw, and we talked about eternity."

Sometimes John would open the Bible they had in their tank. Although he'd grown up in a Christian environment, reading Scripture on the battlefield was different.

"We were in a part of the world much closer to where Jesus actually walked, and it intrigued me to look at that Bible," he says. "I thought, 'I can hear God talking now.'"

In those moments of fear and danger, John found comfort in the words of Scripture and the voice of hope he heard on the highway. But it wasn't until many years later that your gift of God's Word helped him truly encounter Jesus.

When Peacetime Isn't Peaceful

After his first deployment, John spent two more decades serving his nation. But those years came with a cost.

"I was diagnosed with PTSD in 2010, but it started in Desert Storm," he says. The physical toll on his body rendered him permanently disabled. And like many veterans, John bears invisible wounds from what he experienced during his time in combat.

"The sights have never left me," he says.

Over the years, John remembered how the Bible helped him during Desert Storm—but he didn't think he needed it in times of peace. Even while living with the toll of his service, John thought he could hold himself together. After all, shouldn't civilian life be easier than surviving in a war zone?

"My prayer life and church attendance were null and void," he says. "I thought I had life figured out."

Then, in 2024, John's mother passed away. That loss, combined with the burdens he carried as a veteran, sent him into a spiral of despair.

"I was a wreck," John says. "It threw a big curveball into my life. I wasn't confident anymore. And that's when I started looking for different resources that were available for the military."

You Prepared the Way for John to Encounter Jesus

One simple online search brought him to our Military Bible Challenge, a free digital Bible reading and devotional tool designed for the military community and made possible by generous supporters like you.

The challenge? To spend just 20 minutes a day in Scripture for 75 days.

It didn't sound hard. And John was desperate for hope. As soon as he started turning to God's Word each day, he felt something change inside him.



Your compassionate support ministered to John's soul with God's Word during one of the darkest seasons of his life.

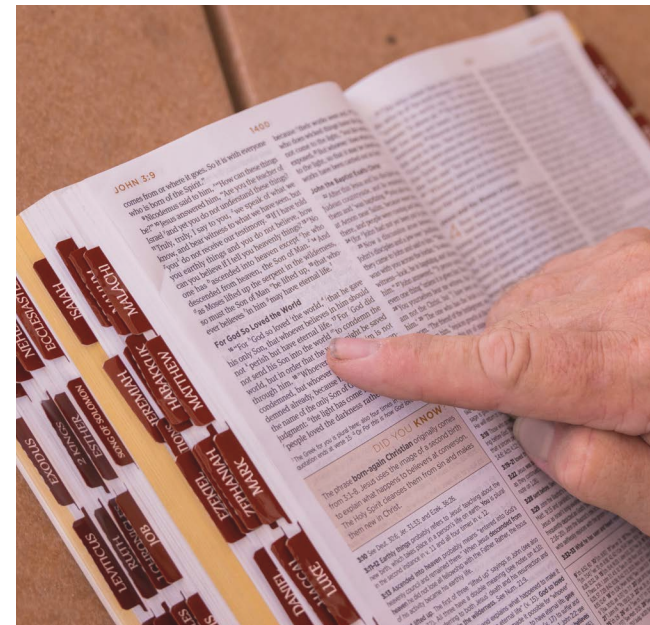
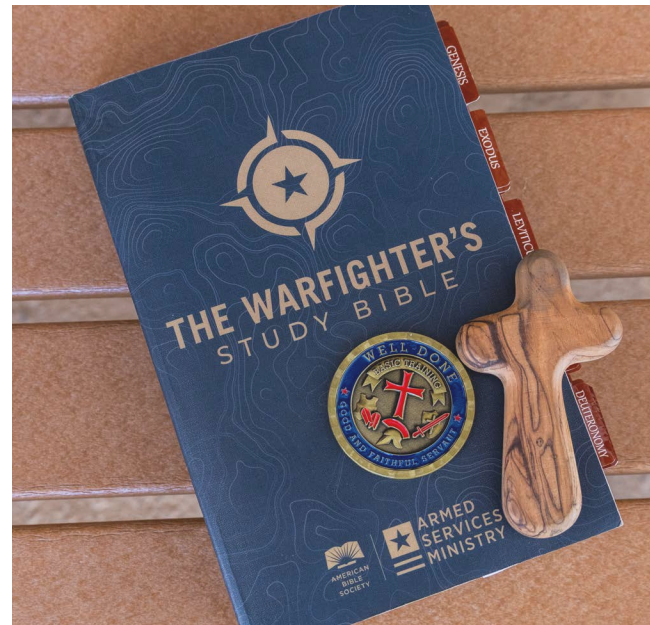
“The Military Bible Challenge helped me understand the Bible more by putting it in a veteran’s perspective. It helped open my eyes to what the Bible really wanted to teach me.”

“It brought me peace,” he remembers. “I thought, ‘Okay, I’m going to live through this.’”

Slowly, John felt light breaking into the darkness of his grief. The deeper he went into Scripture, the deeper God’s healing reached into his heart. Soon he wasn’t just processing the pain of losing his mother; he was unearthing the suffering he’d witnessed and endured on the battlefield. For the first time, he felt like he could understand the voice he heard on the Highway of Death all those years ago.

“The Military Bible Challenge helped me understand the Bible more by putting it in a veteran’s perspective,” John says. “It helped open my eyes to what the Bible really wanted to teach me.”

As he finished the Military Bible Challenge and continued his journey of faith, John received the Warfighter’s Study Bible—another free resource your support provided. “The maps and layout made it easier to understand the Bible,” John says.



“It got me looking into the Bible and learning to live more like God wanted me to.”

Then John had an opportunity he’d never imagined: to return to the Middle East through a veteran-focused nonprofit and visit Israel. He finally walked where Jesus had walked and was even baptized in the Jordan River. But the most precious and unexpected moment came when he visited Gethsemane.

“When we reached that path to the cross, the feelings were overwhelming,” John says. “I couldn’t control my emotions.”

Years before, John heard a voice in the desert through the Bible. But thanks to you, he now knows the source: a suffering Savior who understands his pain and speaks words of love, hope, and peace into his heart through Scripture.

“The more I read and follow God, the more my depression and anxiety are being released,” John says. “My life has changed so much!”

Last year, your support touched thousands of other lives just like John’s through our Armed Services Ministry:

19,354

Warfighter’s Study Bibles provided to our troops

185,093

Military Challenge Bibles shared with active-duty and retired service members

117,100

Military Bible Challenge App users

7,600+

Hero Squad families—more than 30,000 people—blessed with Bible and devotional resources

Find these resources and more at ArmedServicesMinistry.org.



Like you, John is passionate about helping others hear the voice of Jesus through the Bible. He's taking the life-changing Scripture resources you gave him and sharing them with others in need!

“The more I read and follow God, the more my depression and anxiety are being released. My life has changed so much!”

John's Message for Veterans: “This Bible Is for Us.”

The difference you made in John's life extends beyond him. He and his wife now attend church—a community he calls “his Christian family.” He is also a familiar face at his local VA, where he shares the resources that helped him. And he still reads his Warfighter's Study Bible and listens to audio Scripture, even when he's hunting!

To you—the person who met John in his moment of need and helped him hear God's voice—he

says, “I'd just like to say thank you. It's a lot more helpful for a person to have these resources than to try to pick up a Bible and figure it out on their own. And for people who have the military as a big part of their life, this combination really works.”

And like you, John is passionate about helping others hear the voice of Jesus through the Bible—especially the more than 15 million veterans like him in the United States.

“Let's face it. God's got a lot to offer us if we just talk to him,” John says. “I want other veterans to know that you can always go back to church, no matter how long you've been away, no matter what you experienced in your service. That's why whenever I meet another veteran, I tell them, ‘This Bible is for us.’”

Multiplying *the* Gift

Meet three passionate partners helping to share your gift with military communities!

One Viral Video Opens the Door for You to Bless Military Families

Last fall, Coast Guard mom Mariah posted a video online sharing her family's first Hero Squad box. Full of age-appropriate Bibles, devotionals, and more, these boxes are free to military families thanks to your support. Over the next three days, thousands of people saw the video, and more than 2,200 new family members signed up to receive Scripture through our Hero Squad program! For Mariah, the best part of your gift is the spiritual difference you're making in the lives of her children: “My daughter came to me and my husband and said, ‘I want to know everything there is to know about Jesus,’” Mariah says. “So we read our Bibles every night!” Today, **more than 38,000 families have received God's Word through Hero Squad**. You can learn more and bless a military family at MyHeroSquad.org.



Thanks to your support, entire families are navigating the uncertainty of military life with the wisdom and comfort of God's Word.



You're blessing members of the military community with resources that help them grow in faith!



You're reaching active-duty service members with Scripture.

A Bible Study Powered by Your Generosity

This summer, two American Bible Society staff members were blessed to visit U.S. Air Force retired Brig. Gen. Greg Nelson, who is using the Warfighter's Study Bible to guide military community members through Scripture in Florida. Multiple Bible studies for men and women meet each week, and each new member receives a free Bible thanks to your support. One member described what this special group means to him: "It's more than a Bible study. It is a community of Christian men and women who come together each week to learn about our Creator, share our experiences, encourage one another, and grow in obedience to God's Word. . . . I do not have to walk out my faith alone." He also added a special word for you: "Thank you! Your support is helping create a place where military members and veterans can find community, encouragement, and a deeper relationship with Jesus."

A Retired Naval Officer Delivers Your Gift Aboard the USS Carl Vinson

Karen Brabandt is a retired U.S. Naval Officer and nurse. She's also your partner in sharing God's Word with our troops! Karen and her husband recently completed the Military Bible Challenge. "This challenge motivated my husband and me to explore Scripture and deepen our understanding and devotion," Karen says. "You made an impact in our family!" The challenge also inspired Karen to invite other military community members to hear God's voice through Scripture. This May, Karen and the chaplain serving on board the USS Carl Vinson hand-delivered Bibles that you provided to the crew. "Thank you for allowing me the honor and pride of going aboard and helping spread God's Word through these beautiful Bibles," Karen says. "It showed me the incredible impact your ministry is making!"

Help spread the Word to more members of the military community: [Give.Bible/Military](#)

The Word Goes Forth

Your support is helping people experience God's Word around the world.



RWANDA
Discipling the Next Generation

In Rwanda, you blessed more than 9,000 children with their very own Bibles and a full year of discipleship! Your gift of Scripture reaches schools, churches, and homes, multiplying the impact of God's Word and touching thousands of lives.

PHOTO CREDITS: Bible Society in Rwanda



UNITED STATES

Equipping the Church

Here at home, you're making sure that churches have the knowledge and tools they need to encourage people in God's Word.

Our Restoring Hope ministry equips churches to bring the healing of God's Word to their communities. You are helping churches become safe places where struggling Americans can process grief, learn to lament, and grow

in resilience through our Bible-based resources. Learn more at AmericanBible.org/RestoringHope.

And through 16 years of State of the Bible research, you're helping more than 13,000 pastors and church leaders guide their communities to know, trust, and live the truth of Scripture in our modern culture. Explore this year's findings at StateoftheBible.org.



CAMBODIA

Translating Scripture

Early next year, the Kravet people will receive their first copy of the New Testament. Since you helped them start translating the Bible, hundreds of people have heard God's voice and given their lives to Jesus. Every portion of Scripture shared with the community has helped them grow in faith, and they are eager to welcome your gift!

Hear one translator reflect on the journey:
ABS.Bible/Cambodia

ECUADOR

Blessing the Forgotten

In Ecuador, our Bible Society partners take your gift of Scripture into prisons, where men encounter God's healing power through Bible-based trauma healing. Even behind bars, God is using your generosity to restore hearts and remind people that no one is beyond his love.



VENEZUELA

Delivering Hope after Disaster

After recent earthquakes, you delivered Scripture to communities in Venezuela through Bible-based trauma healing workshops. Children and families received care, resources, and the hope of Jesus through your timely support.



WORLDWIDE

Advancing the Word

Did you know that most digital Scripture is powered by one incredible library? Today, our Digital Bible Library is home to thousands of translations in 2,900 languages. Every month, this powerhouse helps about 20 million people experience Scripture through the YouVersion Bible App. Hundreds of ministries are using the Digital Bible Library to advance God's Word around the world—and it's all thanks to you!

Send God's Word where needed most: Give.Bible/GodsWord

PHOTO CREDITS: Bible Society in Cambodia/Trauma Healing Institute

IN MEMORIAM

In memory of
Stephanie Austin
Given by Deborah Austin

In memory of
Jere Lawrence Crook, Jr.
Given by The Crook Trusts

In memory of
Bronx and Gracie Fogliani
Given by Phil Fogliani

In memory of
Bruce Hays
Given by Marie Hays

In memory of my wife and daughter
June and Kim
Given by Bob Handwerker

In memory of
Barbara Jones
Given by Richard C. Lee

In memory of my brother
Edward L. Jones,
USA Vietnam Veteran
Given by Beverly Scorsone

In memory of
Peggy Keady
Given by Jeff Keady

In memory of
Dalton Knauss
Given by Cynthia Knauss-Konija

In memory of our parents
David and Bettie Knisley
Given by Elsilynn Knisley Barber
and Mark Barber

In memory of
Donald A. Kynion
Given by Uniwyo Credit Union

If we live, it is for the Lord that we live, and if we die, it is for the Lord that we die. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

ROMANS 14:8

In memory of
Erwin M. Koeritz
Given by Jeffrey Chase

In memory of
Marleen J. Lieb
Given by the Marleen J.
Lieb Family Trust

In memory of
Eric and Beth McElmury
Given by Western Leasco Inc.

In memory of
**Annie Morris and
Parker Philips**
Given by Jenna James

In memory of
Vicki Proffit
Given by Lois and Alan Ronn

In memory of “Mama,”
Renee Ratliff
Given by Daveyene Bieringer

In memory of
Sandra Richards
Given by Sorvig Trust

In memory of
Linda Shelby
Given by Robert Steenbergh

In memory of our son
LCPL Abraham Simpson
Given by Jim and Maria Simpson

In memory of my husband
Gregory L. Springs
Given by Carol N. Springs

In memory of
Merlin Staatz
Given by Shelly Thiessen

In memory of
Debbie Wolcott
Gifts given by Drew Clawson,
George and Jan Schimming,
and many other loving friends

In memory of
Abraham Woo
Given by Loida Soward



Remembering Debbie Wolcott

Along with her family and friends, American Bible Society celebrates the life of Debbie Wolcott. Serving with our Trauma Healing Institute for more than a decade, Debbie helped millions of people experience the good news of a Savior who sees our pain and heals our wounds. Her work shaped the resources available through our Bible-based trauma healing ministry and launched radio programs in multiple languages across Africa and Latin America. We thank God for the life Debbie led and for the legacy she leaves. We pray that her faithful work will continue to help people experience the true healing found in Jesus Christ.

You can honor the memory of a loved one by providing Bibles to people who don’t yet have them. Memorials of \$500 or more for one individual or family unit will be published in *Record*.

For further details about the memorial process, please contact our Partner Care team at:
1-866-895-4448

ABSDonor@AmericanBible.org
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101 North Independence Mall East FL8 | Philadelphia, PA 19106-2155

Our Dad *the Bible Hero*

Dave Ellingson and his sister, Mary, enjoyed a very special childhood. Their father, Richard H. Ellingson, led American Bible Society's domestic and military ministry during the 1950s. Richard's faithful service led to some wonderful adventures for his young children.

Today, Dave and Mary continue to support the mission of American Bible Society for one simple reason: "We want to keep dad's legacy going!"



Early in his career, Richard Ellingson turned down a fully paid education at Harvard Law when he sensed the Lord calling him to pastoral ministry. He served as a Navy chaplain during World War II, flying to Germany on D-Day just weeks after marrying his wife, Leila.

A pastor for most of his life, Richard served for 10 years with American Bible Society. Here young Mary and Dave pose with a batch of multilingual Gospel booklets. Richard loved reminding his family that it's not enough to read the Word—you have to let the Word read you.



Mary and Dave often tagged along with their dad whenever a special guest came to town to visit American Bible Society. The famous visitors they saw in person included the Queen Mother of England, the emperor of Ethiopia, and Helen Keller, pictured here.

In a segregated America, Richard oversaw the distribution of Scriptures in southern states. He refused to stay in white-only hotels, always sleeping in the homes and preaching in the churches of his black brothers and sisters in Christ.



As a Navy veteran, Richard loved providing Scriptures for the U.S. Military. His son, Dave, remembers the time they delivered Bibles to the world's first nuclear-powered submarine—the USS Nautilus (SSN-571).



Dave and Mary will never forget the time they joined their father at Camp Kilmer in New Jersey to hand out Bibles and welcome Hungarian refugees who had just arrived in America after fleeing Soviet oppression.



Richard served on the delegation that presented President Dwight D. Eisenhower with the 500 millionth Scripture published by American Bible Society.

Thank you, Lord, for the God-honoring legacy of
Richard Ellingson and his family!



How One Woman's Delight in Scripture Shaped *Daily Bible Reading*

BY EMMA CARGILE



For more than 50 years, hundreds of thousands of people have turned to American Bible Society's free Daily Bible Reading guide to engage with Scripture. But it didn't always look like what you receive in your inbox or see on our website.

Thirty years ago, writer Barbara Bernstengel pioneered an easy-to-follow devotional structure so readers could discover why the Bible was important to their everyday lives. Before her involvement in 1994, the Daily Bible Reading was a simple annual Scripture calendar.

Today, we celebrate Barbara's work and share her conviction with you: just as Psalm 1 says, the Bible is as relevant to your life as a stream is to the tree planted beside it.

A Lifelong Love

Barbara's love of the Bible has been a long time in the making. As a child, she thrived in Bible-centered environments like Sunday School and Wednesday afternoon Bible school.

"As an adult," she says, "reading the Bible has sustained me in times of pain and joy."

This sustenance isn't simply utilitarian to her—the Bible isn't flavorless, but delightful. She describes Scripture as "timeless" and says it appears fresh to her no matter how many times she reads a particular passage.

This is why she believes reading the Bible daily is so beneficial: during highs, lows, and mundane days, you can encounter God's faithfulness to you and witness the epic story of his faithfulness to all. The Daily Bible Reading was created for you to search the Scriptures for the details—and the big picture. Our relationship with God includes both.

An Engaging Method

The Daily Bible Reading plan had been going for twenty-five years when Barbara started writing the daily devotional steps that accompany each Scripture passage. The goal was to help readers

understand the world of the Bible and what it meant for them.

To apply this vision, Barbara added an introduction with contextual details, a thematic key verse from that day's passage, reflection questions, and a closing prayer. The idea was to give people substantive readings with a structure that made it easy to return to the Bible on busy days.

Barbara's personal study methods influenced how she developed the Daily Bible Reading. One meaningful method was the *Lectio Divina* model, also known as prayerful reading. This helped shape the steps that outline each day: read, reflect, and pray. The reflection step helps readers pause, consider the passage, and connect what it means to their own lives. It's a simple step, but a powerful one.

A Transforming Power

For our roots to grow deep, we need to know how stories across the Bible are connected. Reading the Old and New Testaments together helps us see how the entirety of God's story matters for our daily lives.

Barbara continues to draw inspiration from something a past leader of American Bible Society once told her: the Bible Society's mission is not to make the Bible relevant, because "the Bible is always relevant." Instead, our mission involves "helping people see and understand

the relevance of the Bible in their lives." In other words, we're here to help you hear God's voice, every single day.

Understanding the Bible as a whole story and experiencing God through it helps us reach others too. Knowing the Bible means we can share it. Sharing it creates opportunities for more people to hear God speak—and for more lives to be transformed.

"Numerous stories in the Bible give testimony to God's transformative power," Barbara says.

Reading the Bible daily impacts more people than you think. For Barbara, this one practice has helped her lead Bible studies, participate in service projects, teach well, share joy through music, attend seminary, and live a faithful life. The people in our lives need us to be grounded in God's Word, and that happens one day at a time.

A Grounded Life

After this year, Barbara retires as the Daily Bible Reading writer as today's Content Development Team takes on carrying out her vision. Barbara remains an active leader in her church, using her knowledge of the Bible to teach adults and children. We thank God for her many years of service, and for the way she's helped readers like you go deeper into his Word.

We invite you to turn the page for a special reflection guide to help you humbly seek God and ground your life in Scripture each day. ■

Visit AmericanBible.org/DailyBible

to join us as we search the Scriptures daily and consider what it means to be grounded in God's Word. Grow your roots deep and let the living God enliven your heart.

PHOTO CREDITS: Courtesy of Barbara Bernstengel

Five Steps You Can Take to Seek God in His Word

Just like Barbara, we uphold Scripture as a treasure worthy of profound honor and respect. On its pages, we discover a text unlike any other—one that is divinely inspired and carries the weight of divine authority. What makes the Bible truly special is that God uses its contents to communicate his love, convict us of sin, and comfort us in the salvation that is found in Jesus. All of the Scriptures point to him (Luke 24:27). And we believe that God is still speaking through the Word and changing lives, now and for eternity.

Here are five steps you can take today
to journey closer to Christ.

1

Pray and ask God if there is anything in your life that is preventing you from seeing him—unaddressed sin, disobedience, distraction, whatever it may be. Ask God to reveal it to you.

Examine me, O God, and know my mind; test me, and discover my thoughts. Find out if there is any evil in me and guide me in the everlasting way.

PSALM 139:23–24

2

Get to a place where you can encounter him. In our fast-paced, digital age, one of the biggest barriers to a life-changing relationship with Jesus is noise. Find a quiet place, silence notifications, and limit all other distractions.

There were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his disciples didn't even have time to eat. So he said to them, "Let us go off by ourselves to some place where we will be alone and you can rest a while." So they started out in a boat by themselves to a lonely place.

MARK 6:31–33

3

Open your Bible. Often we want God to shout from the rooftops or send us a sign, but the reality is that God has already spoken to us through his Word. He promises to meet you in it.

Everything written in the Scriptures was written to teach us, in order that we might have hope through the patience and encouragement which the Scriptures give us.

ROMANS 15:4

4

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal Jesus to you. Our God is a self-revealing God—we need him to intervene if we're going to encounter him.

When, however, the Spirit comes, who reveals the truth about God, he will lead you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own authority, but he will speak of what he hears and will tell you of things to come. He will give me glory, because he will take what I say and tell it to you. All that my Father has is mine; that is why I said that the Spirit will take what I give him and tell it to you.

JOHN 16:13–14

5

Sit with his Word until you encounter him. Don't be in a hurry to finish up or rush out; take a deep breath, keep reading, wait for him to speak to you. He promises that if we seek him, we will find him.

You will seek me, and you will find me because you will seek me with all your heart.

JEREMIAH 29:13



When Grandma Met the Gang Leader



Partners Pieter and Wanda Dearolf Recount a Life-Changing Trip to Guatemala with American Bible Society.

BY JACK NEWMAN

Spend any amount of time around Pieter and Wanda Dearolf and a few things quickly become obvious.

They're devoted to Jesus. They're still smitten with each other after 53 years of marriage. And they absolutely adore their grandchildren.

"We have three adult children and five *amazing* grandchildren," Wanda says with a huge grin. (She emphasizes the word "amazing.")

Their fondest memories with the grandkids have been forged during sleepovers at Grandpa and GiGi's house. The Dearolfs explain that having the grandkids in their home gives them the best opportunity to talk together about Jesus.

"We love taking them on trips and cheering them on in the stands. But if that's all they remember about us, we failed as grandparents," Wanda says. "We have to pass on our faith."



Pieter and Wanda Dearolf saw one Bible verse—John 3:16—transform the life of a hardened gang leader in Guatemala.

Stories of God’s Goodness

Bedtime has always been the sweet spot for these conversations about God—because bedtime means story time. That’s when Grandpa and GiGi Dearolf pull out their Bibles and tell their grandchildren about the wonderful things God has done for them.

But their own lives are full of amazing stories as well.

There’s the story of how God brought a Billy Graham crusade to their hometown the very moment Wanda started questioning her eternal destiny.

“I walked down to the 40-yard line of Tampa Stadium and surrendered my life to Christ,” she remembers. “From then on, everything changed.”

There are the stories of Pieter traveling to dozens of countries while serving as a board member with American Bible Society. He and Wanda even got to meet the Pope!

And then there’s a story that still tops all the others after all these years. Wanda’s eyes sparkle when she sits back in her chair, clears her throat, and begins to tell “the story of the boy in yellow.”

Meeting the Boy in Yellow

Wanda and Pieter met the boy in yellow during a trip to Guatemala with American Bible Society. They had joined with the local Bible Society to distribute Spanish Bibles to a large group of troubled teens who had landed themselves in a reform school.

While it was a joy to hand out the Spanish Bibles, Wanda felt a twinge of regret that she couldn’t connect with the young men on a more personal level.

“I don’t know a lick of Spanish!” she explains. “But as we turned to go, I looked back and thought to myself: ‘I can’t leave this classroom without talking to somebody.’”

Her eyes scanned the crowd of thirty or forty teenage boys. And that’s when she saw him.

“Right smack dab in the middle of the front row was a young man who I call ‘the boy in yellow,’” Wanda remembers. “He had a yellow shirt and yellow pants and yellow sneakers on.”

As she mustered up her courage and walked over to the boy, Wanda’s mind started racing. What on earth was she going to say to him? She didn’t speak his language, and their translator had left for the day.

“I just have to show him something in the Bible,” she resolved. That’s when it hit her. “Juan! I know the name Juan,” she realized. “Juan is John.”

One Verse Transforms a Life

Wanda approached the boy in yellow. She picked up his new Bible. She flipped the pages to Juan 3:16. Wanda couldn’t speak the language. But she used her finger to point. First to the

Bible verse on the page and then to the boy in yellow himself:

Porque de tal manera amó Dios al mundo, que ha dado a su Hijo unigénito, para que todo aquel que en él cree, no se pierda, mas tenga vida eterna.

“This is for you,” she told him over and over again. “This is for you.”

The boy in yellow read Juan 3:16. Then he looked into Wanda’s eyes. He looked down and read the verse once more.

When he looked up at Wanda again, tears were streaming down his face.

“He had probably never had anybody tell him that they loved him,” Pieter says. “And here was our God—Jesus Christ—telling him that he loves him.”

Wanda describes that unforgettable encounter like this: “I saw one verse transform a life right in front of me.”

The surprises didn’t end there.

As they drove away from the school, Pieter and Wanda’s partner from the Bible Society of Guatemala explained with awe: “You didn’t know that there are two gangs in this school. That young man is the leader of one of the gangs. This isn’t only going to change his life. It’s going to change other people’s lives as well.”

Wanda still smiles when she remembers the conversation. “I’ll never forget that moment,” she says. “That’s the life-changing power of the Word of God!”

After corresponding with the boy in yellow via translated letters for four years, Pieter and Wanda learned that he had been killed in a gang war. But they trust that they’ll see him again in glory.

“The boy in yellow is walking streets of gold,” Wanda says. “All because of one verse.”

This is Your Eternal Impact

You may never get to hand a Bible to a gang leader.

But as your fellow stewards, Pieter and Wanda want you to know that when you give generously through American Bible Society, you help people encounter the life-changing Word of God as surely as they did in that Guatemalan classroom.

“You want to put your money where it’s going to have an effect,” Pieter says. “You know it’s going to have an eternal effect through American Bible Society.”

They also want their grandkids to know that they can meet the boy in yellow for themselves one day.

“I want my grandkids to remember that we love God’s Word. We love them. And our highest desire is that we would see them again in heaven,” Wanda says.

“We will be waiting for them.”



Like so many of our partners, Wanda Dearolf loves God’s Word and is passionate about sharing the Good News with unreached people abroad and with the next generation right here at home.

Send God’s Word where needed most: [Give.Bible/GodsWord](https://www.givebible.org)

PHOTO CREDITS: Getty Images / Kristen Butler, American Bible Society

Have Your Cake *and* Eat It Too!

How Charitable Gift Annuities Can Advance God's Word and Benefit You.

BY ASHTON VESTRAND

Can you picture the Bible that God used to change your life?

When Ervin Edwards received a Good News Bible in the 1970s, his relationship with Scripture was transformed. While he loved the King James Version he already owned, he often found its language challenging to navigate and apply to his every day. The clear, accessible language of the Good News Translation helped Ervin encounter God like never before.

After experiencing the life-changing power of God's Word, Ervin wanted everyone he knew to have the same opportunity. During his lifetime, he purchased and gave away more than 50

Good News Bibles to friends, family, and even strangers.

Before he went home to be with the Lord in 2007, Ervin shared with his wife, Juanita, his hope for the legacy he would leave.

"It was shortly before he passed away that he told me he wanted his half of our estate to go to American Bible Society," she shares. For Ervin, nothing meant more than knowing that the Bible that changed his life would continue changing lives around the world for generations to come.

Through a Charitable Gift Annuity, Juanita found a way to honor Ervin's passion for God's

“God is able to give you more than you need, so that you will always have all you need for yourselves and more than enough for every good cause.”

2 CORINTHIANS 9:8



Juanita Edwards honors the legacy of her late husband, Ervin, through a Charitable Gift Annuity (CGA) with American Bible Society. She loves that her CGA advances God's Word around the world while providing her with a dependable stream of income. She calls that, "having your cake and eating it too!"

Word while also receiving dependable income for her future.

"A Charitable Gift Annuity is a way to donate money as an investment to further the gospel and to have your cake and eat it too—you get an income from it for yourself," Juanita says.

Even through seasons of financial difficulty, her Charitable Gift Annuity has allowed Juanita to

faithfully give and advance the gospel in memory of Ervin. Because of their generosity, thousands of people have received God's Word in a language and format they can understand!

Ultimately, Juanita hopes that each person who has received a Bible because of Ervin's legacy "takes it to heart and sees what's there for them. I hope they understand that the Lord is really wanting them to turn to him." ■

Make an eternal difference with your own CGA—learn how by turning the page!



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