



# Bible Access List

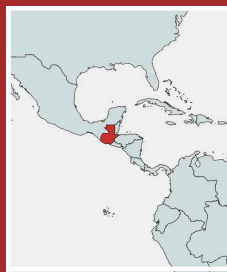
Where Bible access is most difficult, and Bible shortage is greatest

# Guatemala

Bible Restrictions Rank: **83**

**MINIMAL ACCESS RESTRICTIONS**

**Bible shortage has been confirmed**



## An Overview of Bible access in Guatemala

Guatemala is home to a predominantly Christian population, with around 97% of its 18 million people identifying as believers. Despite this overwhelming majority, less than half of Guatemalan Christians have access to a Bible, pointing to a substantial gap in access to Scripture. While there are no legal barriers to owning, distributing, or printing Bibles, practical challenges such as economic constraints and logistical hurdles limit access for many.

Bible importation is permitted, but heavy taxes and bureaucratic red tape add significant costs, even for nonprofit organizations. Printing and storing Bibles pose no restrictions, but the real issue lies in affordability. While Christian bookstores and printing presses exist within the country, the relative high cost of Bibles, especially for the poor, makes widespread availability difficult.

For many Guatemalans, particularly those in rural and impoverished areas, purchasing a Bible is simply not an option. Economic hardship forces families to prioritize daily necessities over the cost of Scripture. Even when Bibles are available, the price can be prohibitive, preventing believers from obtaining their own copy.

While Guatemala's internet is considered safe, access remains a challenge. Only a little over half of the population has internet access, and for those living in extreme poverty, the cost of internet plans makes digital Bibles unattainable. Even though digital access is growing, it does not provide a comprehensive solution since many in rural areas lack both connectivity and digital literacy, reinforcing the need for printed Scripture.

Given these challenges, the demand for Bibles in Guatemala remains high. With a large church that's mostly Catholic, providing access to Scripture is still essential. The opportunity to equip Guatemalan Christians with God's Word requires overcoming economic barriers and finding sustainable ways to make Bibles more widely available.

Before we continue, would you take a pause to pray for Guatemala?

### How can I pray for Guatemala?

- **Provision for Bibles.** Pray for resources and strategies to overcome the financial and logistical barriers that prevent many Guatemalans from accessing Scripture.
- **Economic Relief.** Ask God to bring opportunities for financial stability, especially for families in poverty who struggle to afford even basic needs.
- **Spiritual Growth.** Pray that despite these challenges, the church in Guatemala will continue to grow strong in faith, and that believers will find ways to engage with God's Word, even in difficult circumstances.

*After praying for Guatemala, continue reading on the next page to learn more.*

#### Bible Access Restrictions

Minimal Access Restrictions

#### Other Limiting Factors

Some Other Factors



Poor infrastructure

#### Bible Shortages Among Believers



Bibles are needed for believers and seekers

**Main religion:** Christianity

**Country population:** 18,358,000

**Christian population:**



17,853,000, 97.25% of total population

# WHAT'S BLOCKING BIBLE ACCESS IN GUATEMALA?

## Economic Hardships and the Cost of Scripture

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While Guatemala enjoys religious freedom and has no government-imposed restrictions on Bible distribution, significant economic barriers limit access to Scripture for many believers. More than half of the population lives in poverty, and for those struggling to afford basic necessities, purchasing a Bible is simply not a priority. Even nonprofit organizations face heavy taxation on Bible imports, making distribution costly. Though the National Bible Society plays a crucial role in mitigating these financial hurdles, the demand for Bibles still far exceeds availability.

## The Challenge of Distribution in Rural and Indigenous Areas

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Guatemala's diverse geography creates additional challenges for getting Bibles into the hands of believers. The country's rural and indigenous communities, particularly in the northern highlands, often have limited infrastructure and fewer opportunities to access Christian resources. Many indigenous groups primarily speak languages other than Spanish, yet Bible translations in these languages remain scarce. Even where translations exist, the cost and logistics of printing and distributing them in remote areas remain significant obstacles. Historically, missionary efforts in Guatemala prioritized Spanish over indigenous languages, delaying access to Scripture for many non-Spanish-speaking communities.

## Digital Bibles: A Limited Solution

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While digital Bibles could offer an alternative solution, internet access is far from universal. Though the internet is considered safe in Guatemala, only about half of the population has access, and the high cost of internet plans places it out of reach for many living in extreme poverty. Even when people have internet access, low digital literacy rates—especially among older generations and rural populations—further limit engagement with online Scripture. For these reasons, physical Bibles remain essential, yet they remain inaccessible to many due to economic and logistical barriers. In addition, audio Bibles are an excellent solution as well for those that have low digital literacy or are illiterate.

## A Silent Struggle: The Deaf Community and Scripture

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One of the overlooked barriers to Bible access in Guatemala is the difficulty faced by the deaf community. With an estimated 850,000 Guatemalans being deaf or hearing impaired, this population struggles to engage with Scripture, as traditional written texts are not accessible to those who communicate primarily through sign language.

Until recently, there were no Bible translations in Guatemalan Sign Language (LENSUGUA), leaving this large community without a way to engage with God's Word. Efforts are now being made to translate Scripture into sign language, but this remains an area of critical need.

# THE URGENT NEED FOR BIBLES IN GUATEMALA

Guatemala's deep-rooted Christian identity does not guarantee Bible access for all believers. Less than half of Guatemala's Christian population has access to a Bible, indicating that a significant number of Bibles are needed for both believers and for seekers—those actively exploring Christianity.

## A Large Church in Need of More Access

With over 97% of the population identifying as Christian, the reality is that many lack personal access to God's Word. This highlights the urgent need to make Bibles more readily available, ensuring that faith is not only inherited but deepened through Scripture. Without access to a Bible, many Guatemalans are left without a direct connection to the teachings of Christ, relying solely on secondhand instruction from church services.

## Bible Formats for Diverse Needs

When it comes to Bible formats, print remains the most urgent priority. While digital options exist, limited internet access and high costs make them inaccessible to many. Audio Bibles also play a crucial role, especially for those who are unable to read or have limited literacy skills. These formats are essential in ensuring that every believer—regardless of economic status or education level—can engage with the Word of God.

## The Challenge of Bible Translations

Language barriers further complicate Bible access. Guatemalan Christians speak at least 28 languages. Here's why there's a need for translations:

- Only **16** languages have a full translation of the Bible.
- **6** languages have only the New Testament translated.
- **4** have just a portion of the Bible available.
- **2** languages still have no Scripture translation at all

This leaves some communities without God's Word in their heart language. Expanding Bible translation efforts is vital to ensuring that every Guatemalan believer can read and understand Scripture in their native tongue.



Spoken Languages with Believers in Guatemala

# THE CLARION CALL

The need for Bibles in Guatemala is not just a logistical challenge—it is a spiritual urgency. There is a generation of believers and seekers longing for the truth, yet many are unable to hold or hear the Word of God for themselves.

This is a call to the global church: to stand in the gap, to provide Scripture in every format and language needed, and to ensure that no believer in Guatemala is left without the life-transforming power of the Bible. The opportunity is now, and the need is great. Will we respond?



**0.5%**

Annual Church  
Growth



Bibles needed for both

**Believers  
& Seekers**



**Printed  
Bible**

Preferred Format



**Audio  
Bible**

Format 2nd Priority