The State of American Theology Study 2018

Commissioned by

Ligonier Ministries

TheStateofTheology.com



Research Objective

To measure the theological understanding of Americans today



Biblical Solutions for Life

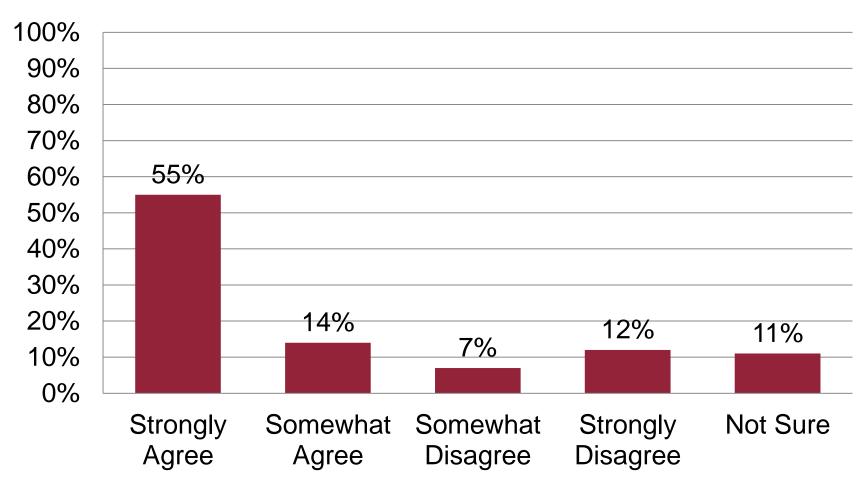
Methodology

- A demographically balanced online panel was used for interviewing American adults
- 3,002 surveys were completed April 24-May 4, 2018
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error from the online panel does not exceed ±1.9%
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups
- □ Slight weights were used to balance gender, age, ethnicity, income, region, and religion ♣LifeWay.

Survey Responses

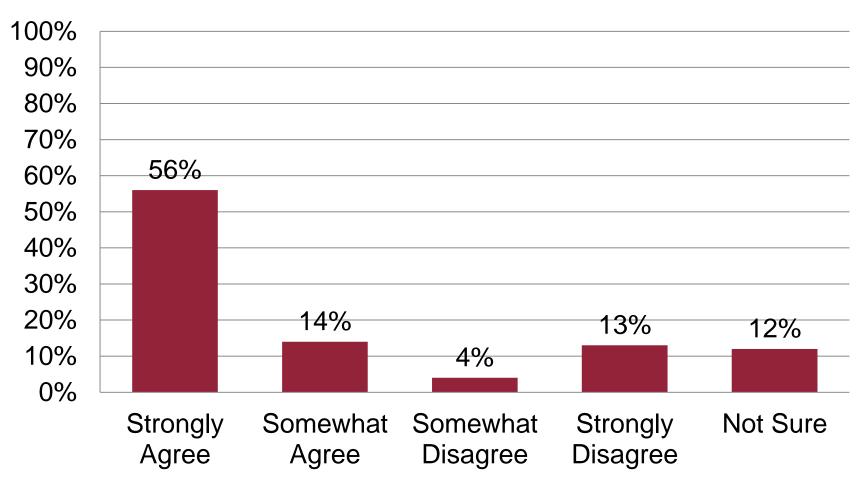


God is a perfect being and cannot make a mistake.



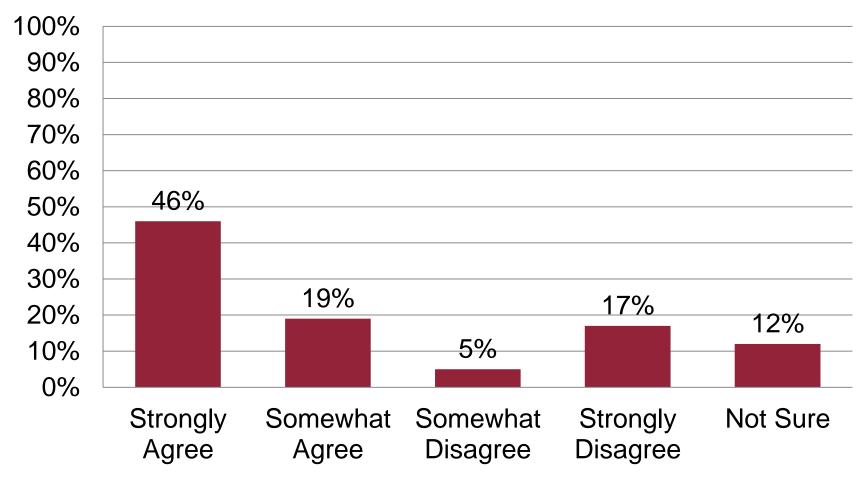


There is one true God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.



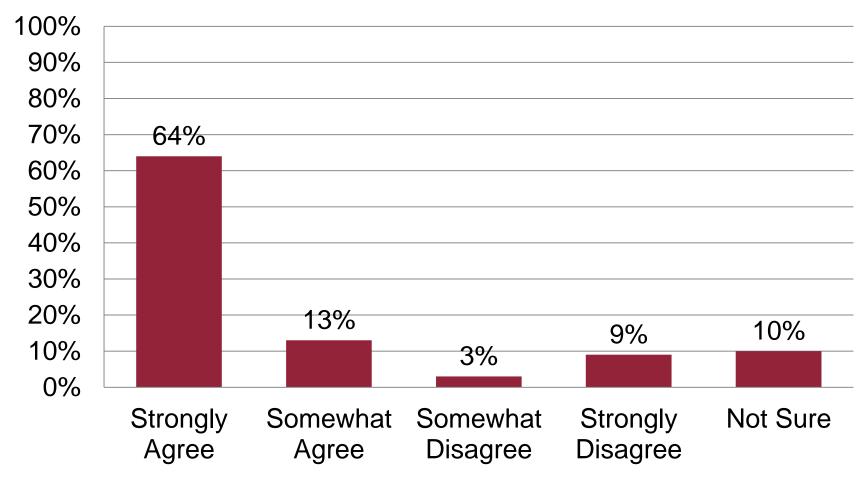


God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism and Islam.



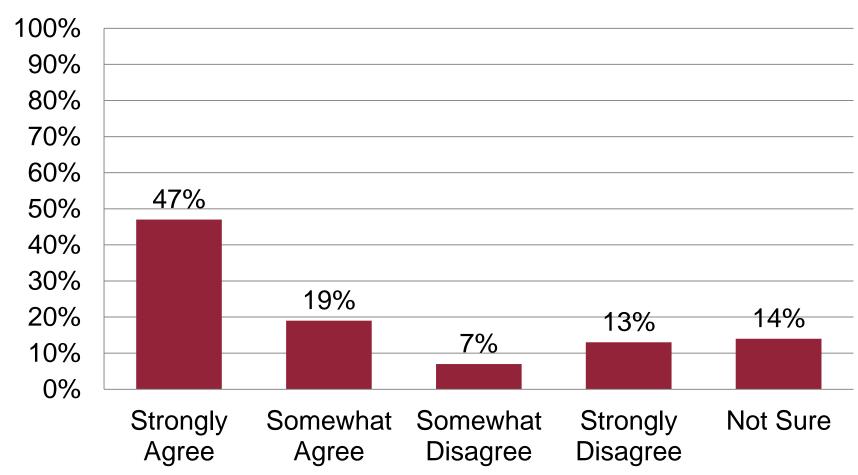


God created male and female.



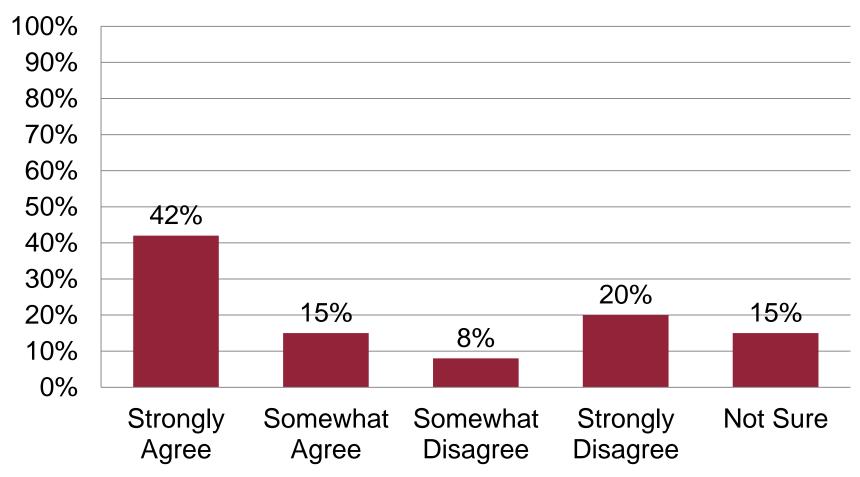


Biblical accounts of the physical (bodily) resurrection of Jesus are completely accurate. This event actually occurred.



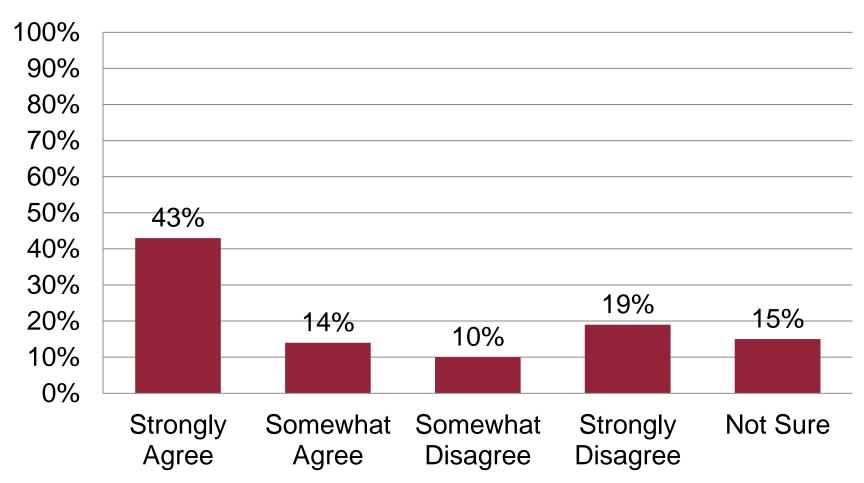


Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God.



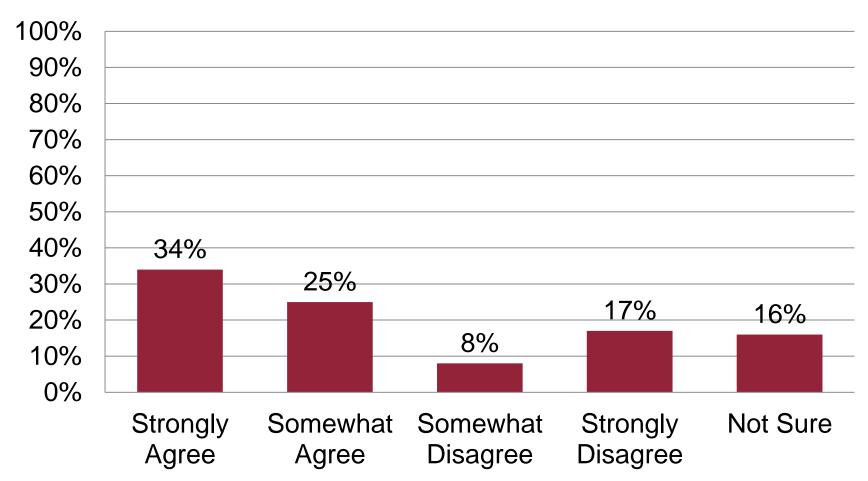


Jesus Christ is the only person who never sinned.



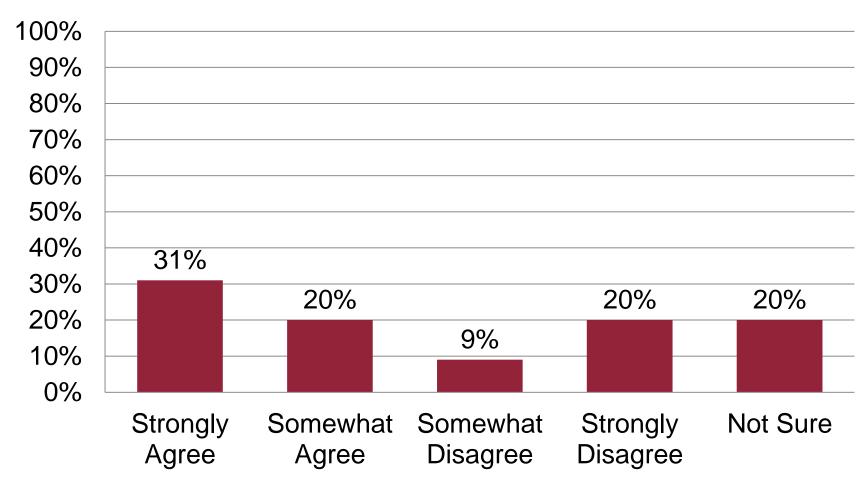


The Holy Spirit is a force but is not a personal being.



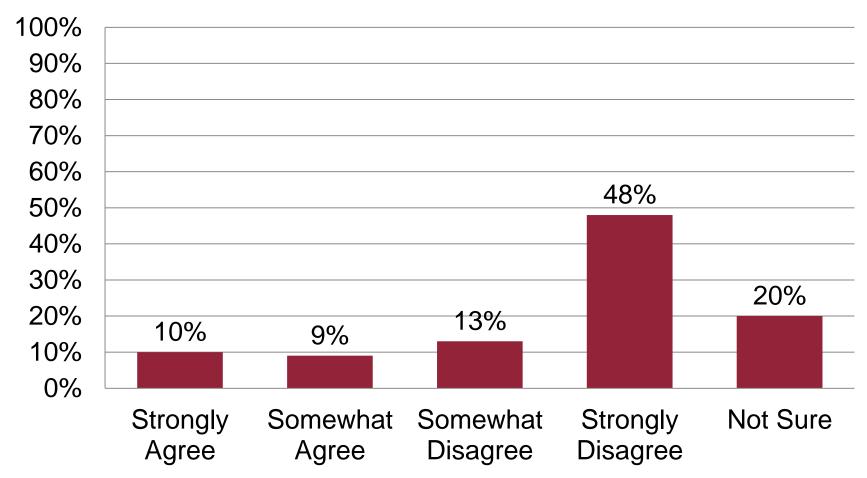


The Holy Spirit gives a spiritual new birth or new life before a person has faith in Jesus Christ.



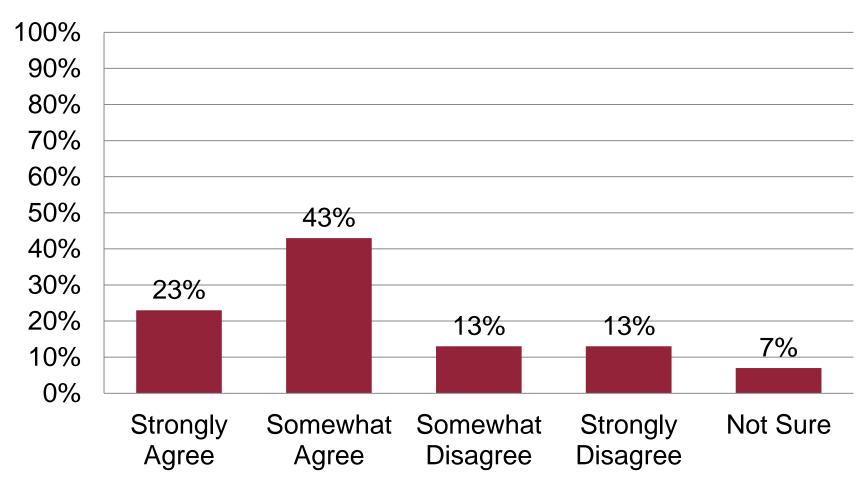


The Holy Spirit can tell me to do something which is forbidden in the Bible.



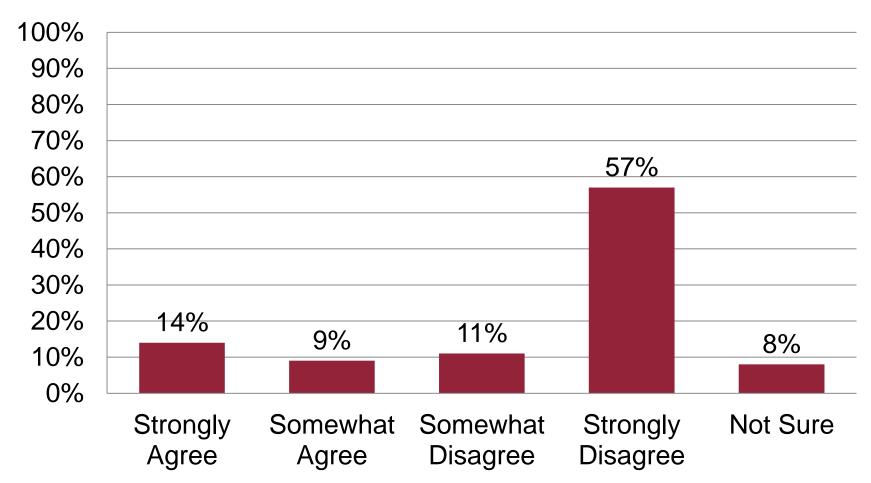


Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature.



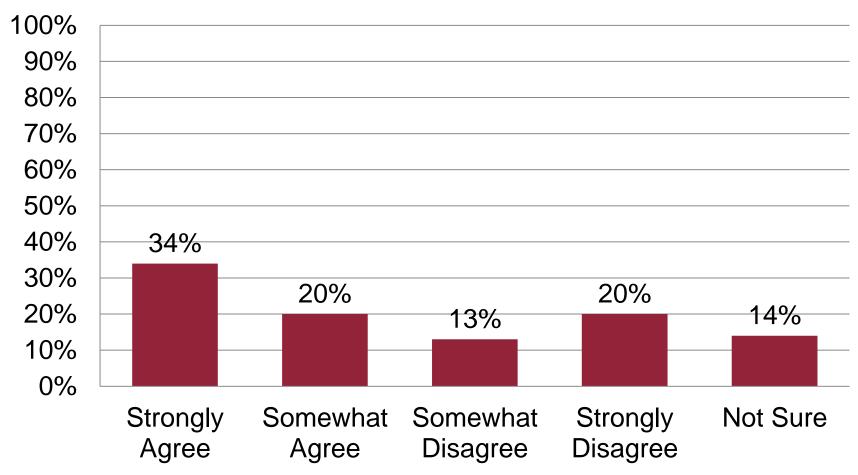


Even the smallest sin deserves eternal damnation.



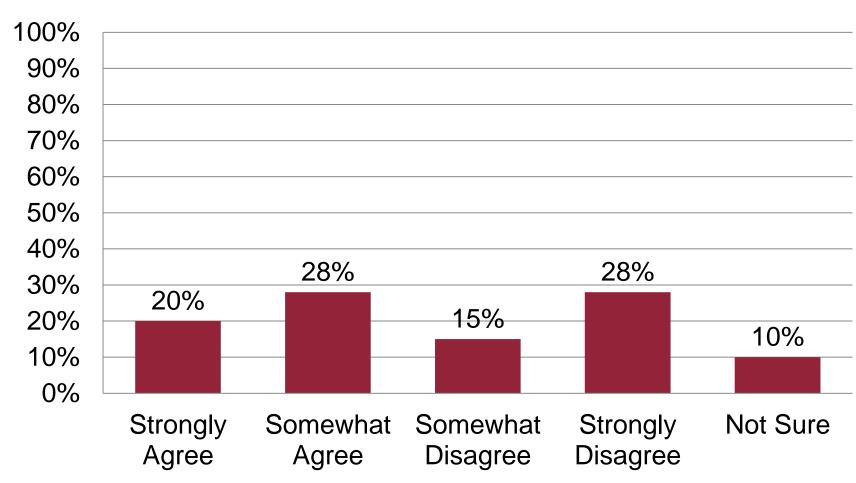


God counts a person as righteous not because of one's works but only because of one's faith in Jesus Christ.



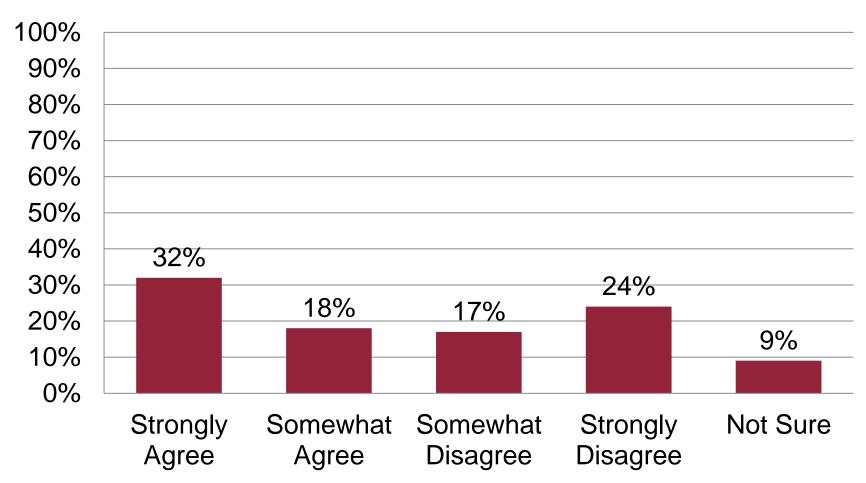


The Bible, like all sacred writings, contains helpful accounts of ancient myths but is not literally true.



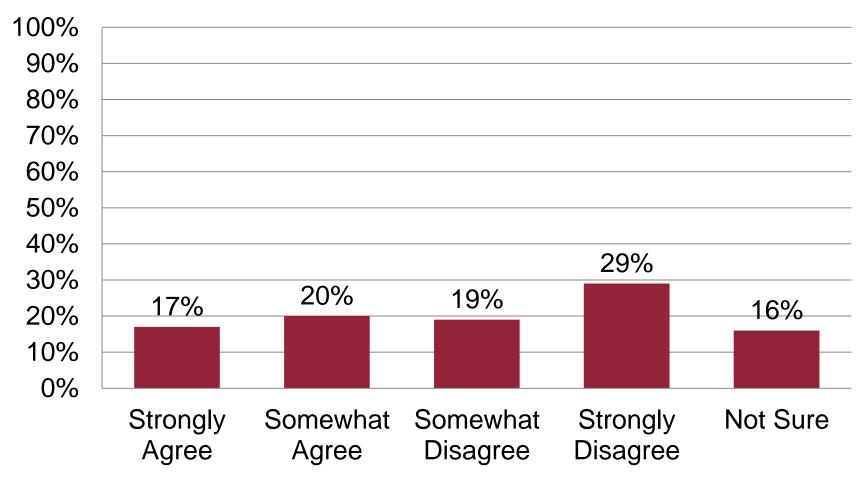


The Bible is 100% accurate in all that it teaches.



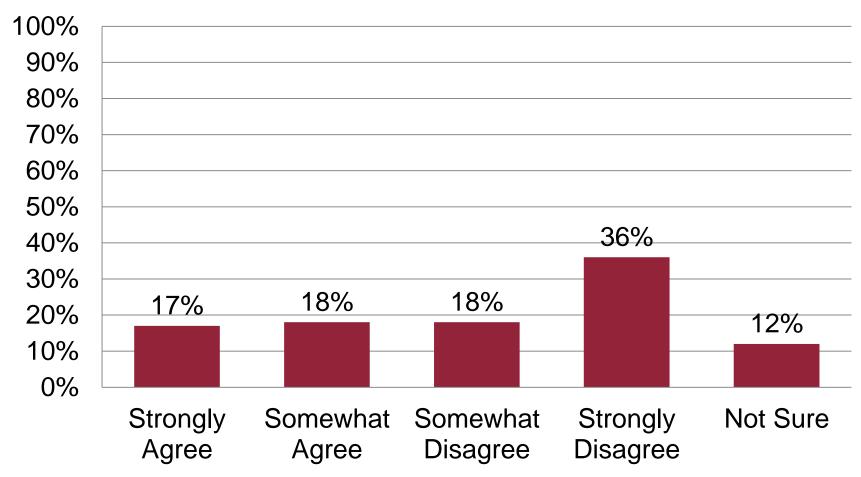


Modern science disproves the Bible.



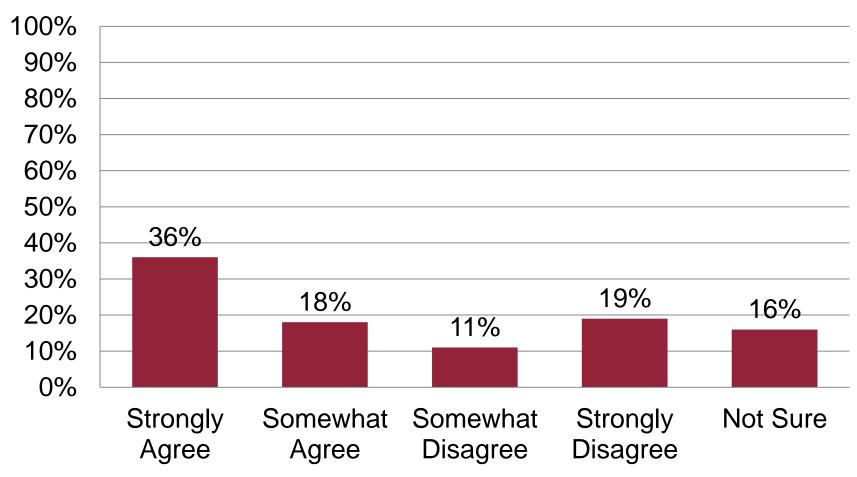


God will always reward true faith with material blessings in this life.



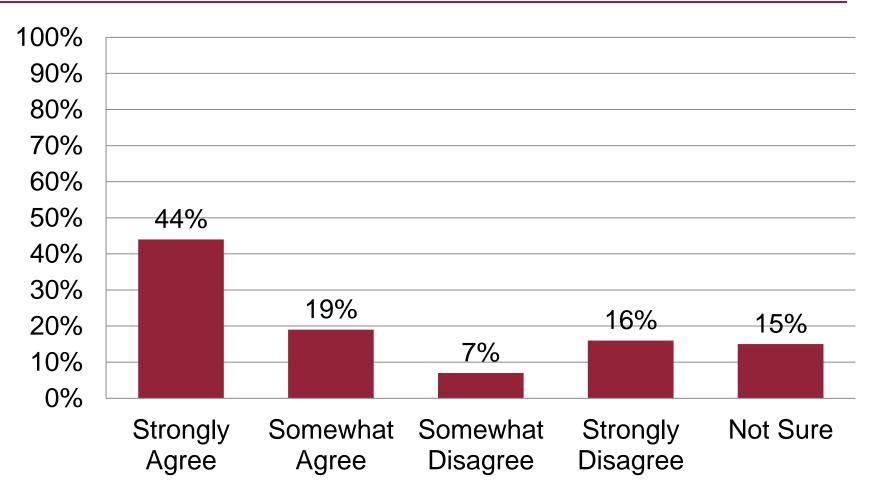


Hell is a real place where certain people will be punished forever.



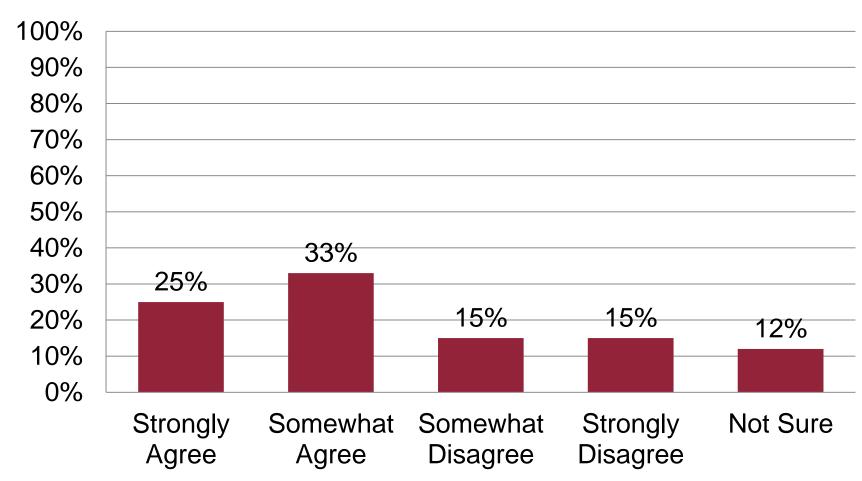


There will be a time when Jesus Christ returns to judge all the people who have lived.



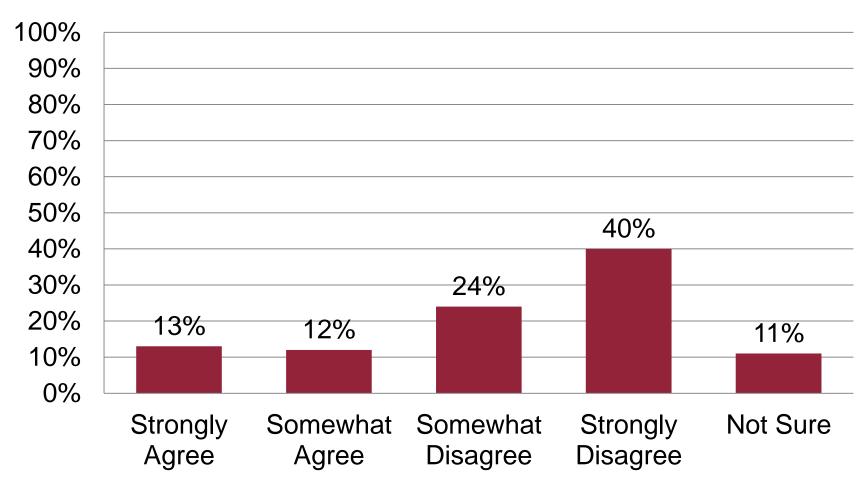


Worshiping alone or with one's family is a valid replacement for regularly attending church.



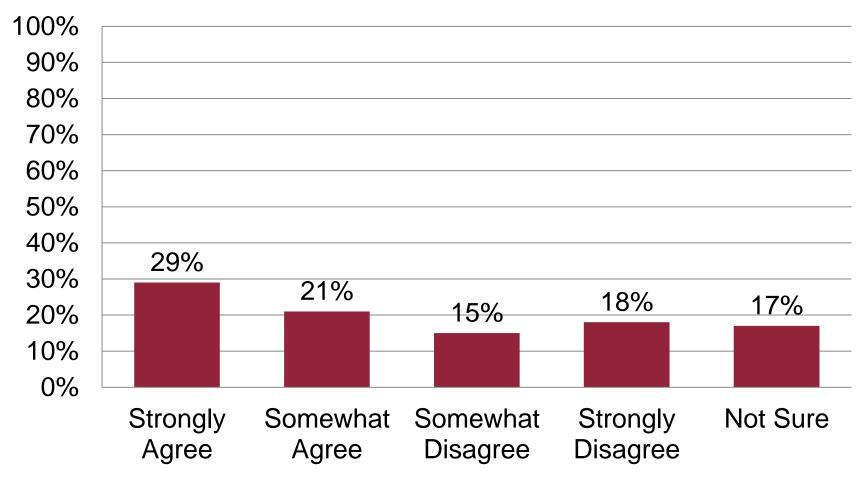


Christians should be silent on issues of politics.



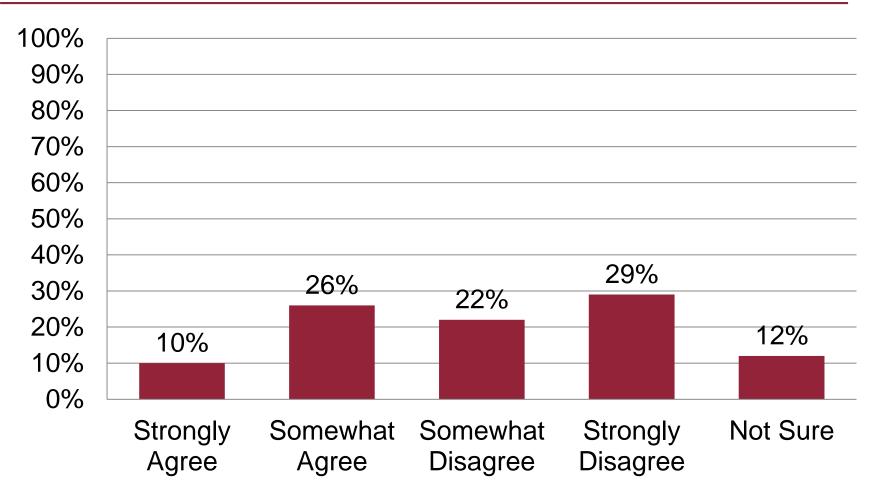


Only the power of God can cause people to trust Jesus Christ as their savior.



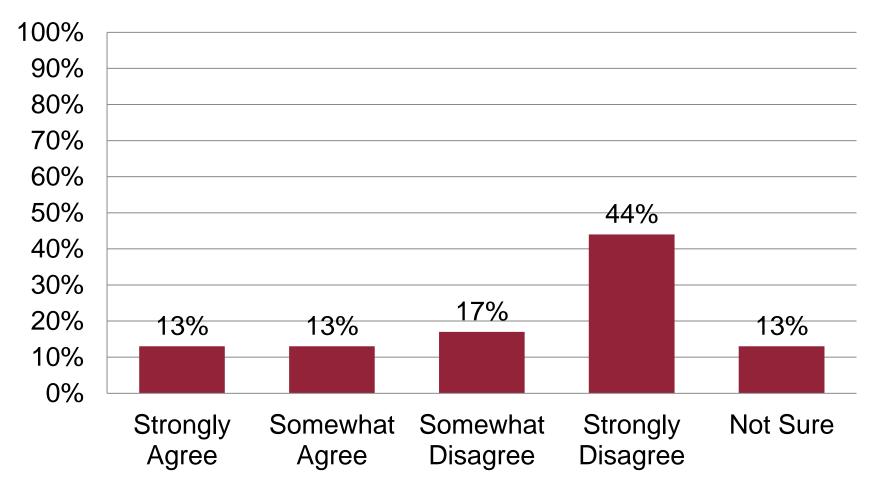


Churches must provide entertaining worship services if they want to be effective.



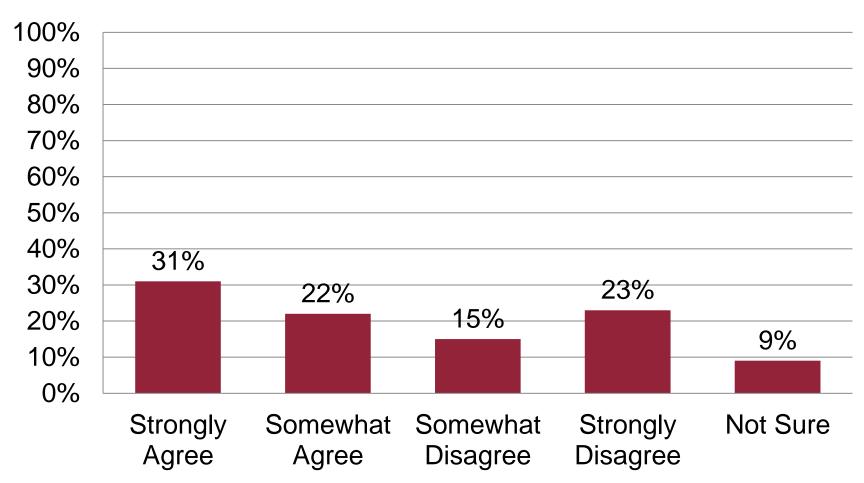


God is unconcerned with my day-to-day decisions.



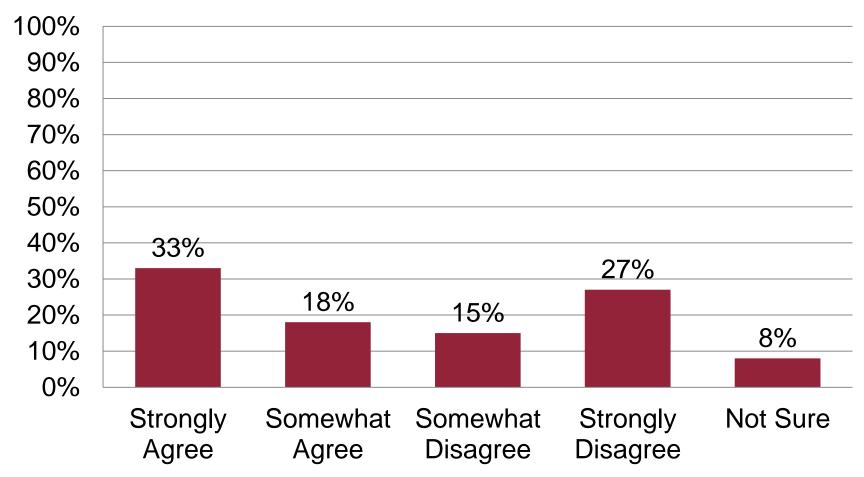


The Bible has the authority to tell us what we must do.



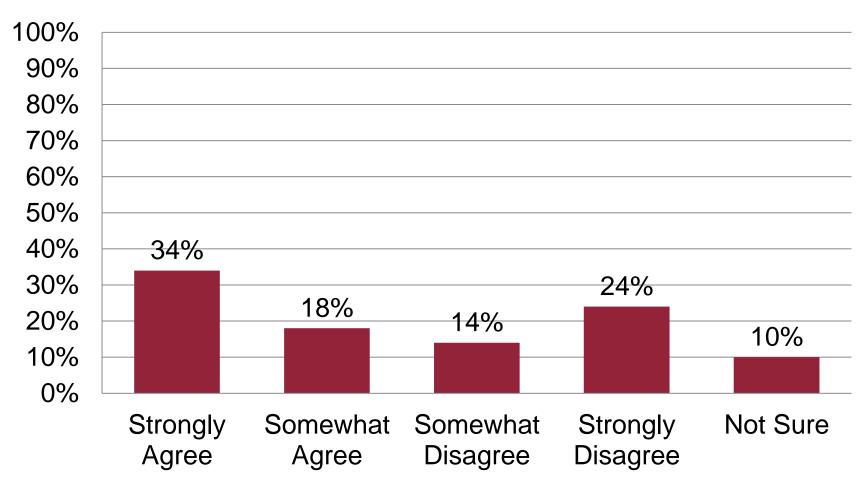


Sex outside of traditional marriage is a sin.



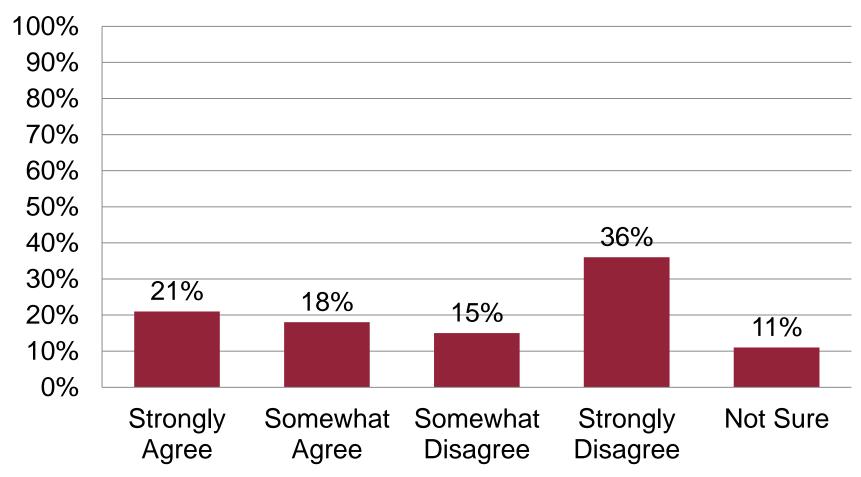


Abortion is a sin.



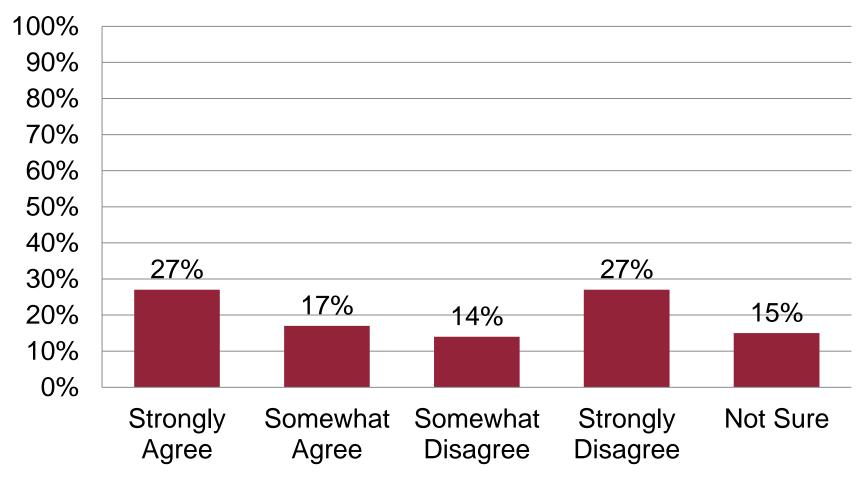


Gender identity is a matter of choice.



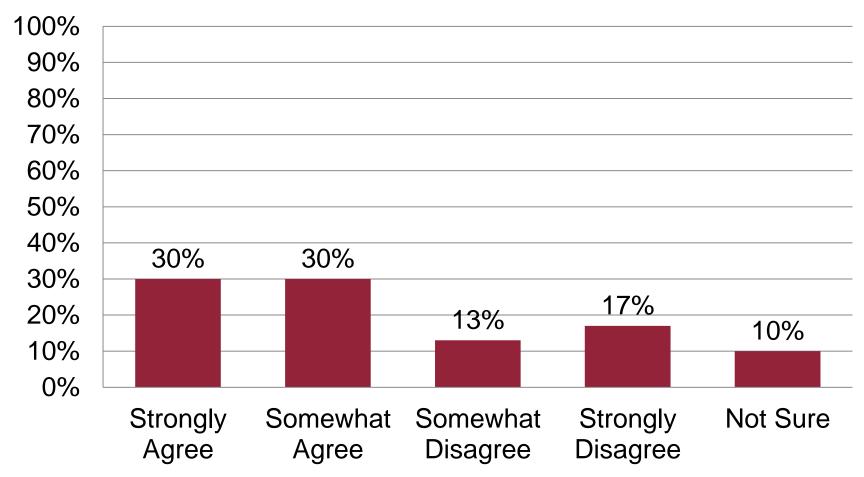


The Bible's condemnation of homosexual behavior doesn't apply today.



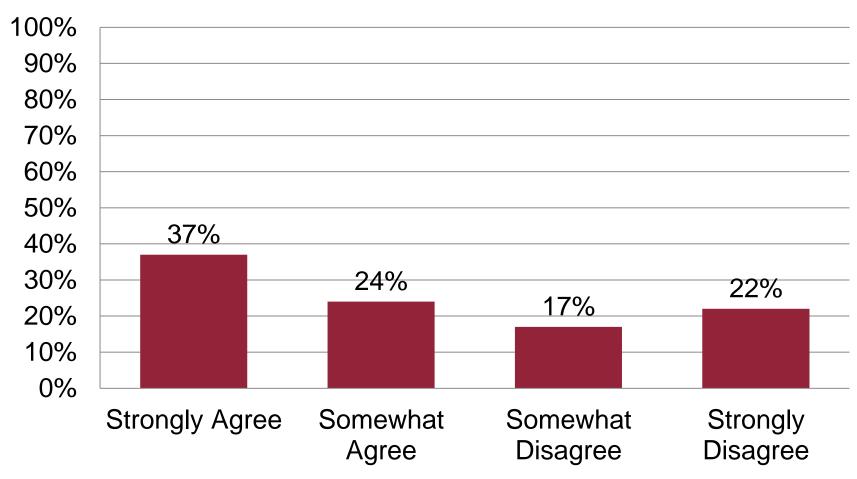


Religious belief is a matter of personal opinion; it is not about objective truth.



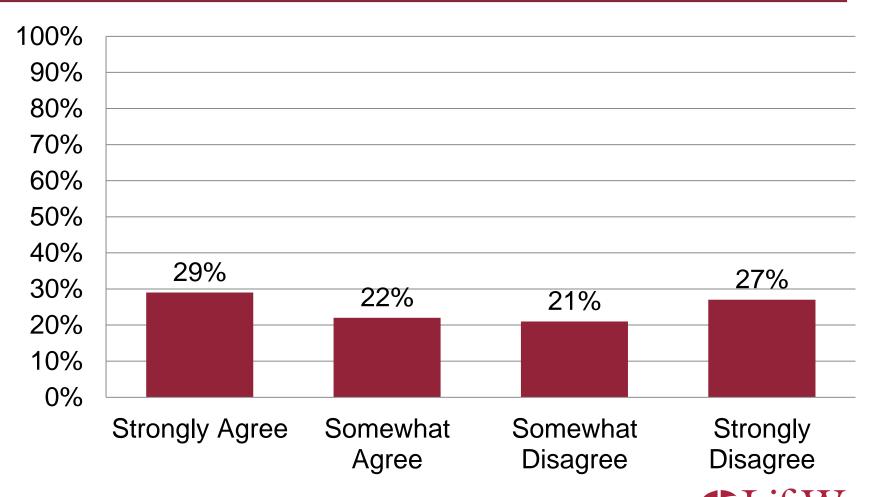


The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe.

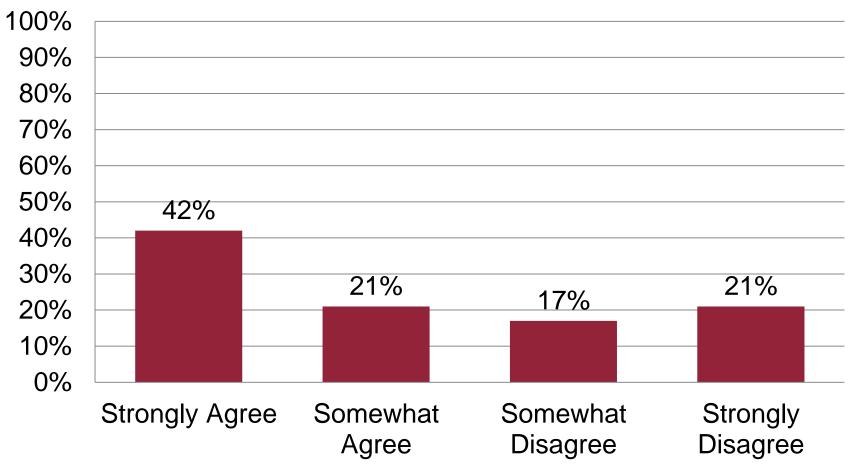




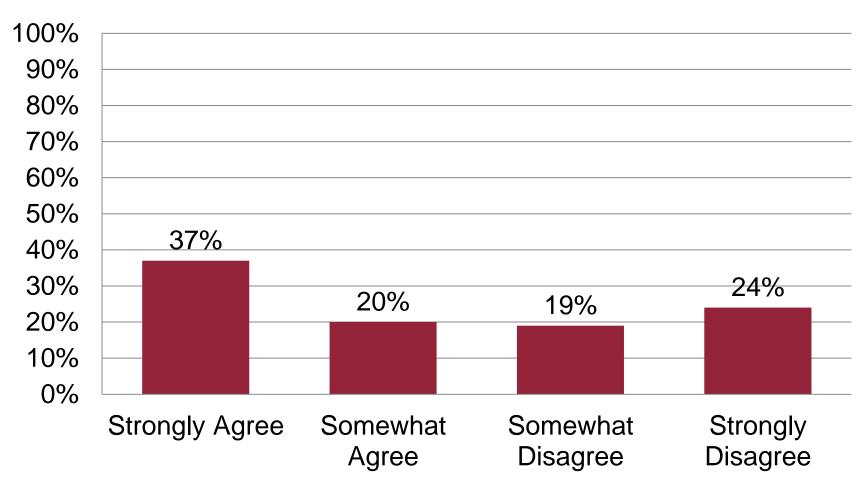
It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior.



Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin.



Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation.





Significant Differences

Region
Age
Gender
Education Level
Household Income
Ethnicity
Religious Service Attendance
Christian Religious Traditions
Evangelical Beliefs



Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among region of the country, age, gender, education level, and household income.

Region	Age	Gender	Education Level	HH Income
Northeast	18-34	Male	HS graduate or less	<\$25,000
Midwest	35-49	Female	Some college	\$25- <\$35k
South	50-64		Bachelor's degree	\$35- <\$50k
West	65+		Graduate degree	\$50- <\$75k
				\$75- <\$100k
				\$100,000+

Notes: Region is defined by US Census locations



Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among ethnic group, religious service attendance, Christian religious traditions, and Evangelical beliefs.

Ethnic Group	Religious Service Attendance	Christian Religious Traditions	Evangelical Beliefs
Asian-Americans	At least once or twice a month	Evangelical	Yes
African-American	Never	Black Protestant	No
Hispanic/Latino		Mainline	
White, non-Hispanic		Catholic	
Other/ mixed			



Evangelical Beliefs

- Evangelical Beliefs are defined using the NAE LifeWay Research
 Evangelical Beliefs Research Definition based on respondent beliefs
- Respondents are asked their level of agreement with four separate statements using a four-point, forced choice scale (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). Those who strongly agree with all four statements are categorized as having Evangelical Beliefs
 - The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe
 - It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior
 - Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin
 - Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation



"God is a perfect being and cannot make a mistake."

- Americans in the West are the least likely to Agree (63%)
- Americans age 18-34 are the least likely to Agree (66%)
- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (83%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (92% v. 50%)
- Evangelicals (95%) and Black Protestants (92%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (80%) and Catholics (80%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree than those without Evangelical Beliefs (98% v. 62%)



"There is one true God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit."

- Americans in the West are the least likely to Agree (63%)
- Americans with household income of \$75,000-\$99,999 (73%) and \$100,000 or more (75%) are more likely to Agree than those with income of less than \$25,000 (65%)
- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (81%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (91% v. 52%)
- Evangelicals (93%) and Black Protestants (99%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (88%) and Catholics (89%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (97% v. 63%)



"God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism and Islam."

- Americans age 50-64 (68%) and 65+ (73%) are more likely to Agree than those 18-34 (62%) and 35-49 (62%)
- Americans with household income of \$75,000-\$99,999 (68%) and \$100,000 or more (72%) are more likely to Agree than those with income of less than \$35,000-\$49,999 (61%)
- African-Americans (70%) are more likely to Agree than Whites (64%) and Other Ethnicities (56%)
- Evangelicals are the least likely to Agree (53%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are less likely to Agree (51% v. 69%)



"God created male and female."

- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (87%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (95% v. 62%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (99% v. 72%)



"Biblical accounts of the physical (bodily) resurrection of Jesus are completely accurate. This event actually occurred."

- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (77%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (91% v. 46%)
- Evangelicals (95%) and Black Protestants (89%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (80%) and Catholics (79%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (97% v. 59%)



"Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God."

- Americans who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to Agree (65%)
- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (72%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (73% v. 43%)
- Black Protestants are the most likely to Agree (82%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (78% v. 52%)



"Jesus Christ is the only person who never sinned."

- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (68%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (80% v. 36%)
- Evangelicals (87%) and Black Protestants (82%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (65%) and Catholics (61%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (92% v. 48%)



"The Holy Spirit is a force but is not a personal being."

- Americans with household income of \$100,000 or more (64%) are more likely to Agree than those with income of less than \$25,000 (57%), \$25,000-34,999 (54%), and \$50,000-\$74,999 (54%)
- African-Americans (65%) and Hispanics (62%) are more likely to Agree than Asian-Americans (52%) and Whites (57%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (66% v. 52%)
- Evangelicals are the least likely to Agree (59%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to *Disagree* (37% v. 22%)



"The Holy Spirit gives a spiritual new birth or new life before a person has faith in Jesus Christ."

- Americans age 18-34 are the most likely to Agree (57%)
- Americans with household income of \$75,000-\$99,999 (54%) and \$100,000 or more (55%) are more likely to Agree than those with income of \$35,000-\$49,999 (45%)
- African-Americans (60%) are more likely to Agree than Whites (48%) and Other Ethnicities (47%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (66% v. 38%)
- Catholics (69%) are more likely to Agree than Evangelicals (61%) and Mainlines (61%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (63% v. 48%)



"The Holy Spirit can tell me to do something which is forbidden in the Bible."

- Americans age 18-34 are the most likely to Agree (30%)
- Americans with a some college are the least likely to Agree (13%)
- Americans with household income of \$75,000-\$99,999 are the most likely to Agree (28%)
- Asian-Americans (29%), African-Americans (24%), and Hispanics (25%) are more likely to Agree than Whites (17%) and Other Ethnicities (11%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (27% v. 13%)
- Black Protestants (29%) and Catholics (31%) are more likely to Agree than Evangelicals (18%) and Mainlines (13%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to *Disagree* (73% v. 58%)



"Everyone sins a little, but most people are good by nature."

- Americans age 65+ are the most likely to Agree (73%)
- Americans with household income of \$50,000-\$74,999 (69%) and \$100,000 or more (72%) are more likely to Agree than those with income of less than \$25,000 (61%), \$25,000-\$34,999 (60%), and \$35,000-\$49,999 (62%)
- Catholics are the most likely to Agree (84%) and Evangelicals are the least likely to Agree (55%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to *Disagree* (44% v. 22%)



"Even the smallest sin deserves eternal damnation."

- Americans age 18-34 are the most likely to Agree (34%), those age 65+ are the least likely to Agree (13%)
- Americans with household income of \$75,000-\$99,999 are the most likely to Agree (34%)
- Asian-Americans (40%) and African-Americans (31%) are more likely to Agree than Whites (20%) and Other Ethnicities (17%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (38% v. 10%)
- Evangelicals (39%) and Black Protestants (34%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (17%) and Catholics (24%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (49% v. 17%)



"God counts a person as righteous not because of one's works but only because of one's faith in Jesus Christ."

- Americans who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to Agree (63%)
- African-Americans (66%) are more likely to Agree than Hispanics (52%), Whites (51%), and Other Ethnicities (43%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (74% v. 35%)
- Evangelicals (82%) and Black Protestants (81%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (58%) and Catholics (54%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (91% v. 44%)



"The Bible, like all sacred writings, contains helpful accounts of ancient myths but is not literally true."

- Americans age 18-34 (52%) are more likely to Agree than those 35-49 (47%) ad 50-64 (41%)
- Americans with a Bachelor's degree (50%) or a Graduate degree (57%) are more likely to Agree than those who are High School Graduates or less (40%) or with some college (42%)
- Americans with household income of \$50,000-\$74,999 (47%), \$75,000-\$99,999 (52%) and \$100,000 or more (53%) are more likely to Agree than those with income of less than \$25,000 (40%)
- Asian-Americans (52%) and Whites (48%) are more likely to Agree than African-Americans (41%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to *Disagree* than those who do not (58% v. 30%)
- Catholics are the most likely to Agree (57%), and Evangelicals are the least likely to Agree (22%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Disagree (75% v. 35%)

"The Bible is 100% accurate in all that it teaches."

- Americans in the South (54%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Northeast (44%) and West (46%)
- Americans who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to Agree (60%)
- Americans with household income of \$100,000 or more (46%) are more likely to *Disagree* than those with income of \$25,000 or less (36%), \$25,000-\$34,999 (39%), and \$75,000-\$99,999 (37%)
- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (66%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (76% v. 28%)
- Evangelicals (85%) and Black Protestants (81%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (49%) and Catholics (53%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (96% v. 39%)



"Modern science disproves the Bible."

- Americans age 18-34 (47%) and 35-49 (41%) are the more likely to Agree than those 50-64 (30%) and 65+ (24%)
- Asian-Americans are the most likely to Agree (49%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to *Disagree* than those who do not (60% v. 37%)
- Black Protestants (42%) and Catholics (39%) are more likely to Agree than Evangelicals (22%) and Mainlines (24%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to *Disagree* (67% v. 43%)



Biblical Solutions for Life

"God will always reward true faith with material blessings in this life."

- Americans age 18-34 are the most likely to Agree (43%); those 65+ are the least likely to Agree (25%)
- Americans who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to Agree (45%)
- Americans with household income of \$100,000 or more (61%) are more likely to *Disagree* than those with income of less than \$25,000 (47%), \$25,000-34,999 (51%), and \$75,000-\$99,999 (51%)
- Asian-Americans (45%) and African-Americans (50%) are more likely to Agree than Hispanics (35%), Whites (31%), and Other Ethnicities (25%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (47% v. 24%)
- Black Protestants are the most likely to Agree (64%); Mainlines are the least likely to Agree (31%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (46% v. 32%)

"Hell is a real place where certain people will be punished forever."

- Americans in the South are the most likely to Agree (59%)
- Americans age 18-34 (58%) and 35-49 (57%) are more likely to Agree than those 65+ (49%)
- Americans who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to Agree (63%)
- Americans with household income of \$75,000-\$99,999 (62%) are more likely to Agree than those with income of less than \$25,000 (51%), \$50,000-74,999 (53%), and \$100,000 or more (54%)
- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (69%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (78% v. 34%)
- Evangelicals (86%) and Black Protestants (82%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (57%) and Catholics (61%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (93% v. 45%)



"There will be a time when Jesus Christ returns to judge all the people who have lived."

- Americans who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to Agree (71%)
- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (76%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (88% v. 41%)
- Evangelicals (92%) and Black Protestants (87%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (74%) and Catholics (72%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (98% v. 54%)



"Worshiping alone or with one's family is a valid replacement for regularly attending church."

- Americans in the Northeast are the most likely to Agree (63%)
- Other Ethnicities (66%) are more likely to Agree than Asian-Americans (52%) and African-Americans (55%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to *Disagree* than those who do not (45% v. 16%)
- Evangelicals are the most likely to Disagree (50%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to *Disagree* (54% v. 24%)



"Christians should be silent on issues of politics."

- Americans age 18-34 (38%) and 35-49 (27%) are more likely to Agree than those 50-64 (17%) and 65+ (14%)
- Americans with some college are the least likely to Agree (18%)
- Americans with household income of \$75,000-\$99,999 are the most likely to Agree (34%)
- Asian-Americans are the most likely to Agree (41%)
- Black Protestants (28%) and Catholics (29%) are more likely to Agree than Evangelicals (16%) and Mainlines (17%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to *Disagree* (74% v. 62%)



"Only the power of God can cause people to trust Jesus Christ as their savior."

- Americans who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to Agree (59%)
- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (64%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (71% v. 33%)
- Evangelicals (74%) and Black Protestants (79%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (57%) and Catholics (56%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (83% v. 43%)



"Churches must provide entertaining worship services if they want to be effective."

- Americans age 18-34 are the most likely to Agree (46%)
- Americans with household income of \$100,000 or more (42%) are more likely to Agree than those with income of less than \$25,000 (30%), \$25,000-\$34,999 (33%), and \$50,000-\$74,999 (36%)
- Asian-American (42%) and African-Americans (41%) are more likely to Agree than Other Ethnicities (28%)
- Black Protestants (53%) and Catholics (47%) are more likely to Agree than Evangelicals (34%) and Mainlines (33%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to *Disagree* (61% v. 49%)



"God is unconcerned with my day-to-day decisions."

- Americans age 18-34 are the most likely to Agree (36%)
- Americans with household income of \$75,000-\$99,999 (34%) are more likely to Agree than those with income of less than \$25,000 (22%), \$35,000-\$49,999 (23%), \$50,000-\$74,999 (26%), and \$100,000 or more (27%)
- Asian-Americans are the most likely to Agree (35%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to *Disagree* than those who do not (74% v. 50%)
- Black Protestants (26%) and Catholics (31%) are more likely to Agree than Evangelicals (13%) and Mainlines (17%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to *Disagree* (83% v. 56%)



"The Bible has the authority to tell us what we must do."

- Americans who are High School Graduates or less (59%) are more likely to Agree than those with some college (48%)
- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (70%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (78% v. 31%)
- Evangelicals (87%) and Black Protestants (79%) are the more likely to Agree than Mainlines (61%) and Catholics (52%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (97% v. 42%)



"Sex outside of traditional marriage is a sin."

- Americans who are High School Graduates or less (57%) or with some college (53%) are more likely to Agree than those with a Bachelor's degree (48%) or a Graduate degree (47%)
- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (68%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (73% v. 32%)
- Evangelicals (79%) and Black Protestants (74%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (51%) and Catholics (51%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (89% v. 41%)



"Abortion is a sin."

- Americans in the South are the most likely to Agree (57%)
- Americans age 18-34 are the most likely to Agree (57%)
- African-Americans (61%) are more likely to Agree than Asian-Americans (52%), Hispanics (52%) Whites (50%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (75% v. 31%)
- Evangelicals are the most likely to Agree (79%); Mainlines are the least likely to Agree (47%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to Agree (88% v. 43%)



"Gender identity is a matter of choice."

- Americans age 18-34 are the most likely to Agree (45%)
- Asian-Americans (46%), African-Americans (45%), and Hispanics (43%) are more likely to Agree than Whites (35%)
- Black Protestants (45%) and Catholics (47%) are more likely to Agree than Evangelicals (29%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to *Disagree* (64% v. 48%)



"The Bible's condemnation of homosexual behavior doesn't apply today."

- Americans age 18-34 are the most likely to Agree (51%)
- Americans with a Graduate degree are the most likely to Agree (56%)
- Americans with household income of \$50,000-\$74,999 (44%),
 \$75,000-\$99,999 (46%), and \$100,000 or more (49%) are more likely to Agree than those with income of less than \$25,000 (38%)
- Asian-Americans (48%), Hispanics (46%), and Whites (44%) are more likely to Agree than African-Americans (34%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to *Disagree* than those who do not (57% v. 28%)
- Catholics are the most likely to Agree (52%); Evangelicals are the least like to Agree (21%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to *Disagree* (74% v. 33%)



"Religious belief is a matter of personal opinion; it is not about objective truth."

- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to *Disagree* than those who do not (45% v. 17%)
- Catholics are the most likely to Agree (67%); Evangelicals are the least likely to Agree (37%)
- Americans with Evangelical Beliefs are more likely to *Disagree* (62% v. 22%)



"The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe."

- Americans who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to Agree (69%)
- Americans with household income of \$75,000-\$99,999 are the most likely to Agree (71%)
- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (79%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (86% v. 40%)
- Evangelicals (92%) and Black Protestants (90%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (74%) and Catholics (67%)



"It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior."

- Americans age 18-34 are the most likely to Agree (58%)
- Americans who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to Agree (61%)
- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (70%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (78% v. 29%)
- Evangelicals (84%) and Black Protestants (82%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (52%) and Catholics (53%)



"Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin."

- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (76%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (85% v. 43%)
- Evangelicals (90%) and Black Protestants (85%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (73%) and Catholics (69%)



"Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation."

- Americans in the South (61%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Northeast (51%) and West (55%)
- Americans who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to Agree (66%)
- Americans with household income of \$75,000-\$99,999 (64%) are more likely to Agree than those with income of \$35,000-\$49,999 (55%), \$50,000-\$74,999 (56%), and \$100,000 or more (54%)
- African-Americans are the most likely to Agree (73%)
- Americans who attend a religious service at least once a month are more likely to Agree than those who do not (80% v. 37%)
- Evangelicals (88%) and Black Protestants (83%) are more likely to Agree than Mainlines (65%) and Catholics (58%)



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