

Deseret News

Faith in America Survey

2022

 **Deseret News.**

Marist Poll[™]

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Executive Summary

This Deseret News: Faith in America Survey, conducted by the Marist Poll, sheds light on the state of faith in America, and how Americans of different backgrounds do or do not incorporate religion and faith into key aspects of their lives.

With the demographic characteristics of the American population shifting as baby boomers enter retirement, the state of religion is reaching a tipping point. Religious service attendance has continued to trend downward over the past decade, despite over half of Americans saying they believe in God as described in the Bible or pray daily. Age is shown to be one of the strongest indicators of whether or not one attends religious services. With younger age groups less likely to attend religious services than their older counterparts, the downward trend of religious attendance is likely to continue.

As the demographic face of religion within America changes, so does the role religion plays in society. All generations of Americans believe it is necessary to follow the Golden Rule; however, younger generations are less likely than their older counterparts to believe that being religious is necessary in order to live a moral life. Americans find themselves looking to family more often than religious teachings when looking for sources of moral guidance.

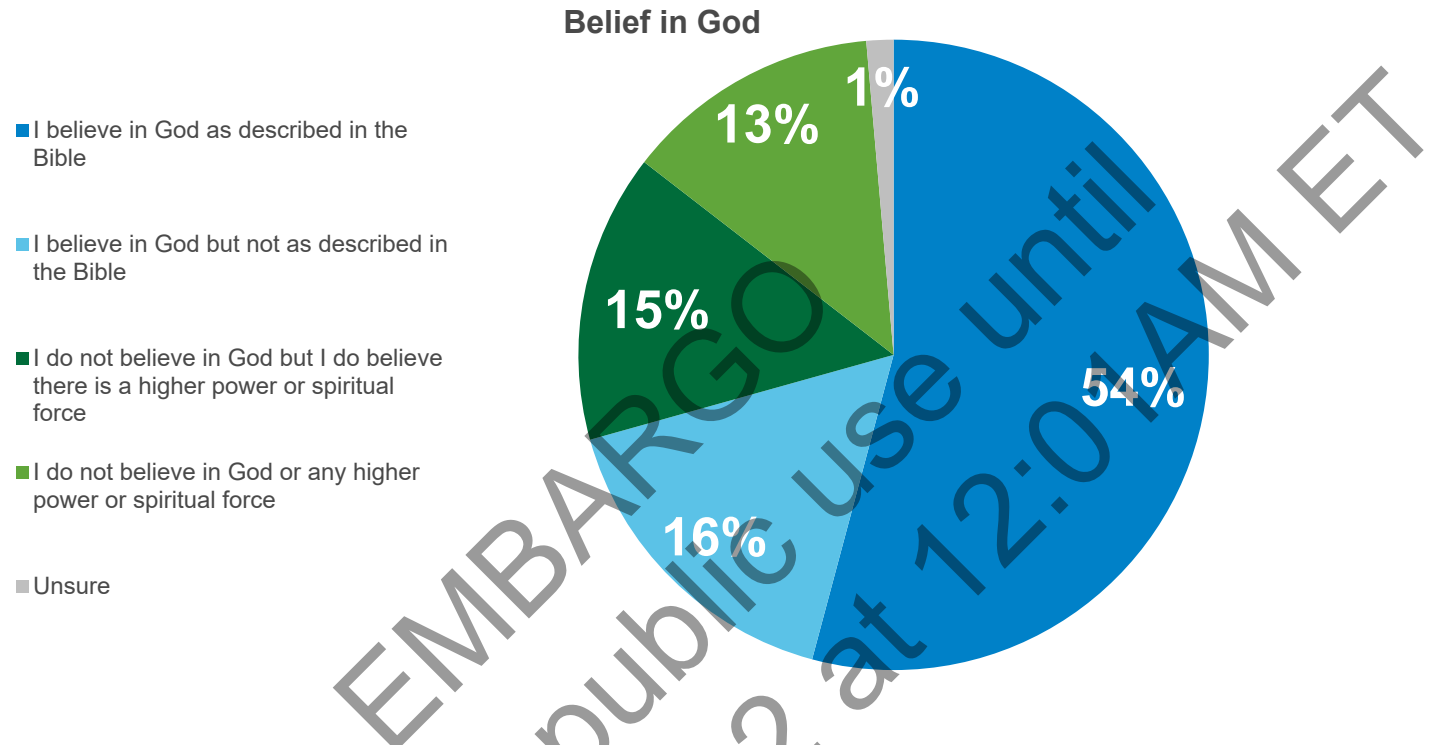
The connection between faith and politics is also at an interesting crossroads. Although a majority of Americans do not feel as though their religion plays a role in their political affiliation, one's political stance can be a strong indicator of the role they feel religion does and should play in society. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to believe the future of the nation lies in God's hands rather than in the American people's control, and Republicans are also more likely to see divine inspiration as having a hand in the creation of the Constitution and key Amendments.

The future of religion in America is closely tied to the changing demographic makeup of the nation. As the population ages and becomes more politically polarized, the importance of and role that religion plays in society will continue to change and evolve.

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The State of Faith in America Today

Majority of Americans Believe in God as Described in the Bible

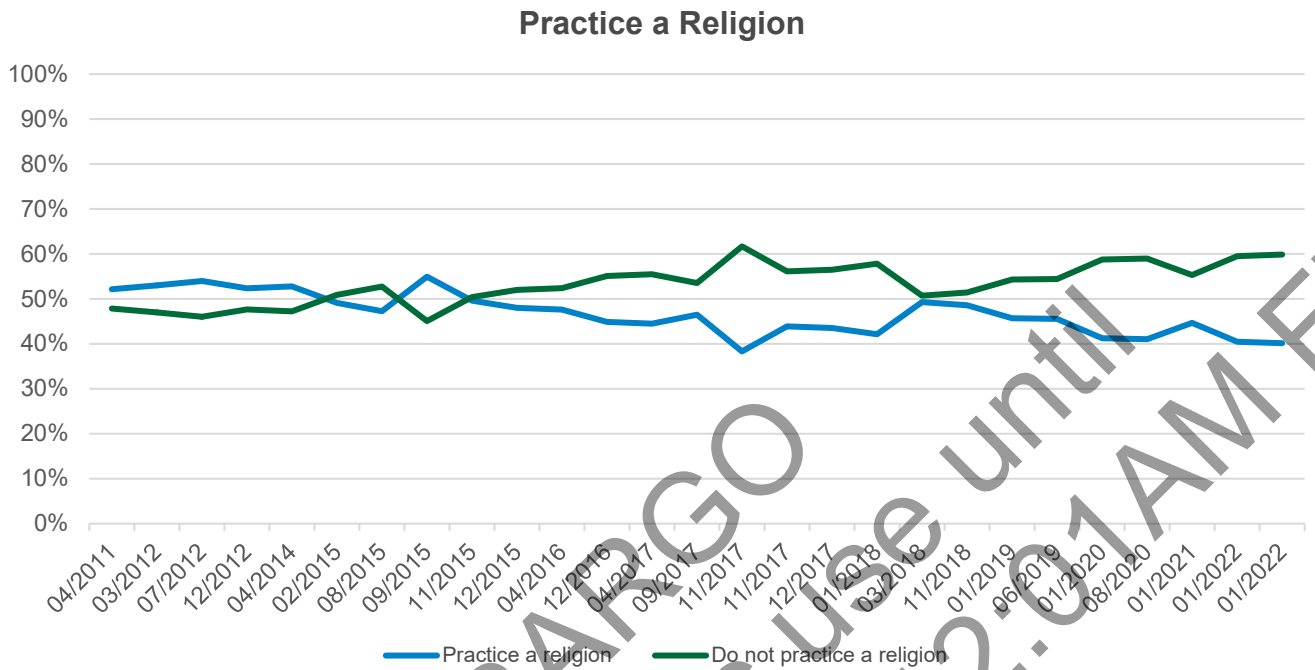


54% of Americans report they believe in God as described in the Bible. This includes 86% of all those who practice a religion and about one in three (33%) individuals who report they do not practice a religion.

A direct correlation exists between age and belief in God. Americans 60 or older (69%) are the most likely to report they believe in the Biblical description of God followed by those aged 45 to 59 (62%). Americans 30 to 44 (50%) and those 18 to 29 (31%) are less likely to believe the same. Among those 18 to 29, 20% believe in God but not as described in the Bible, 24% believe in a higher power but not God, and an identical 24% do not believe in God or any higher power or spiritual force.

Regardless of whether they practice a religion or not, many Americans (71%) consider themselves to be spiritual. Among these individuals, 69% believe in God as described in the Bible. Spirituality increases with age, with 57% of those 18-29 considering themselves spiritual, 62% of those 30-44, 79% of those 45-59, and 83% of those 60 or older reporting themselves to be spiritual or very spiritual, regardless of whether or not they practice a religion.

Religious Attendance Continues Downward Trend



40% of national adults report attending religious services at least once or twice a month. This is a noticeable decline from an April 2011 Marist Poll which revealed that 52% of Americans attended religious services at least once or twice a month. 30% of U.S. adults currently attend church services at least weekly. Among those who practice a religion, 75% attend services at least weekly. More than four in ten Christians (41%), including 45% of Protestants and 30% of Catholics, report attending religious services on at least a weekly basis. Protestants (15%) are more likely than Catholics (6%) and slightly more likely than Christians, overall, (12%) to attend religious services **more than once a week**.

Age Significantly Impacts Church Attendance

Age plays a significant role in religious attendance. Those 60 or older (43%) are more likely than their younger counterparts to attend religious services at least weekly. 21% of those 18-29, 25% of those 30-44, and 27% of those 45-59 attend religious services at least weekly.

Over Half of U.S. Adults Pray Daily, Comparable to Past Trends

53% of Americans report they pray daily, while more than one in five (22%) do not pray at all. These findings are similar to those reported in a 2007 Pew Research poll when 58% of Americans reported they prayed daily, and 18% said they prayed seldom or not at all. In a 2014 Pew study, 55% of Americans said they prayed at least daily.

Age and religious affiliation are both determining factors in Americans' frequency of prayer. Nearly seven in ten Christians (69%), especially Protestants (74%), pray daily. Nearly six in ten Catholics (58%) say the same.

Adults aged 60 or older (69%) are the most likely to report they pray on a daily basis compared with adults aged 45 to 59 (61%), those 30 to 44 (49%), and Americans 18 to 29 years old (27%).

Americans Value Being Part of a Close-Knit Community

87% of Americans, including 88% of Christians, think it is important to be part of a close-knit community. This feeling holds true regardless of age, race, political party, or religion.

Half of Americans Say Their Religion Plays Some Role in Their Personal Associations

50% of Americans report their religion plays a major role (22%) or minor role (28%) in the friends or people with whom they associate. 49% report their religion plays no role at all.

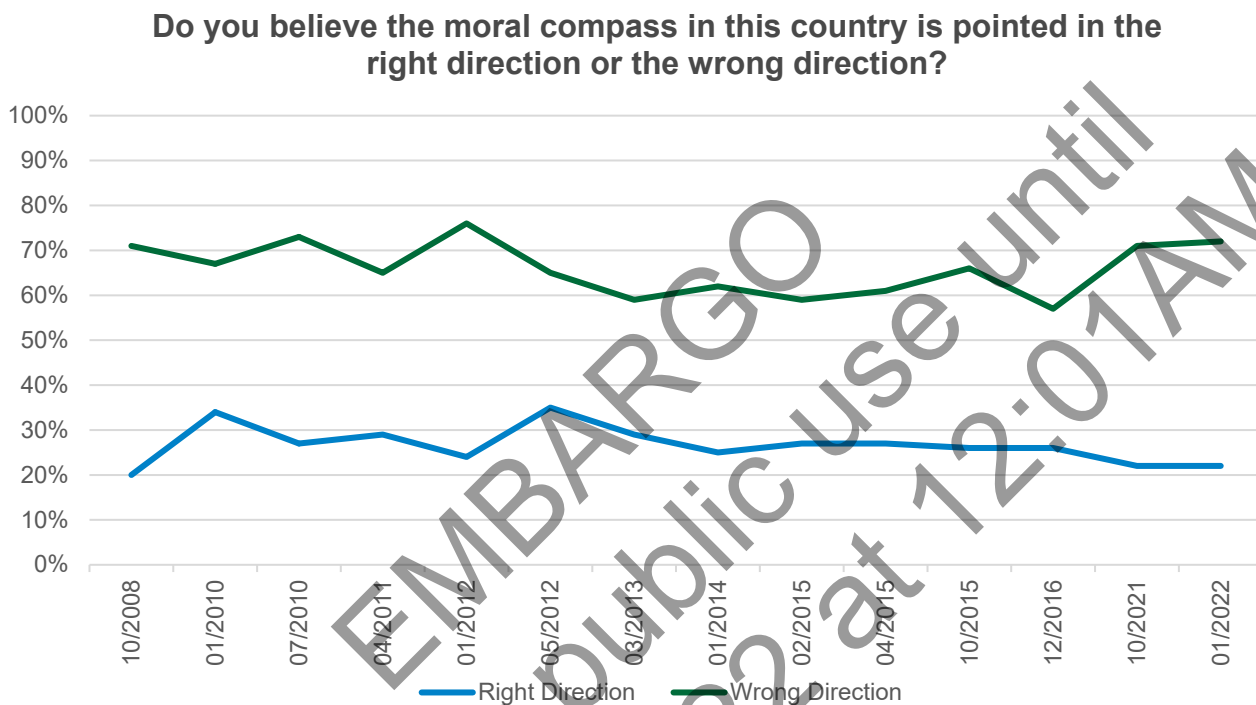
Among Christians, 59% say their religion plays a major role (28%) or a minor role (31%) in choosing their friends or associates. 40% say religion plays no role at all in determining their social circles.

Republicans (35%) are nearly twice as likely as Democrats (18%) and Independents (18%) to report their religion plays a **major** role in deciding with whom they spend time.

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Morality and America

More than Seven in Ten Americans Believe Nation’s Moral Compass Pointed in Wrong Direction

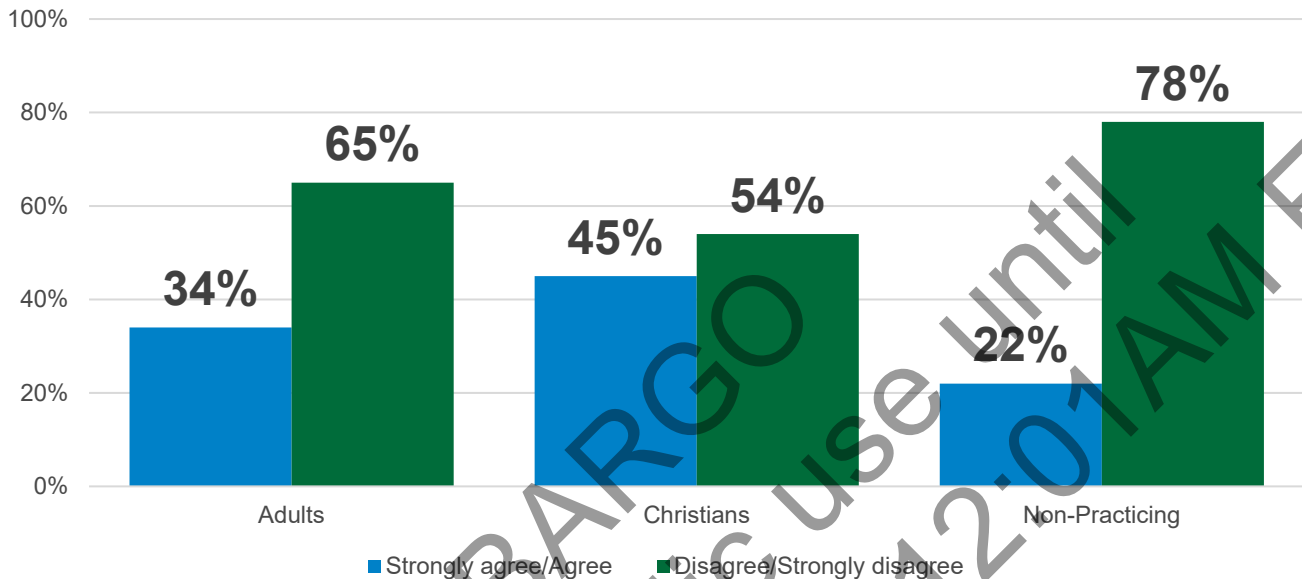


72% of Americans think the nation’s moral compass is pointed in the wrong direction while 22% believe it is pointed in the right one. 74% of Christians believe the nation’s morals are headed in the wrong direction, as does a majority of Americans who do not practice a religion (69%).

Bipartisan consensus exists when it comes to believing the nation’s moral compass is broken. 90% of Republicans, 77% of Independents, and 51% of Democrats are in agreement on this.

Majority Do Not See Religion as Requirement for Morality

Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements: Being religious is necessary in order to live a moral life?



A majority of Americans (65%) do not think being religious is necessary in order to live a moral life. However, opinions divide among those who practice a religion and those who do not practice a religion. 78% of those who do not practice a religion, compared with 46% who do, think being religious is not necessary in order to live a moral life. Among Christians, 54% do not think being religious is necessary to live a moral life while 45% believe it is.

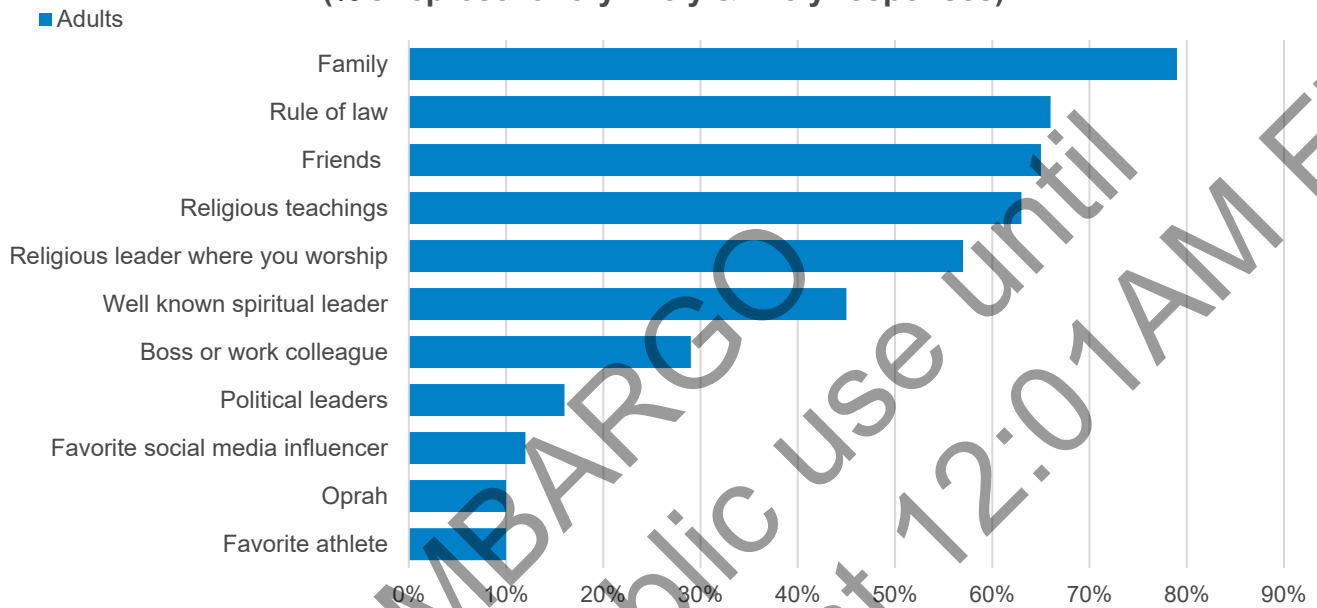
Regardless of Religion, Americans Value the Golden Rule

92% of Americans think it is necessary to follow the Golden Rule – do unto others as they would do unto you - in their personal lives, and 88% believe the same for their professional lives.

Religion is not a strong factor when it comes to how necessary following the Golden Rule is. 93% of those who practice a religion as a whole, and 91% of those who do not, believe it is necessary to follow the Golden rule in their personal lives. Similar proportions report that following the Golden Rule in their professional lives is just as necessary.

Family is Most Likely Source of Moral Guidance

Are you very likely, likely, not very likely, or not likely at all to look to each of the following for guidance on how to live a moral life? (%'s represent very likely & likely responses)



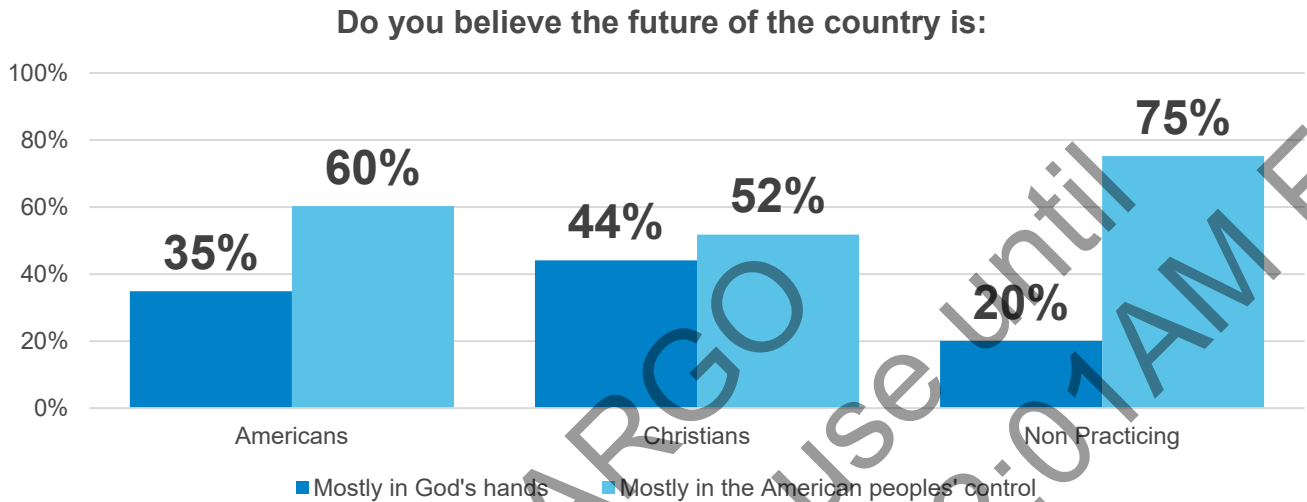
Family is reported to be the most likely source for moral guidance for Americans (79%), Christians (83%), and those who practice a religion (86%) agree. Those who report not practicing a religion (74%) site family as who they look to for moral guidance. Among Americans, the rule of law (66%) is the second most likely source of moral guidance. Fewer (63%) report being likely to consult religious teachings for moral guidance. However, those who practice a religion (90%) report religious teachings as providing the most guidance on morality. Among Christians, religious teachings (77%) are the second most likely source of moral guidance.

Most Americans Do Not Look to Political Leaders or Celebrities for Moral Guidance

Only 16% of Americans, including 18% of those who practice a religion, 17% of Christians, and 14% of those who do not practice a religion say they are likely to look to political leaders for moral guidance. Oprah, favorite social media influencers, and favorite athletes are even less influential in one’s moral development.

Politics and Faith

Six in Ten Americans Say Future of the Country in the People’s Control Rather Than God’s Hands



60% of Americans believe the future of the country is mostly in the American people’s control and not in God’s hands (35%). However, nearly six in ten of those who practice a religion (57%) believe the future of the country is mostly in God’s hands. Among Christians, 44% believe God will determine the future, and 52% believe the American people have control.

Catholics (27%) are significantly less likely than Protestants (52%) and Christians, overall, (44%) to believe God will determine the future of the country. Those who believe in a higher power but not God (86%) largely believe the nation’s future is in the American people’s hands.

Politically, Republicans (49%) are significantly more likely than Democrats (27%) or Independents (30%) to believe the fate of the nation lies in God’s hands.

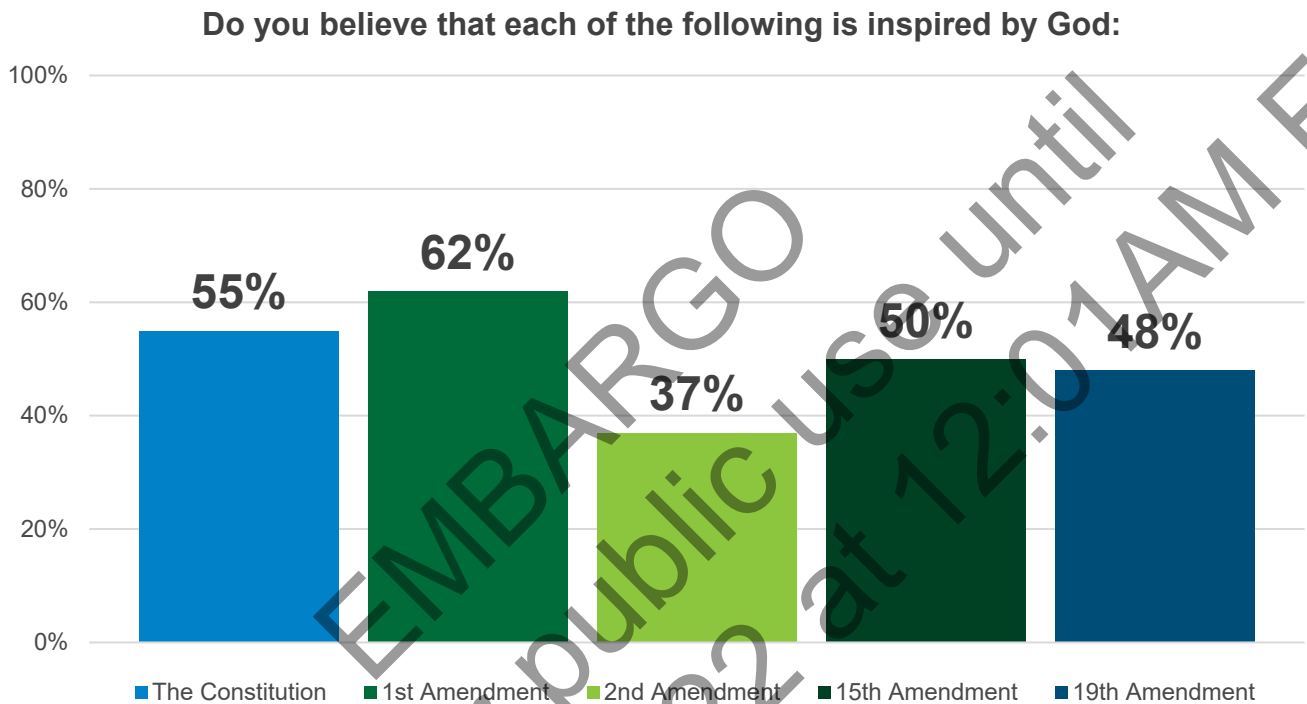
Older individuals are more likely than younger Americans to believe the future of the nation rests in God’s hands rather than in the American people’s control. 44% of those 60 or older believe this, followed by 39% of those 45-60, 30% of those 30-44, and 23% of those 18-29 who believe the same.

Over Half of Americans Say Religion Has No Role in Their Political Identification, Christians Split

54% of Americans report their religion plays no role in their political identification, 23% say it plays a minor role, and 23% say it plays a major role.

However, 54% of Christians say their religion does play a major role (29%) or a minor role (25%) in their political identity. 45% of Christians say religion plays no role at all.

Majority Believe Constitution & 1st Amendment Inspired by God. 2nd Amendment Not So Much



55% of Americans overall believe the U.S. Constitution was inspired by God. That proportion increases to 65% among Christians and 70% among those who practice a religion overall. Even 45% of those who do not practice a religion believe the Constitution was inspired by God.

A strong partisan divide exists on this issue of divine inspiration of the Constitution and key amendments. Looking at the Constitution as a whole, Republicans (81%) overwhelmingly believe it was inspired by God while 55% of Independents and only 36% of Democrats agree.

Americans 60 or older (62%) are the age group most likely to perceive divine inspiration as playing a role in the Constitution. Those 45-59 (59%), 30 to 44 (51%), and 18-29 (48%) follow.

62% of Americans believe that the First Amendment was inspired by God. 73% of Christians and 51% of those who do not practice a religion agree.

Americans are less convinced that divine inspiration played a role in the Second Amendment. Only 37% of adults believe God was behind the right to bear arms. 53% of Christians and 73% of non-practicing individuals believe God **did not** inspire the Second Amendment.

Americans Divide Over Whether Religion Should Influence One's Politics

52% of Americans think that someone's religious beliefs and values should not influence their politics, while 45% think it **should**.

Religious participation does have an impact on this issue. 66% of those who practice a religion and 56% of Christians believe someone's religious beliefs and values **should** influence their politics. 66% of those who do not practice a religion think one's faith **should not** impact their politics.

Republicans (70%) are significantly more likely than Democrats (28%) and Independents (45%) to believe someone's politics should be influenced by their religion.

Despite Political Differences, Majority Believe Americans Have a Shared Sense of Right and Wrong

66% of Americans believe, despite political differences, most Americans have a shared sense of what is right and wrong. Religious affiliation has little impact on this sentiment. Christians (66%), those who do not practice a religion (65%), and those who consider themselves to be spiritual (67%) agree.

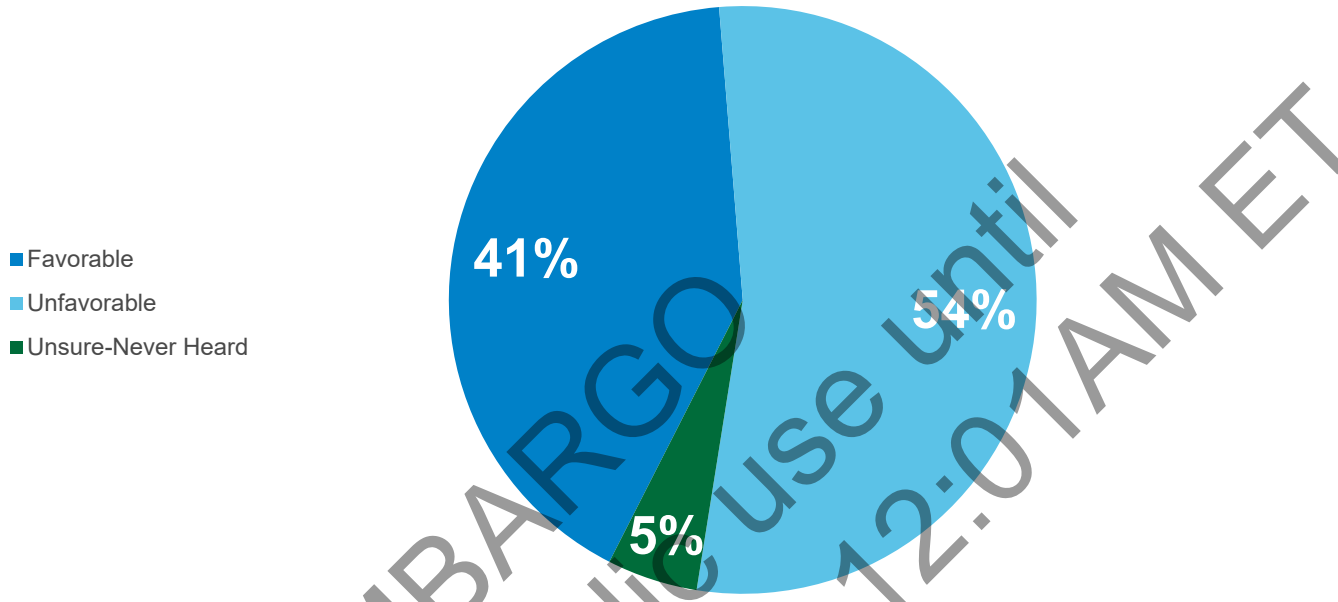
Bipartisan consensus also exists on this issue, with 67% of Democrats, 66% of Independents, and 66% of Republicans agreeing that political differences do not create different sets of moral values to live by.

A majority of Americans do not believe that a person's belief in God (or lack thereof) results in widespread disagreement between believers and nonbelievers on most issues. 61% of adults, 58% of Christians, and 64% of those who do not practice a religion share this view.

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President Biden Favorability Underwater, Viewed as More Religious than Trump

In general, do you have a favorable or an unfavorable impression of Joe Biden?



41% of Americans have a favorable impression of President Biden, while 54% have an **unfavorable** impression. Biden’s unfavorable number increases to 58% among Christians, and up to 62% among those who practice a religion in general.

Biden’s favorability rating does however increase with age. 34% of those 18-29 have a **favorable** impression of Biden compared with 49% among those 60 or older.

49% of adults consider Joe Biden to be more religious than Donald Trump (32%). While a plurality of Christians (44%) agree, a slim plurality of those who practice a religion, overall, believe Trump (43%) to be more religious than Biden (39%). A notable one in ten Americans view neither as religious.

Contact Information



About Client

The Deseret News was founded in 1850 at the edge of the American frontier by pioneers committed to “Liberty & Truth.”

More than a century and a half later, the Deseret News is the longest-running news organization in Utah and the state’s oldest continuously operating business. In addition to its award-winning website and mobile app, the Deseret News publishes a weekly edition (delivered by mail), Deseret Magazine, and the Church News.

The Deseret News is a subsidiary of the Deseret Management Corporation, which is owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Deseret News retains and reaffirms its commitment to being a standard-bearer of journalistic integrity and principled reporting. We aim to elevate understanding, challenge assumptions, and illuminate context from our long-standing heritage of faith, family and the fundamental values that build strong societies.

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About the Marist College Institute for Public Opinion (MIPO)

Founded in 1978, the [Marist College Institute for Public Opinion](#) (MIPO) is a survey research center at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, New York. The Marist Poll has conducted independent research on public priorities, elections, and a wide variety of social issues. The Marist Poll regularly partners with NBC News to conduct scientific public opinion polls in key electoral battleground states. It teams with NPR and the PBS NewsHour to take the pulse of the country.

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