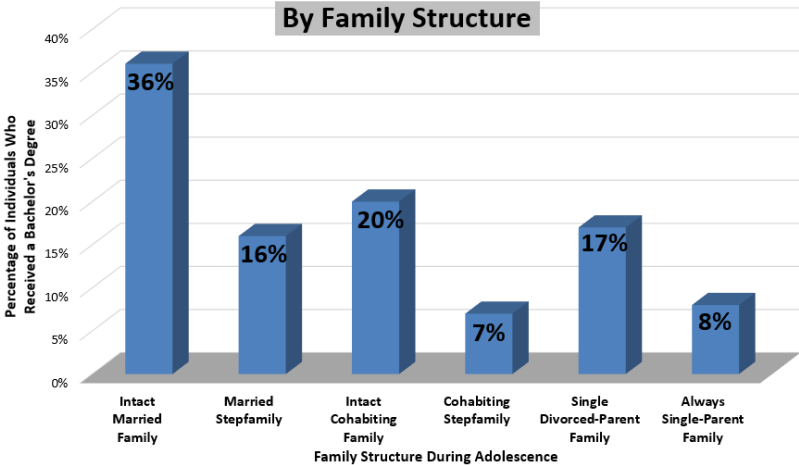


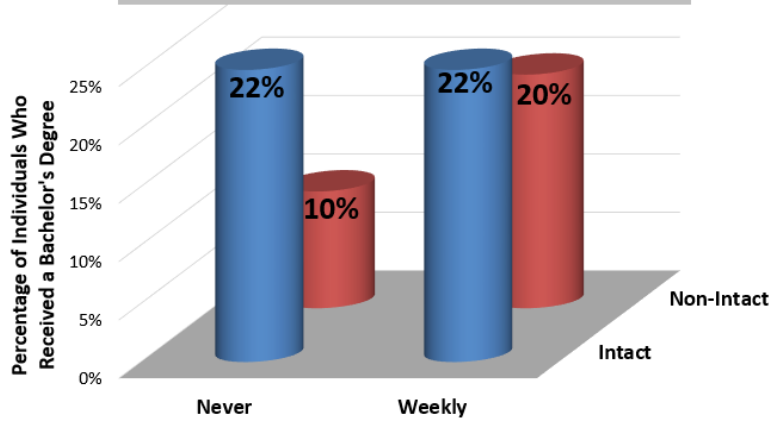
## Received a Bachelor's Degree By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Received a Bachelor's Degree  
By Family Structure



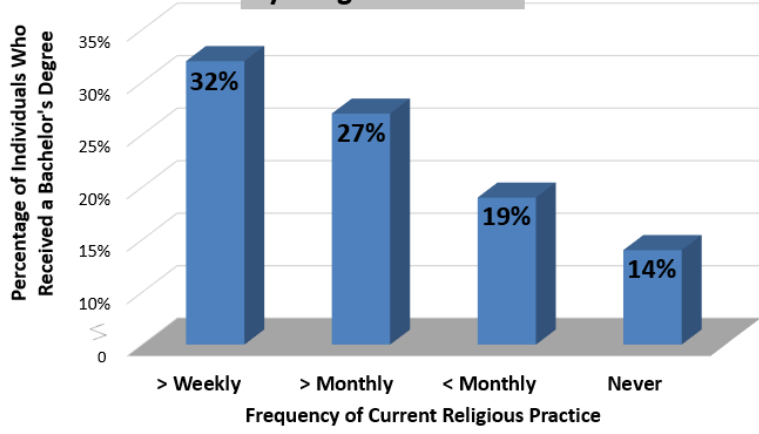
Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

Received a Bachelor's Degree  
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Source: National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (1997)

Received a Bachelor's Degree  
By Religious Practice



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*This chart looks at individuals who have received a Bachelor's degree at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.*

*These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of family structures (always-intact vs. all other family structures\*) and two sets of religious attendance (weekly vs. never).*

*The families occupying the four corners (or four extremes) of these quadrants are:*

- The always-intact married family that worships weekly;*
- The always-intact married family that never worships;*
- All other family structures\* that worship weekly;*
- All other family structures\* that never worship.*

*(\*This group consists of individuals in the following categories: married stepfamily, cohabiting stepfamily, single divorced parent, and always-single parent. In all these structures, there has been rejection between the biological father and mother, and thus the original pairing is no longer intact.)*

## Received a Bachelor's Degree by Family Structure and Religious Practice

The 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth shows that students who grew up in intact married families and attended weekly religious services at the time of the survey were more likely to receive a Bachelor's degree.

**Family Structure:** Thirty six percent of individuals who came from intact, married families received a Bachelor's degree, followed by those from intact, cohabiting families (20 percent), single divorced-parent families (17 percent), married stepfamilies (16 percent), always-single parent families (8 percent), and cohabiting stepfamilies (7 percent).

**Religious Practice:** Thirty two percent of individuals who attended weekly religious services had received a Bachelor's degree, compared with those who attended religious services at least monthly (27 percent), those who attended less than once a month (19 percent), and those who never attended (14 percent).

**Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined:** Twenty two percent of individuals who grew up in intact married families and attended weekly religious services received a Bachelor's degree. It is clear that family structure plays a significant role in educational attainment, because individuals who grew up in intact married families that never attended church were equally likely to receive a Bachelor's degree (22 percent). They were followed closely by individuals from non-intact families that attended weekly religious services (20 percent) and those from non-intact families that had no religious attendance (10 percent).

**Related Insights from Other Studies:** Religious attendance and education are related in many ways. Studies also show that educational attainment is related to the religious commitment of an individual's community, as measured by church attendance. Individuals who lived in communities with high religious densities had, on average, more years of education than those who lived in less religiously dense communities.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, another study shows that, compared to students enrolled in four-year colleges, those who did *not* attend college were more likely to report a decrease in religious service attendance, a decline in the importance of religion in their lives, or a change to no religious affiliation.<sup>2</sup> Individuals from intact families completed, on average, more years of schooling and were more likely to graduate from high school and college than were their peers raised in non-intact families.<sup>3</sup>

Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. and Scott Talkington, Ph.D.

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<sup>1</sup> Gruber, Jonathan. "Religious Market Structure, Religious Participation, and Outcomes: Is Religion Good for You." *National Bureau of Economic Research*. Vol. No. 11377 (2005).

<sup>2</sup> Uecker, Jeremy E. "Losing My Religion: The Social Sources of Religious Decline in Early Adulthood." *Social Forces* Vol. 85 (4) (2007) pp. 1667-1692.

<sup>3</sup> Ginther, Donna K., "Family Structure and Childrens Educational Outcomes: Blended Families, Stylized Facts, and Descriptive Regressions. *Demography* Vol. 41(4) (2004) pp. 671-696.