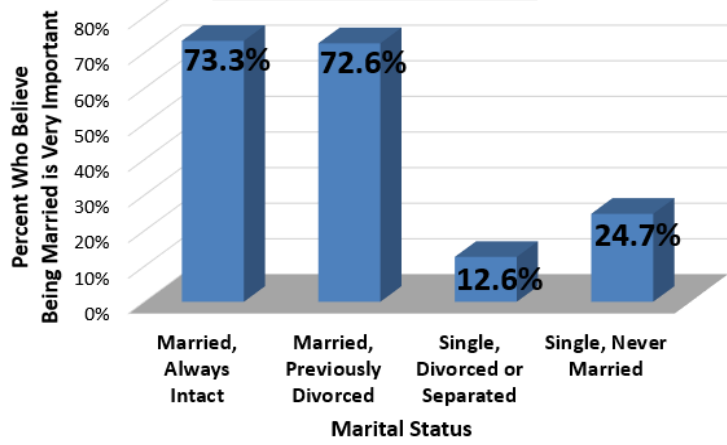


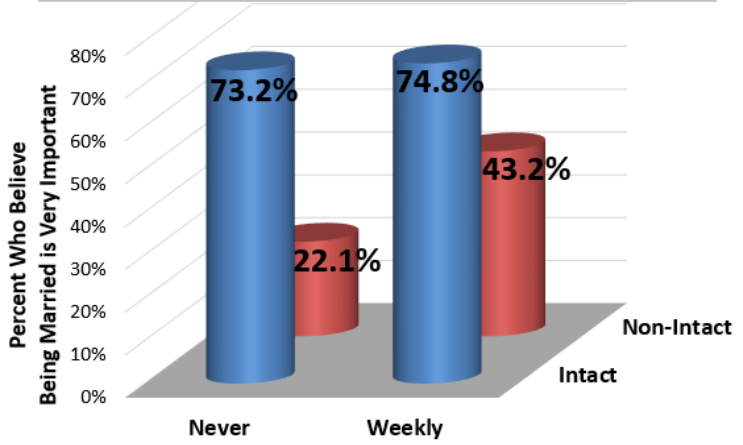
The Importance of Marriage By Family Structure and Religious Practice

Being Married is Very Important
By Family Structure



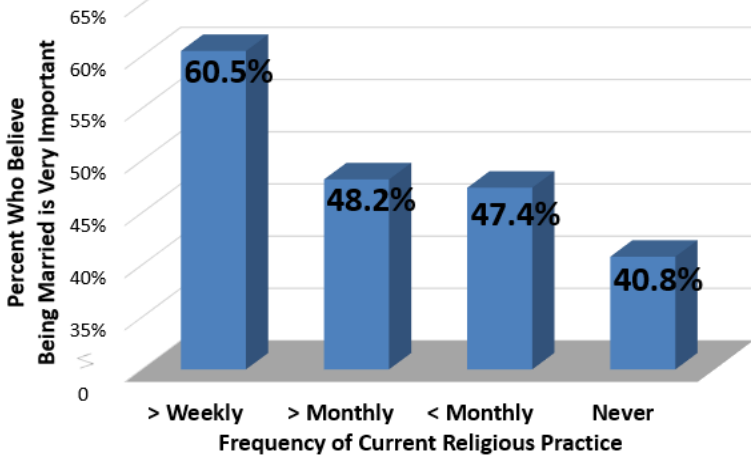
Source: General Social Surveys, 1972-2006

Being Married is Very Important
By Family Structure and Religious Practice



Source: General Social Surveys, 1972-2006

Being Married is Very Important
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These charts take the national data on “the personal importance of being married” and splits it into four quadrants. It then illustrates the poles of each quadrant to highlight the difference in outcomes that correlate with the different poles of marital status and religious attendance.

The starting points are demographics that mark two major social institutions: marital status and religious attendance. Marital status is divided further into two groups: always-intact marriages and all other marital status categories.* Religious attendance is also divided into two groups: high and low worship of which the two poles “weekly attendance” and “never attends” are subcategories used in this chart.

The resultant four poles are 1) Americans in always-intact marriages who worship weekly; 2) Americans in always-intact marriages who never worship; 3) Americans in all other marital status categories who worship weekly; and 4) Americans in all other marital status categories who never worship.

* The “all other marital status categories” group consists of adults who are “married, previously divorced,” “single, divorced or separated,” and “single, never married.”

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Family Structure: According to the General Social Survey (GSS), 73.3 percent of always-intact married adults reported that being married was either very important to them or one of the most important values they held, followed by 72.6 percent of married, previously-divorced adults, 24.7 percent of single, never-married adults, and 12.6 percent of single, divorced or separated adults.¹

Religious Practice: According to the General Social Survey (GSS), 60.5 percent of adults who worshiped at least weekly reported that being married was either very important to them or one of the most important values they held, followed by 48.2 percent of those who worshiped between one and three times a month, 47.4 percent of those who attended religious services less than once a month, and 40.8 percent of those who never attended religious services.

Family Structure and Religious Practice Combined: According to the General Social Survey (GSS), 74.8 percent of adults in always-intact marriages who attended religious services at least weekly reported that being married was either very important to them or one of the most important values they held, followed by 73.2 percent of adults in always-intact marriages who never attended worship, 43.2 percent of all other adults who worshiped at least weekly, and 22.1 percent of all other adults who never attended religious services.

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¹ These charts draw on data collected by the General Social Surveys, 1972-2006. From 1972 to 1993, the sample size averaged 1,500 each year. No GSS was conducted in 1979, 1981, or 1992. Since 1994, the GSS has been conducted only in even-numbered years and uses two samples per GSS that total approximately 3,000. In 2006, a third sample was added for a total sample size of 4,510.