"Completed Some College" by Current Religious Attendance and Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners

This chart looks at likelihood to complete some college at the extremes of four demographic quadrants. These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of sexual habits (chaste* vs. promiscuous**) and two sets of religious attendance (weekly vs. never).

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

- **CHASTE*** 
- **NEVER ATTENDS**
- **PROMISCUOUS**
- **ATTENDS WEEKLY**

Current Religious Attendance and Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners Combined

*No non-marital sexual partners during the survey year

**Four or more non-marital sexual partners during the survey year

This chart looks at likelihood to complete some college at the extremes of four demographic quadrants.

These four quadrants are derived from combining two sets of sexual habits (chaste* vs. promiscuous**) and two sets of religious attendance (weekly vs. never).

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

- The chaste* person that worships weekly;
- The chaste* person that never worships;
- The promiscuous** person that worships weekly;
- The promiscuous** person that never worships.

(*No non-marital sexual partners during the survey year.)

(**Four or more non-marital sexual partners during the survey year.)
“Completed Some College”
by Current Religious Attendance and Number of Extramarital Sexual Partners

The 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth Child and Young Adult Survey shows that adults who have had no extramarital sexual partners in the survey year and currently worship at least weekly are more likely to complete college.

**Number of extramarital sexual partners:** Forty-three percent of individuals who have had no extramarital sexual partners have completed some college, compared with 41 percent of those who have had one extramarital sexual partner. Forty percent of those who have two or more extramarital sexual partners have completed college, while 42 percent of those who have three or more extramarital sexual partners have completed some college. Only 35 percent of those with four extramarital sexual partners or more have completed some college.

**Current religious attendance:** Forty-one percent of those who attend church weekly have completed some college, as well as 41 percent of those who attend at least once a month. Only 38 percent of those who attend church less than once a month have completed some college, followed by 28 percent of those who never attend church.

**Current religious attendance and number of extramarital sexual partners combined:** Those who worshiped at least weekly and were chaste (had no extramarital sexual partners) were most likely to complete some college (48 percent), compared to 44 percent of those who attended church weekly but were promiscuous (had four or more extramarital sexual partners). Thirty percent of those who were promiscuous and never attend church have completed some college, followed by 28 percent who were chaste but who did not ever attend church.

**Related Insight from Other Studies**

One study of 330 college students at a southeastern university found that students who hold core spiritual beliefs, such as a belief that having a spiritual life is important, and those who have had spiritual experiences that changed their life are likely to have more conservative, traditional views about sexual practices (e.g., the purpose of sex) and possess less sexually permissive attitudes.¹

Another study of undergraduates at a small secular liberal arts college found an association between an increase in religious practice and an increase in academic performance among college-aged students: more than 75 percent of students who become more religious during their college years achieved above-average college performance.²

Family structure also has an influence on children’s view of education. One study found that about 40 percent of sons and 44.7 percent of daughters from married-parent families planned to continue their education after obtaining their Bachelor’s degree, compared to 30.7 percent of sons and 35.3 percent of daughters from single-parent families.³

Additionally, around 57 percent of children who live in intact families enter college, compared to 32.5 percent of children in married stepfamilies, 47.5 percent of children in single-parent families, and 31.8 percent of children who live without parents.⁴

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² David S. Zern, “Some Connections Between Increasing Religiousness and Academic Accomplishment in a College Population,” Adolescence 24, no. 93 (1989): 152. This study’s sample size was 251. Zern also found that neither past nor present religious practice was related to grade point average in college.
