

Z GEN

A Look at the Next,
Next Generation





**What is shaping the next
generation of young people?**





For more information about this study and to see the complete findings, check out our 2018 report:

Gen Z

The full report is available at shop.barna.com or through Barna Access membership.

Methodology

- **Qualitative / Focus Groups with Gen Z**
- **Quantitative /** Nationally representative surveys:
 - **1,490 U.S. Teens**, ages 13 to 18
 - **1,517 U.S. Adults**, ages 19 +
 - **507 additional Teens**
 - **335 Protestant Youth Pastors**
 - **404 Engaged Christian Parents** of Teens
- Research included Christians *and* non-Christians

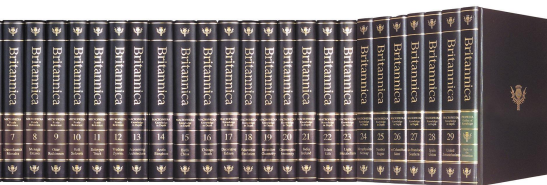


Generations

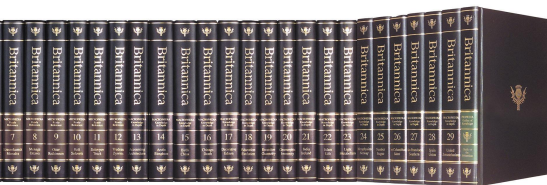
- **Gen Z:** Born between 2002 and 2015
- **Millennial:** Born between 1984 and 2001
- **Buster/Gen-X:** Born between 1965 and 1983
- **Boomer:** Born between 1946 and 1964
- **Elder:** Born before 1946



The best human inventions...



The best human inventions...in our pockets



Beliefs & Values



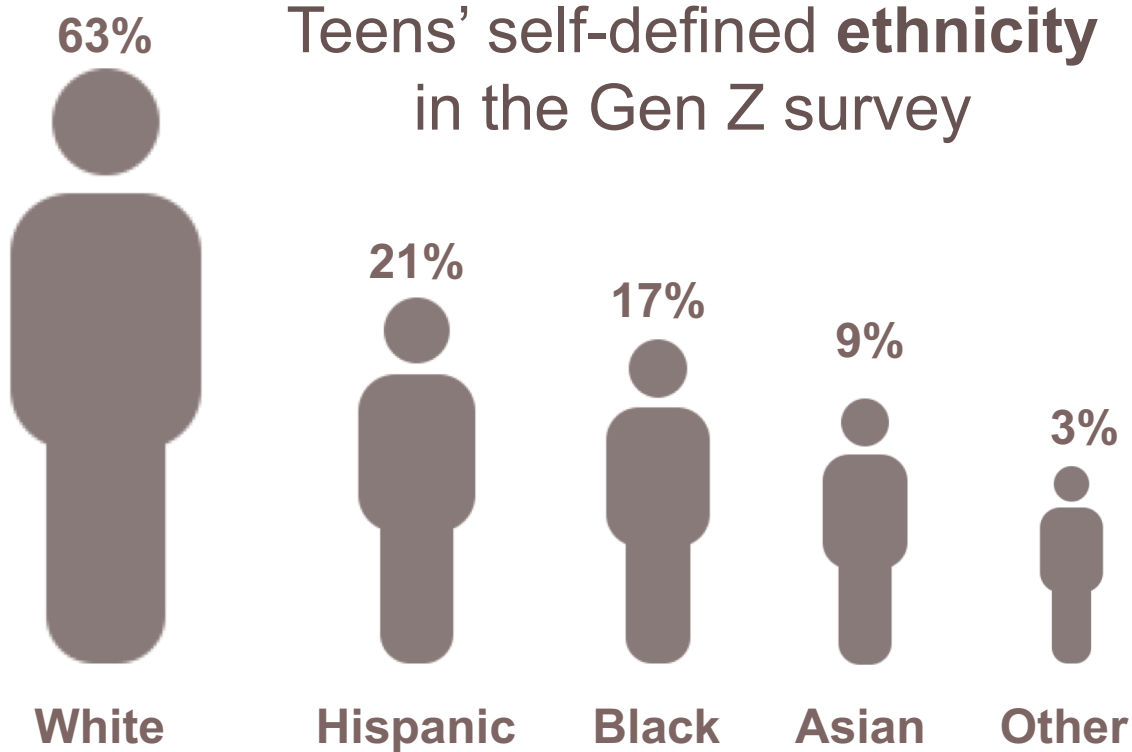
Four Themes of Gen Z

- They are “screenagers”
- They are extremely diverse
- They are career-driven
- Their context is post-Christian and global



Gen Z Is Diverse

DIVERSITY



Different Is Expected



39%

regularly interact with
people who are **different**
from themselves

DIVERSITY



Career-Driven

Barna

EDUCATION



FUTURE GOAL

Finish my education / start a career

66%

IDENTITY TODAY

*My professional /
educational achievement*

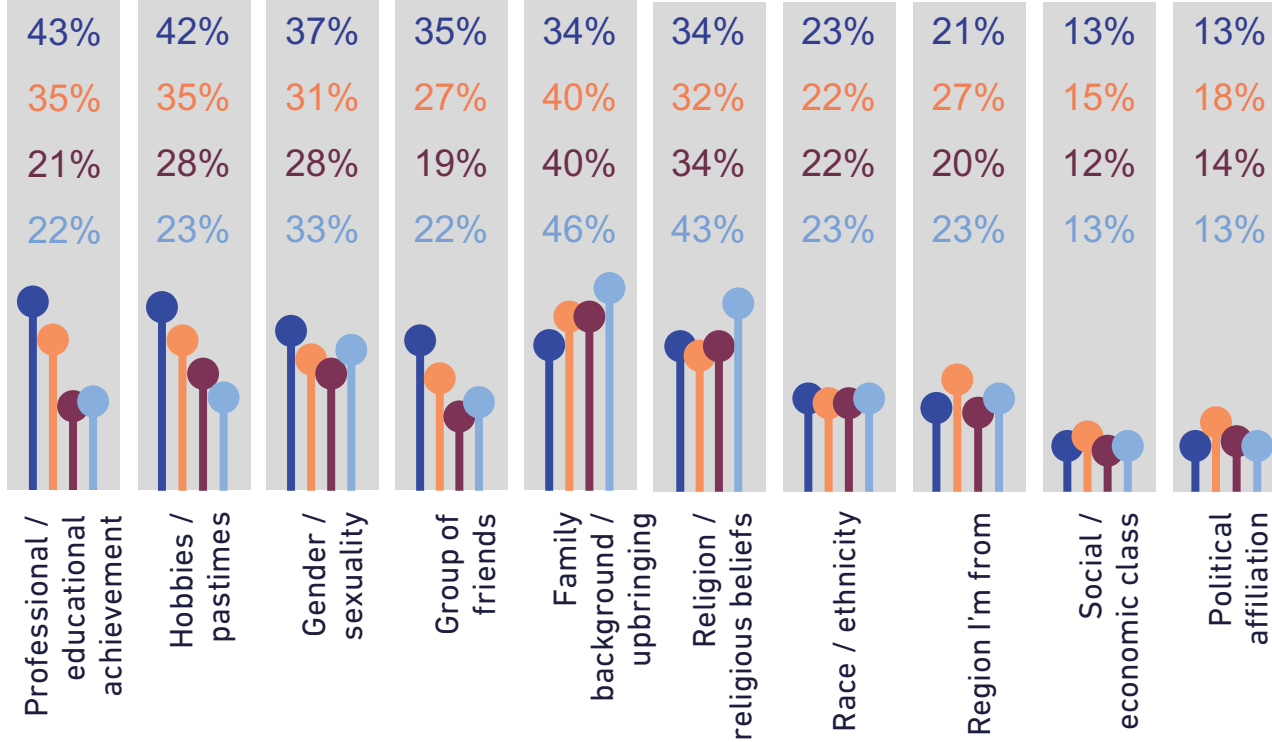
43%

Success is a high priority.



My _____ is very important to my sense of self

% Agree Strongly



- Gen Z
- Millennials
- Gen X
- Boomers



Sexuality

Barna



12%

describe their own
sexuality as something
other than heterosexual

IDENTITY



Identity

Barna

37%

Identify **gender** as
central to their
sense of self.

IDENTITY



Identity

Barna



43%

**Professional/Educational
Achievement** is important to
their sense of self.

IDENTITY



Identity

Barna



34%

Family and/or Religion
is important to their
sense of self.

IDENTITY



Z
GEN

Gender

33%

say **gender** is how
a person feels, not
their birth sex

IDENTITY



Gender

Barna



29%

know someone who
has **changed** their
gender identity

IDENTITY



I want to _____ before age 30

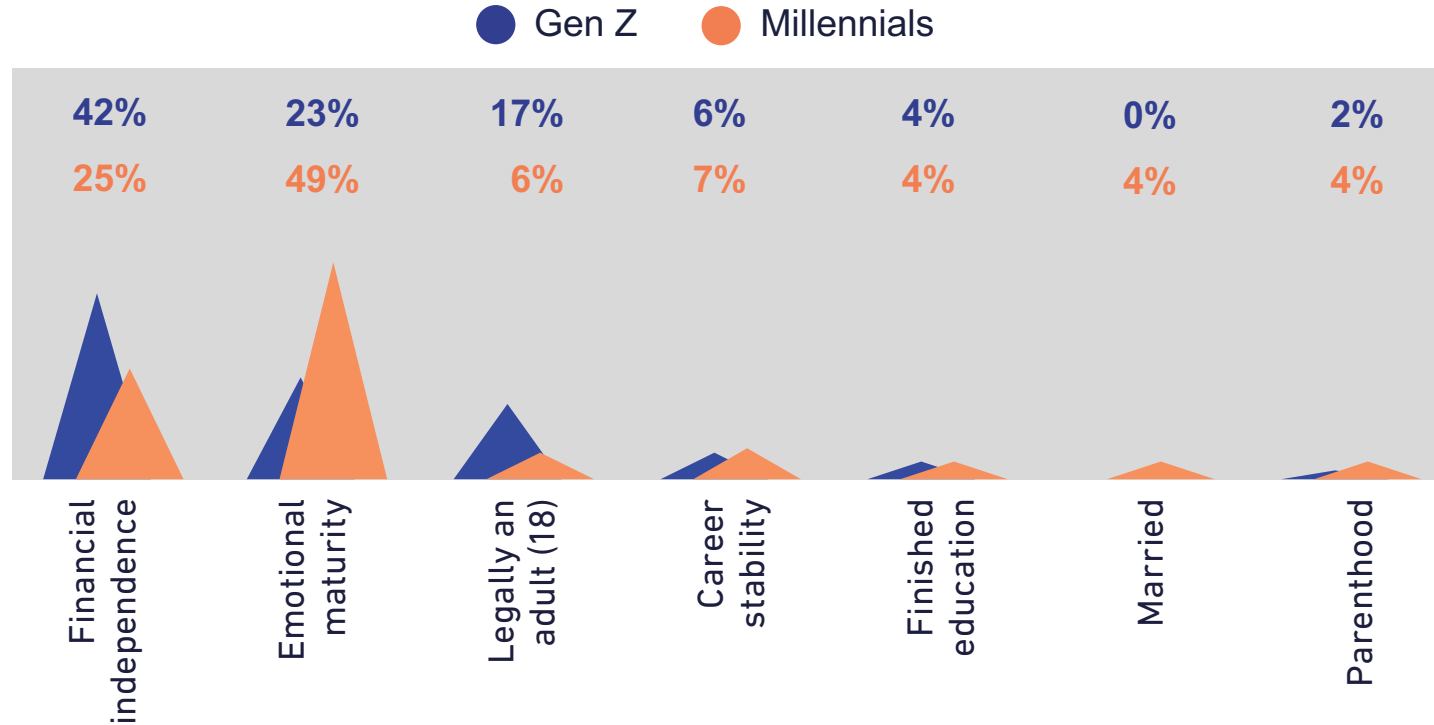
Finish my education	66%	59%
Start a career	66%	52%
Become financially independent	65%	51%
Follow my dreams	55%	40%
Enjoy life before I have the responsibilities of being an adult	38%	31%
Find out who I really am	31%	29%
Travel to other countries	21%	28%
Get married	20%	24%
Become more mature spiritually	16%	21%
Become a parent	12%	20%
Care for the poor and needy	9%	9%
Try to become famous or influential	9%	5%

● Gen Z
● Millennials



What Makes You an Adult?

The Primary Mark of Adulthood: Gen Z vs. Millennials



Security

Barna

SECURITY



51%

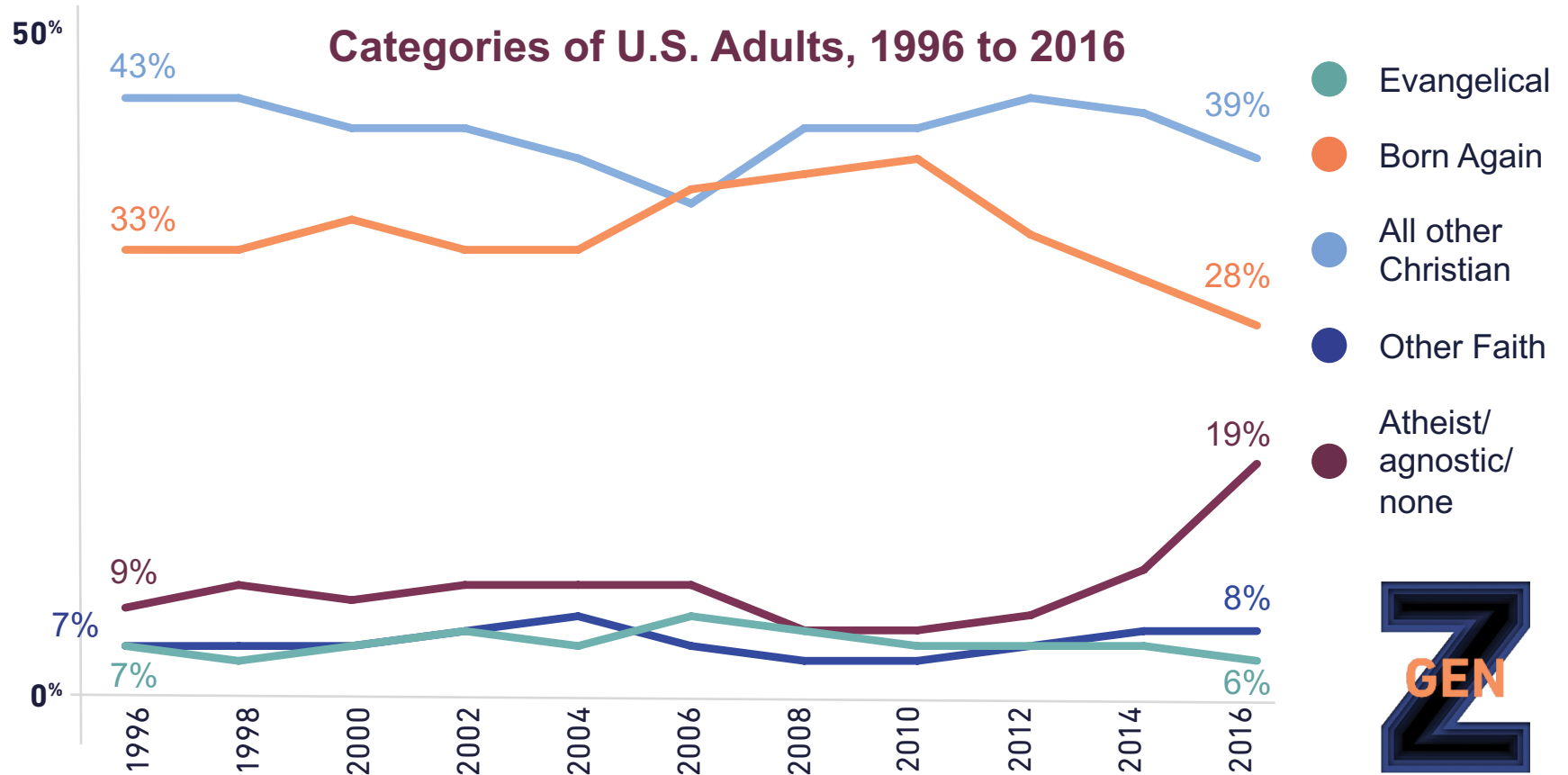
say **HAPPINESS**
is their ultimate
goal in life



What does happiness look like?



Gen Z Context Is Post-Christian



Faith

WORLDVIEW

34%

religious affiliation is
atheist, agnostic or
“none”

4%

have a **Biblical**
worldview



Faith & Science

WORLDVIEW



Gen Z



Millennials



Gen X



Boomers



Science & the Bible are...

In Conflict

I consider myself to be on the side of science.

Independent

They refer to different aspects of reality.

Complementary

Each can be used to help support the other.

In Conflict

I consider myself to be on the side of the Bible.



Does Science Ever Make You Question Your Own Beliefs?

“Yeah, like the stuff we’re learning in school today. Not only evolution, but other theories like how the world came to be, that definitely makes you question it because they’re scientists, they study this everyday. In the end I’ll still believe in God, but I can’t totally ignore it, it’s there, I learned it in school. There’s nothing I can do about it.”

— Christian Teen Focus Group Participant

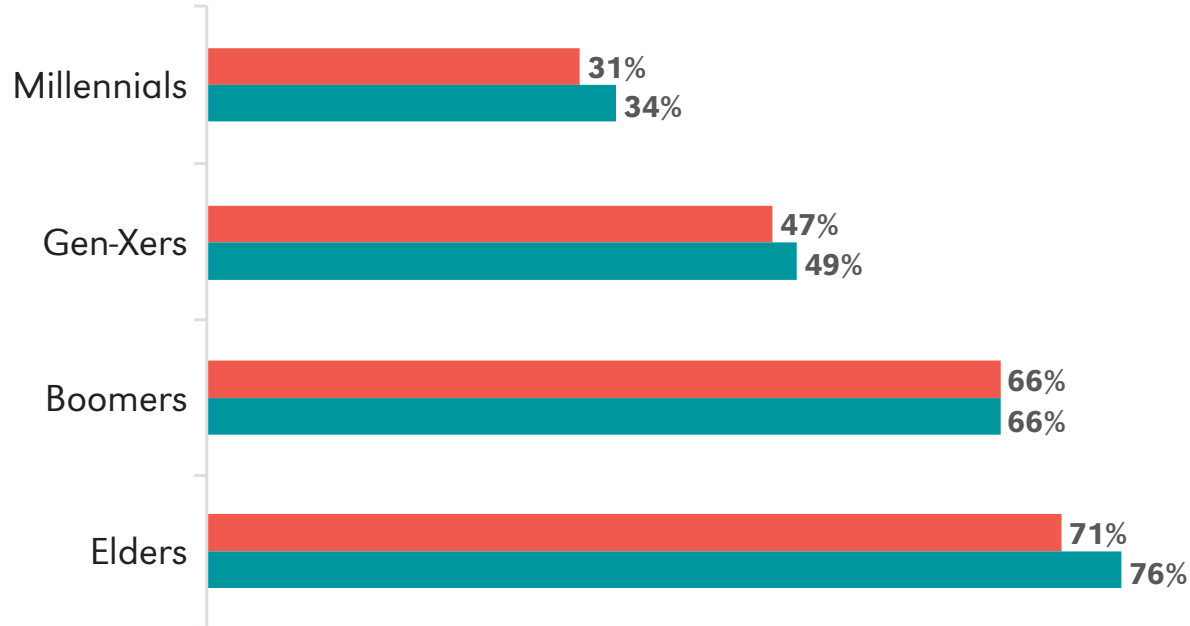


Younger Gens Doubt Bible's Impact

THE EFFECT OF REGULAR BIBLE READING ON POLITICIANS

% "yes" among U.S. adults 18 and older

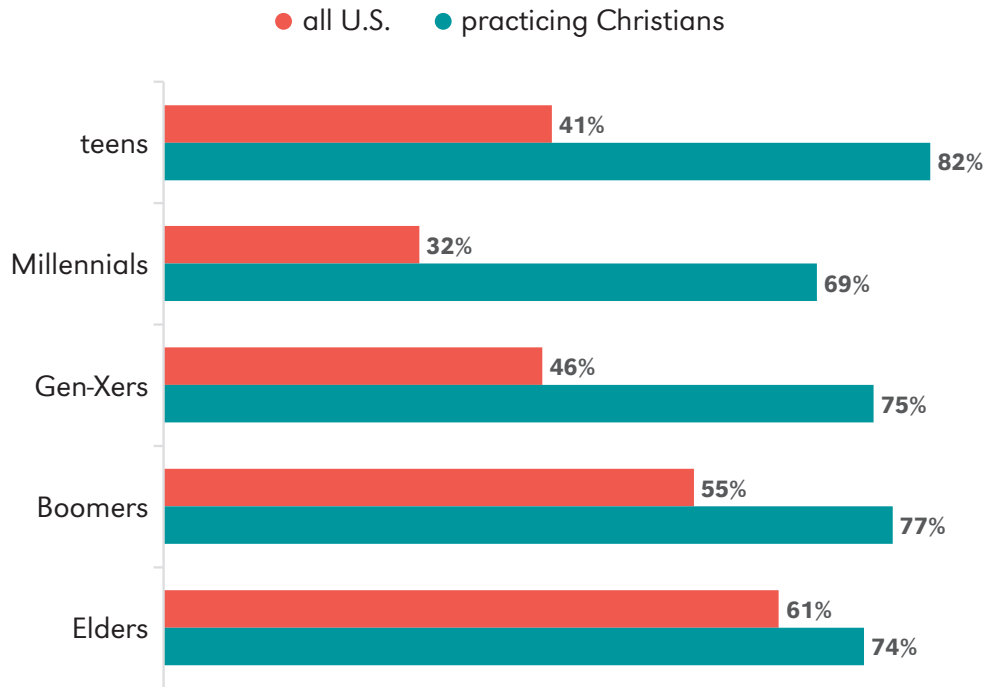
● politics would be more civil ● politicians would be more effective



A Snapshot of the Bible in America

THE BIBLE CONTAINS EVERYTHING A PERSON NEEDS TO KNOW TO LIVE A MEANINGFUL LIFE

% agree strongly among U.S. teens and adults 13 and older

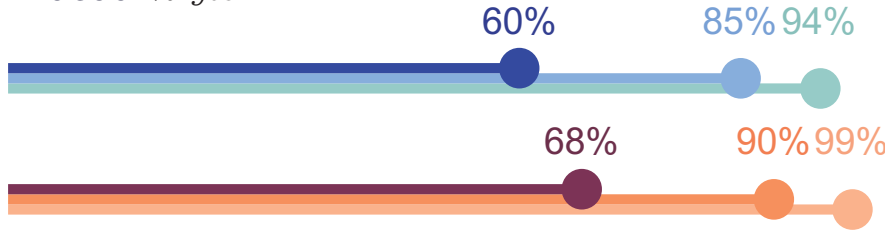


Beliefs

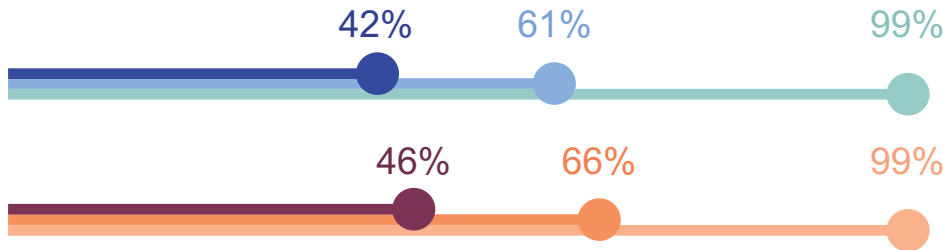
WORLDVIEW



“ Jesus was a real person who was crucified by Rome and was actually physically raised from the dead. % yes ”



“ The Bible is totally accurate in all of the principles it teaches. % total agree ”



- All Gen Z
- Churched teens
- Engaged Christian teens
- All adults
- Churched adults
- Engaged Christian adults



Morality

Beliefs About Morality, by Generation

% strongly agree

● Gen Z

● Millennials

● Gen X

● Boomers

What is morally right and wrong changes over time based on society

24% | 21% | 18% | 12%

What is morally right and wrong depends on what an individual believes

21% | 23% | 18% | 17%

WORLDVIEW



Morality

34%

only one-third of
Gen Z says **lying** is
morally wrong

WORLDVIEW

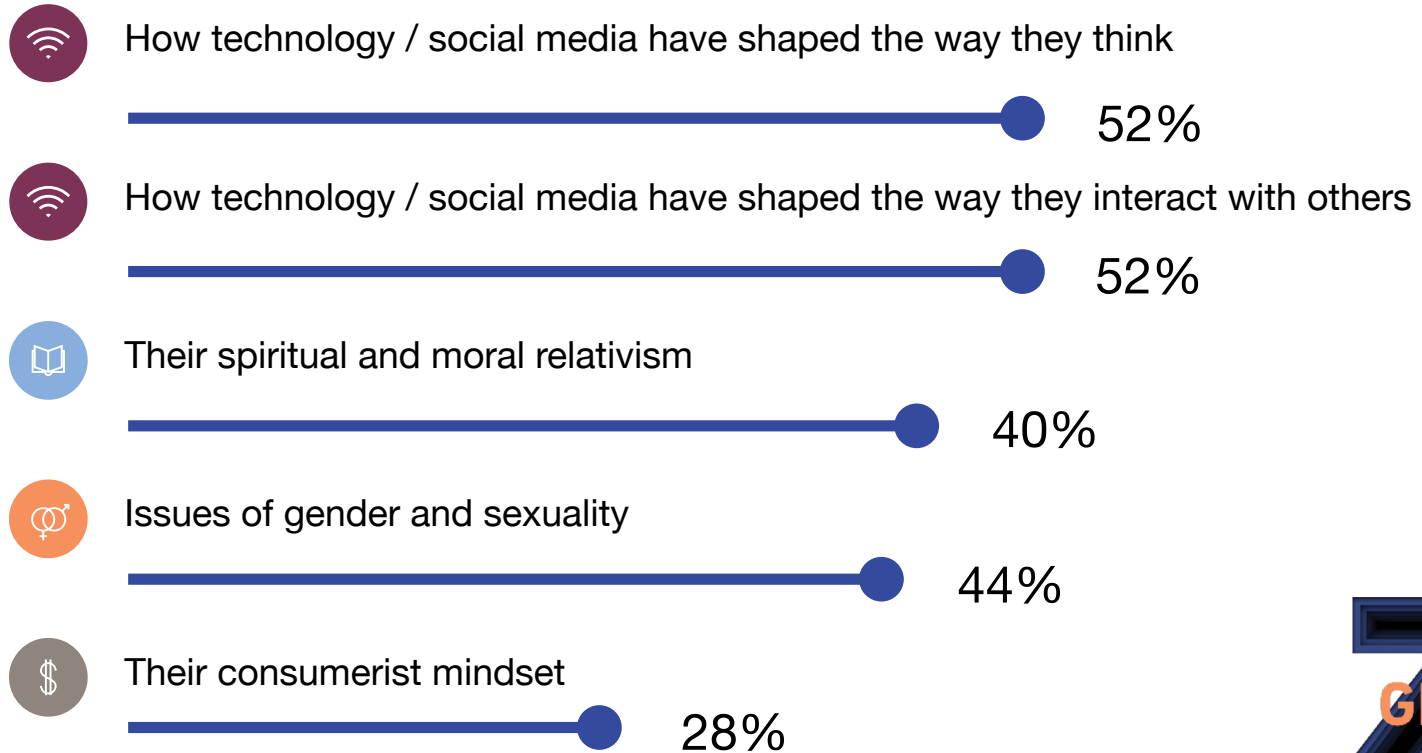


“There is no such thing as truth, but there are facts. [Not only can] people believe whatever truth they want, [there is] always room for truth to change.”

— Teen Focus Group Participant



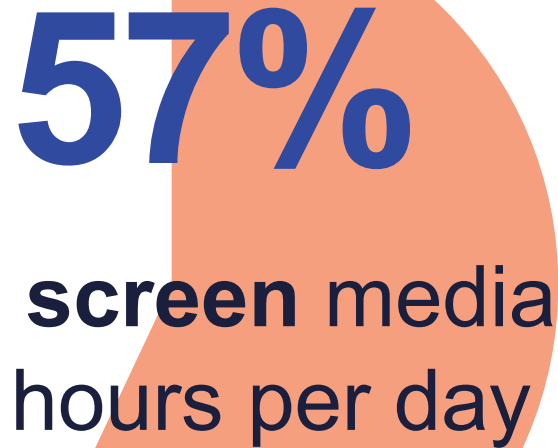
Most Defining Factors of Teens, According to Youth Pastors



Gen Z Are “Screenagers”

Barna

TECHNOLOGY



57%

use **screen** media
4+ hours per day

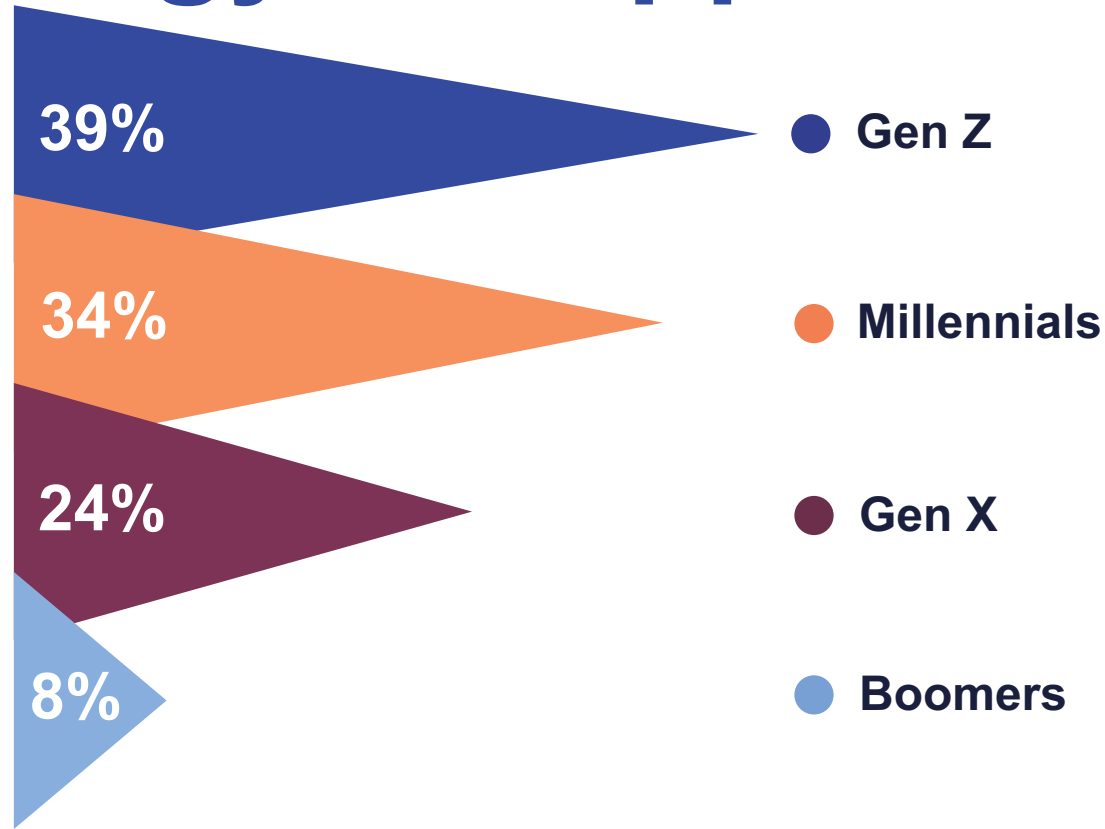
A large pie chart with an orange slice representing 57% of the total. The text is centered over the chart.

Z
GEN



Technology & Happiness

“ Looking at other people’s posts often makes me feel bad about the lack of excitement in my own life. ”



“Because young people feel so pressured to post happy things on social media, most of what everyone sees on social media from their peers are happy things; as a result, they often feel inferior because they aren’t actually happy all the time.”

- Donna Freitas, *The Happiness Effect*



Engaging Gen Z



- Define and develop *resilient* disciples
- Be confident Christianity answers today's complicated issues
- Robust pedagogy is critical to doing this
- Realize doubt and honest questions are powerful drivers of faith formation
- Connect to real life: work, relationships, sexuality, ambition, money, and so on



- Stop blaming and labeling them
- Be open about your journey: “It’s not easy”
- Be a learner yourself!
- Acknowledge their world is more difficult
- Don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know” and “I am sorry”
- Be vigilant against self-righteousness



- Have young people engage Bible *together*
- Educate *with* the next generation
- Focus on cultivating discernment
- Teach *purity* and *proximity* to culture
- Teaching is critical to uncovering this truth
- Explore wisdom literature, such as Ecclesiastes, in a self-obsessed society
- Pray like exiles



Jerusalem

Faith = Center

Mono-religious

Slower paced

Homogeneity

Central control

Simpler life

Idol: False piety

Babylon

Faith = Margins

Pluralistic

Accelerated / Frenetic

Diversity

Open-source

Bittersweet tension

Idol: Fitting in / Not missing out



Five Ways to Disciple in Babylon

Experiencing Jesus

Cultural Discernment

Meaningful Relationships

Vocational Discipleship

Countercultural Mission



Get free Barna research to your inbox!

Text **BARNA** to **444999**



Learn where your city ranks and get an in-depth look at individual metrics from FaithView, our new subscription-based online database of city, state and national spiritual profiles.

[VIEW NOW](#)

FaithView

This new, interactive, customizable database offers clear and relevant insights into the spiritual climate, faith trends and practices in your city or region. Combine and compare from 200+ data points to get the wisdom you need to lead your ministry or workplace with confidence.



Subscribe Now



Millennial Non-Christians Show Greater Spiritual Curiosity Than Older Adults

[Read More](#)



Millennials Bring Ambition and Optimism to Their Work

[Read More](#)

The Mercy Journey

A critical element is missing in how we relate to one another today: mercy. In embarking on *The Mercy Journey*, the presence of Christians and the work of



About the Project Partners

BARNA GROUP is a research firm dedicated to providing actionable insights on faith and culture, with a particular focus on the Christian church.

www.Barna.com

IMPACT 360 INSTITUTE cultivates leaders who follow Jesus through life-changing experiences that help students live out their faith with confidence.

www.Impact360.org





For more information about this study and to see the complete findings, check out our 2018 report:

Gen Z

The full report is available at shop.barna.com or through Barna Access membership.