



Series: Is Marriage Still Relevant?

Barna Trends

The Trends Redefining Romance Today, by Editor in Chief Roxanne Stone, 2017

- 52% of Americans are married
- 10% of Americans are currently divorced (Does not include re-married)
- 25% of Americans have been divorced and are re-married
- 30% of Americans are single
 - 60% of 25–29-year-olds are not married (9% higher than 2000)
 - 34% of 30-39-year-olds are not married (10% higher than 2000)
- 36% of 25–29-year-olds are married (7% lower than 2000)
- 57% of 30-39-year-olds are married (10% higher than 2000)

*These are massive shifts, most pronounced among those in their twenties and thirties, toward a broader move to delay marriage among younger Americans.

Americans are getting married later and later.

- In 1960, 72% of all adults ages 18+ were married.
 - Today, that number is just 52%
- Average age of first marriage in the US is 27 for women and 29 for men
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Cohabiting

- 65% either strongly or somewhat agree it's a good idea to live together before marriage
 - 35% strongly or somewhat disagree
- The idea of living with one's significant other before getting married for the sake of convenience (9%) or to save rent (5%) isn't as persuasive as the value of testing compatibility (84%).
- A majority (62%) believes that living together did not affect the pressure to get married at all, and those who say it reduced (19%) or increased (18%) the pressure to get married were evenly split.
- 57% of adults either currently or have previously lived with their boyfriend/girlfriend
 - 65% of Americans think it's a good idea to cohabit
 - Millennials are one of the groups *least* likely to have ever cohabitated

Practicing Christians & Evangelicals

- 59% of this group are married, compared to just over half 52% of the general population
- Among evangelicals, 67% are married (15% higher than US average)
- The divorce numbers are equal among all the groups/people

***No faith:** identify as agnostic or atheist, or as having no faith

***Practicing Christian:** Those who attend a religious service at least once a month, who say their faith is very important in their lives and self-identify as a Christian

***Born again:** Have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today and believe that, when they die, they will go to heaven because they have confessed their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their savior.

***Evangelicals:** meet specific theological criteria – ie: Jesus is the Savior; He lived a sinless life on earth; eternal salvation is possible through grace, not works; Bible is accurate and applicable; evangelism is important; Satan exists; God is the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfect deity who created the universe and still runs it today. *This category is *not* dependent on church attendance.

- Percentages of those who agree it's a good idea to cohabitate before getting married:
 - Evangelicals 6%; Born-again 35%; Practicing Christian 41%; No Faith 88%
- 25% of Evangelicals have been divorced = same number of US population

What the Research Means

- Roxanne Stone, editor in chief at Barna Group says, “Since the Garden of Eden, humans have been trying to puzzle out love... But the state of romance (the when and why of getting married), has changed drastically in a very short period of time.”
- “Marriage itself has seen the greatest impact,” continues Stone. “While once viewed as the primary end goal for romantic relationships, the institution of marriage now seems to be under great scrutiny. People are getting married later and later in life, they are dating and breaking up with more people before they commit to a life-long relationship. The ‘trials and errors’ of dating now include living together as an assumed, final hurdle before marriage.”
- “Millennials and Gen-Xers were children when divorce rates hit an all-time high, and their cautious approach toward marriage is the likely result.”
- “Millennials and Gen-Xers are skeptical that the church is relevant to their lives—or that faith has answers for them. Discussions on dating, sex, and love are opportunities to show that the church can offer meaningful guidance through the minefield of modern-day romance.”

Series' Objective: How does Jesus make the Church relevant to marriage?
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- Why do I need a piece of paper telling me that I'm married?
- What does that paper even mean?
- Why would I not tear up that paper when things get difficult?

1 Peter 1:3

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”