

# American Views on Purpose in Life

A SURVEY OF 1,200 AMERICANS

Lifeway research

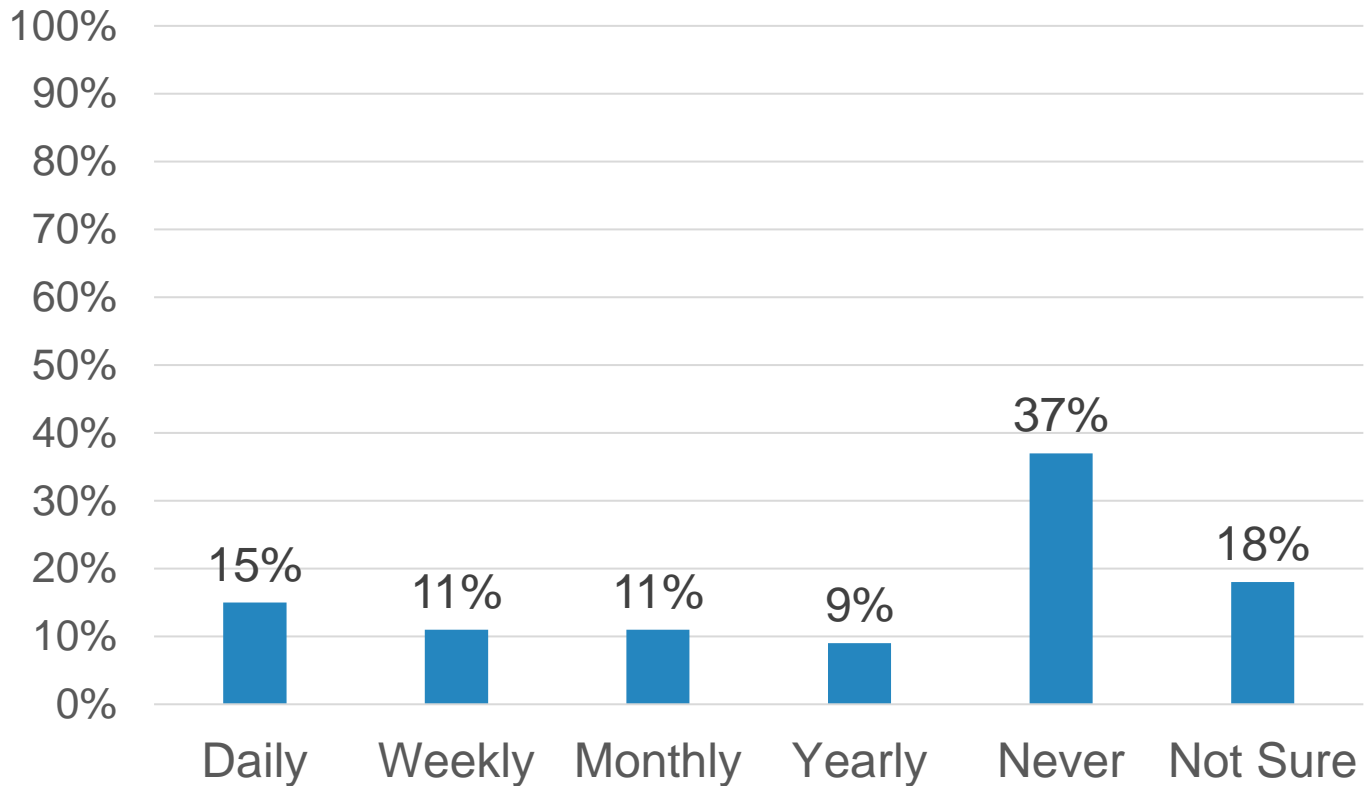
# Methodology

- The online survey of 1,200 Americans was conducted September 9-23, 2020 using a national pre-recruited panel
- Quotas and slight weights were used to balance gender, age, region, ethnicity, education, and religion to more accurately reflect the population
- The sample includes an over-sample of Americans with Evangelical Beliefs providing additional reliability for breakouts of this group. Totals for all Americans reduce these responses to their correct proportion through weighting
- The completed sample is 1,200 surveys
- The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error from the panel does not exceed  $\pm 3.2\%$  This margin of error accounts for the effect of weighting
- Margins of error are higher in sub-groups
- Comparisons are made to a Lifeway Research survey conducted September 23-26, 2011 among 2,144 Americans using an online panel

# Definitions

- **Evangelical Beliefs** are defined using the NAE Lifeway Research Evangelical Beliefs Research Definition based on respondent beliefs
- Respondents are asked their level of agreement with four separate statements using a four-point, forced choice scale (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). Those who strongly agree with all four statements are categorized as having Evangelical Beliefs
  - The Bible is the highest authority for what I believe
  - It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior
  - Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin
  - Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior receive God's free gift of eternal salvation

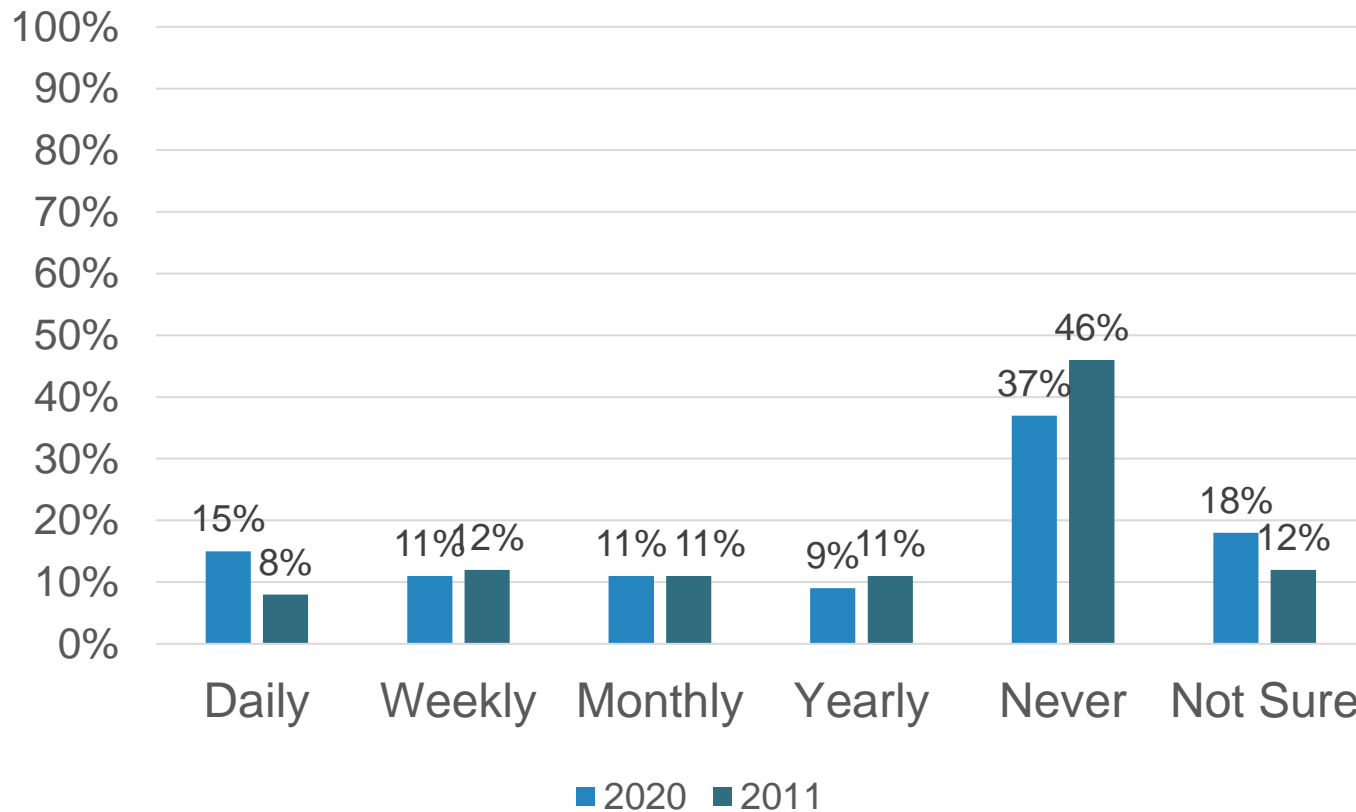
# 37% say they never wonder if they would go to heaven if they die



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Q: "How often do you wonder: "If I were to die today, do I know for sure that I would go to heaven? (Select one)."

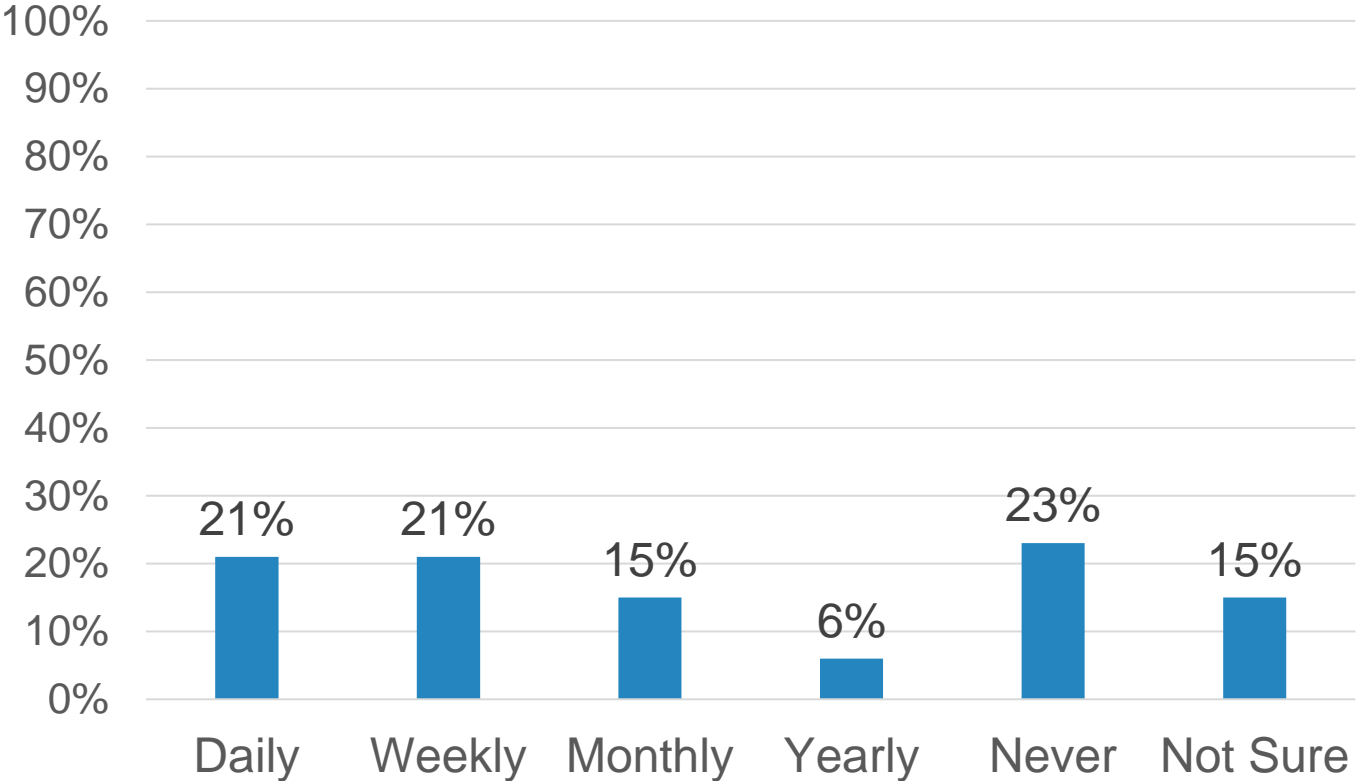
# Compared to 2011, fewer Americans never wonder if they will go to heaven; more say daily or not sure



Lifeway research

Q: "How often do you wonder: "If I were to die today, do I know for sure that I would go to heaven? (Select one)."

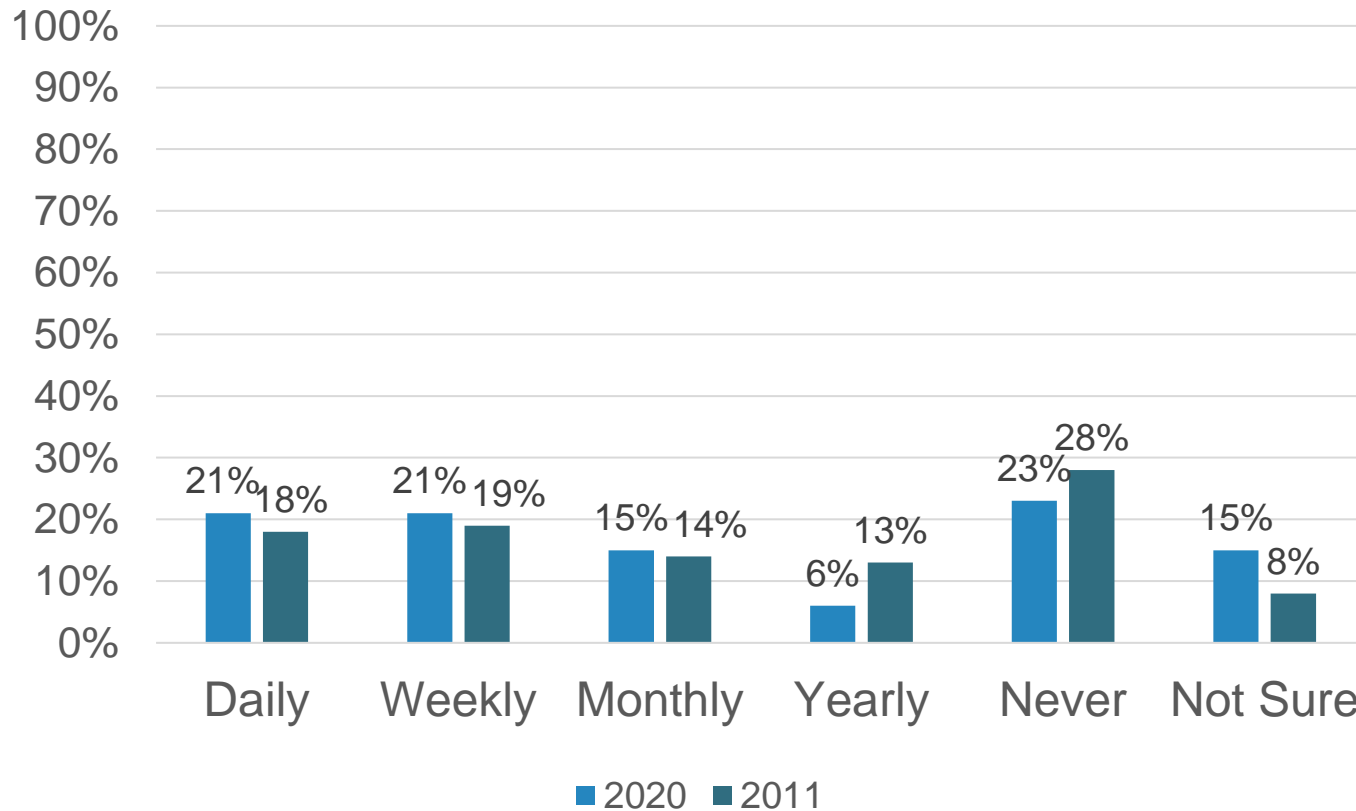
# 41% say they wonder how they can find meaning and purpose in their life at least once a week



Lifeway research

Q: "How often do you wonder: "How can I find more meaning and purpose in my life?"

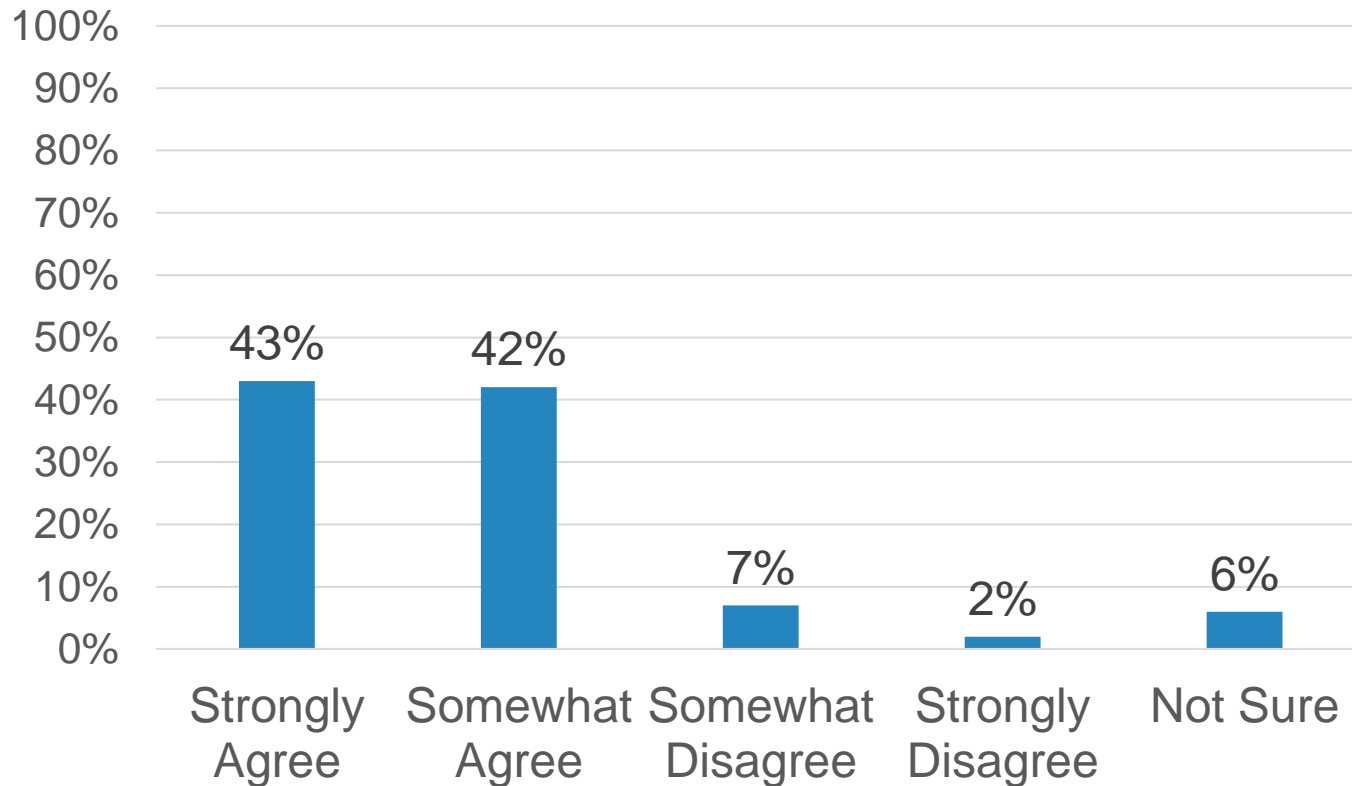
# Compared to 2011 more say they wonder about meaning and purpose at least monthly; fewer yearly or never



Lifeway research

Q: "How often do you wonder: "How can I find more meaning and purpose in my life?"

# 85% believe that there is more to life than the physical world and society

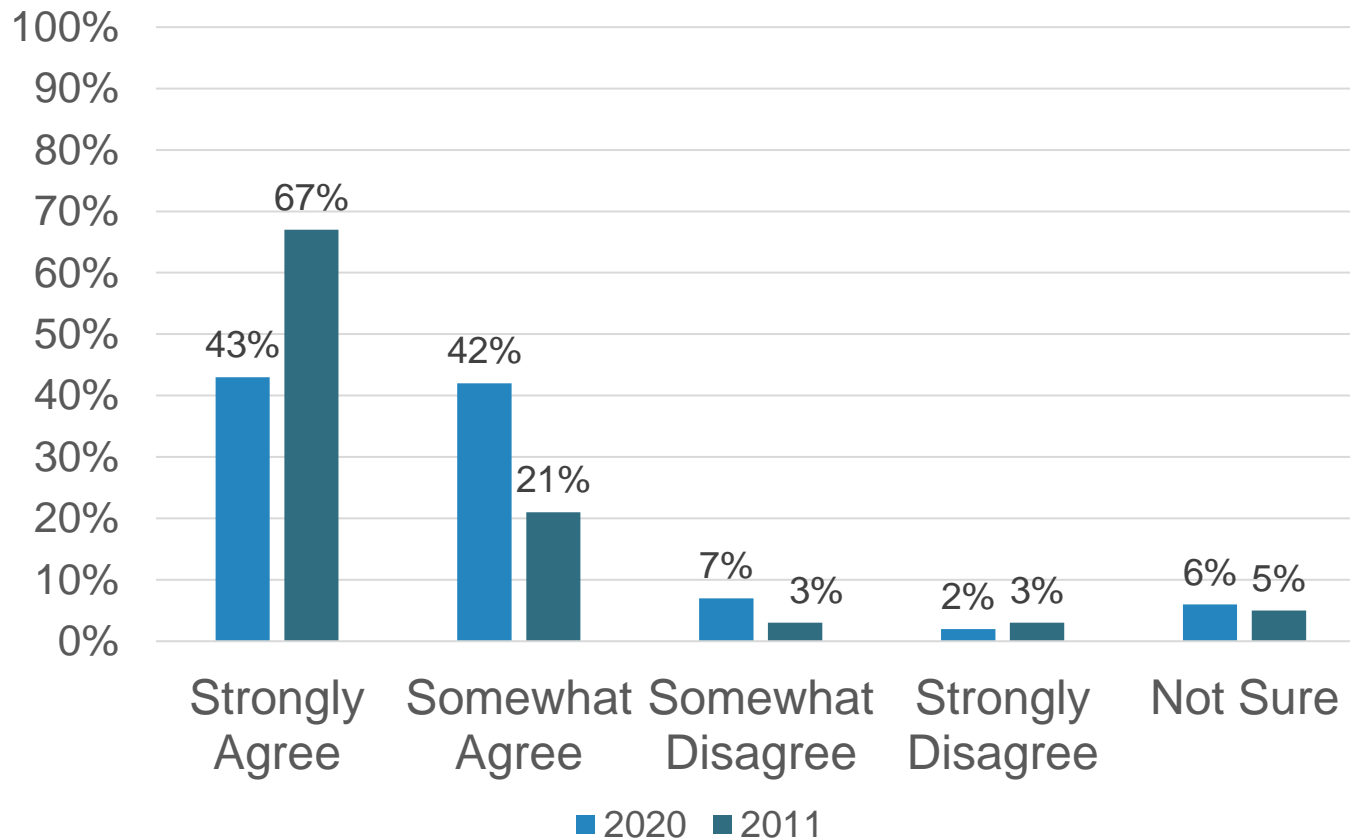


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Q: "There is more to life than the physical world and society."



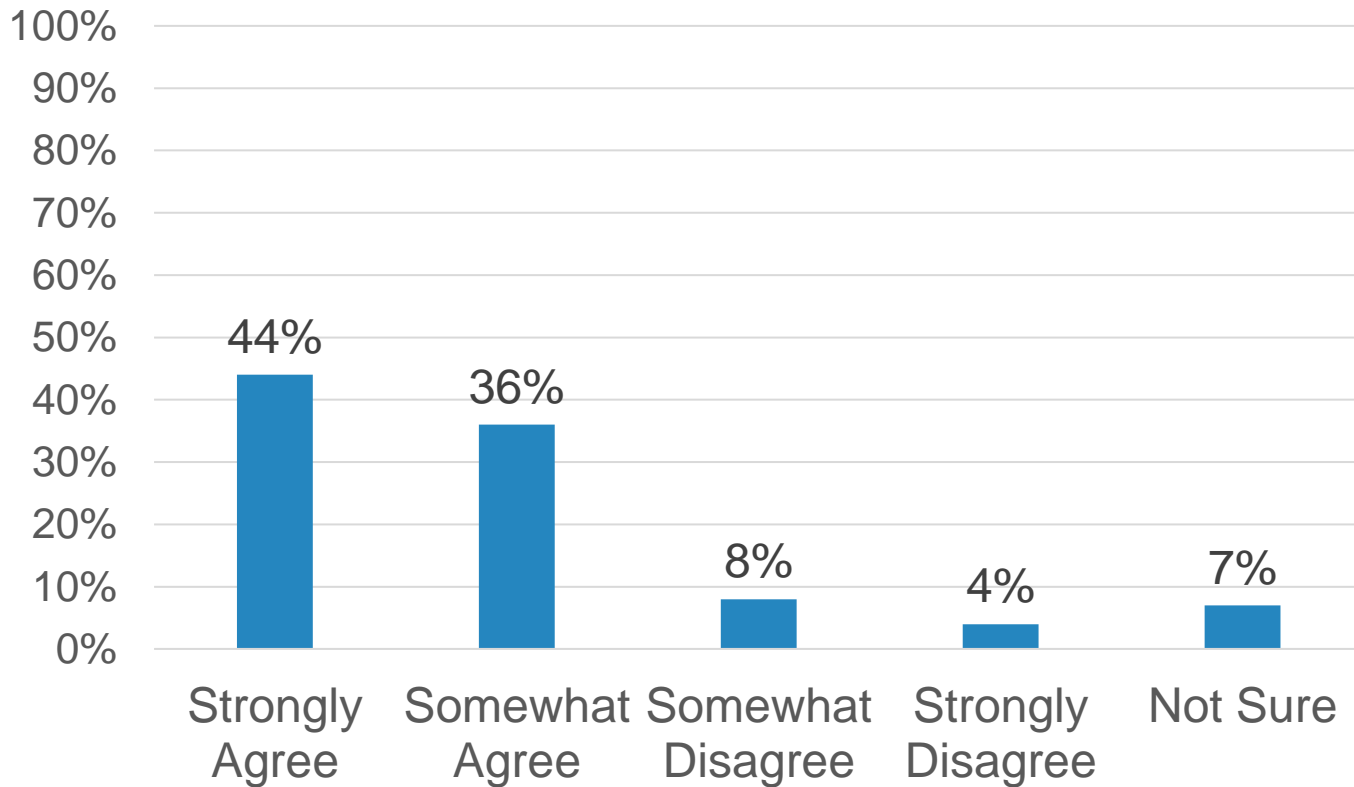
# While total agreement is similar to 2011, 24% fewer strongly agree there is more than physical world/ society



Lifeway research

Q: "There is more to life than the physical world and society."

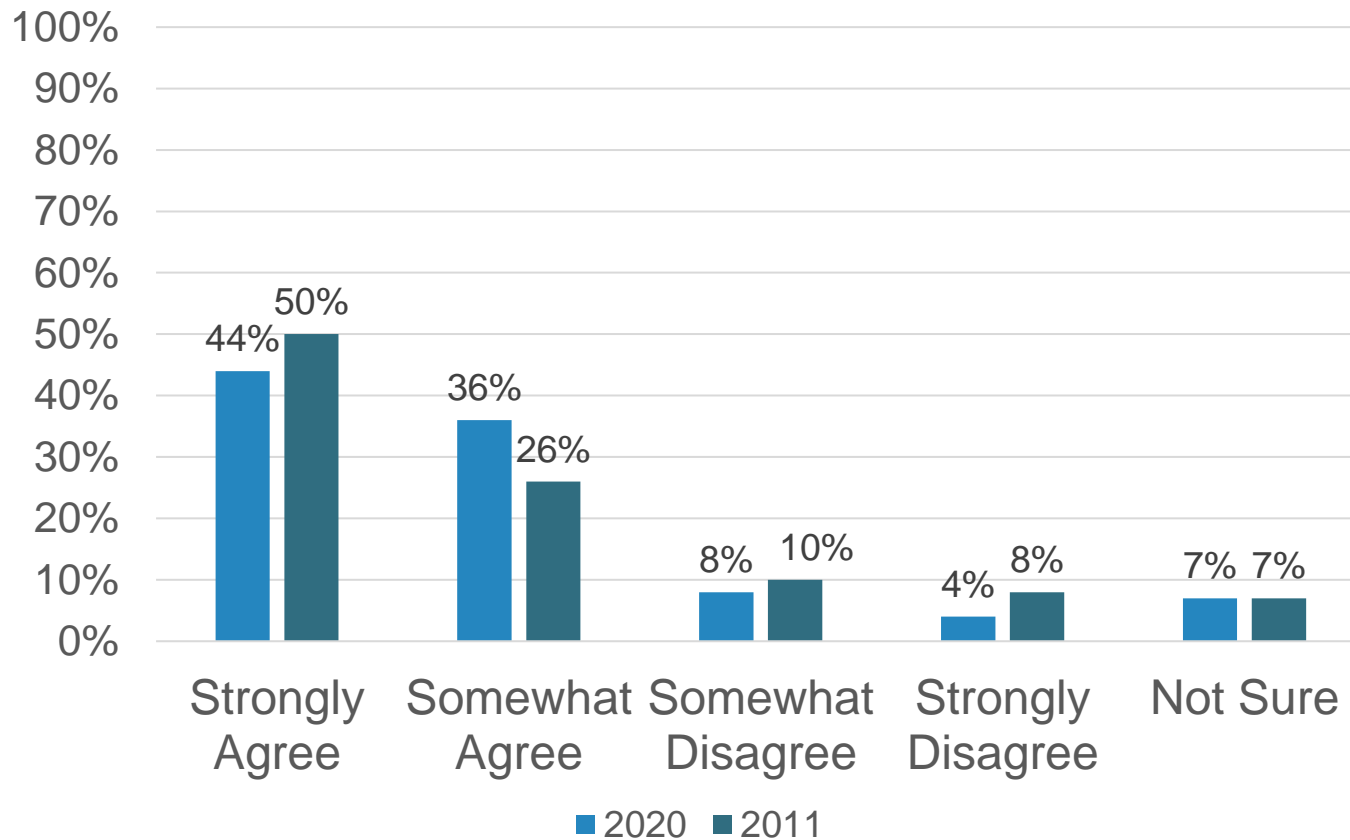
# 81% say there is an ultimate purpose and plan for every person's life



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Q: "There is an ultimate purpose and plan for every person's life."

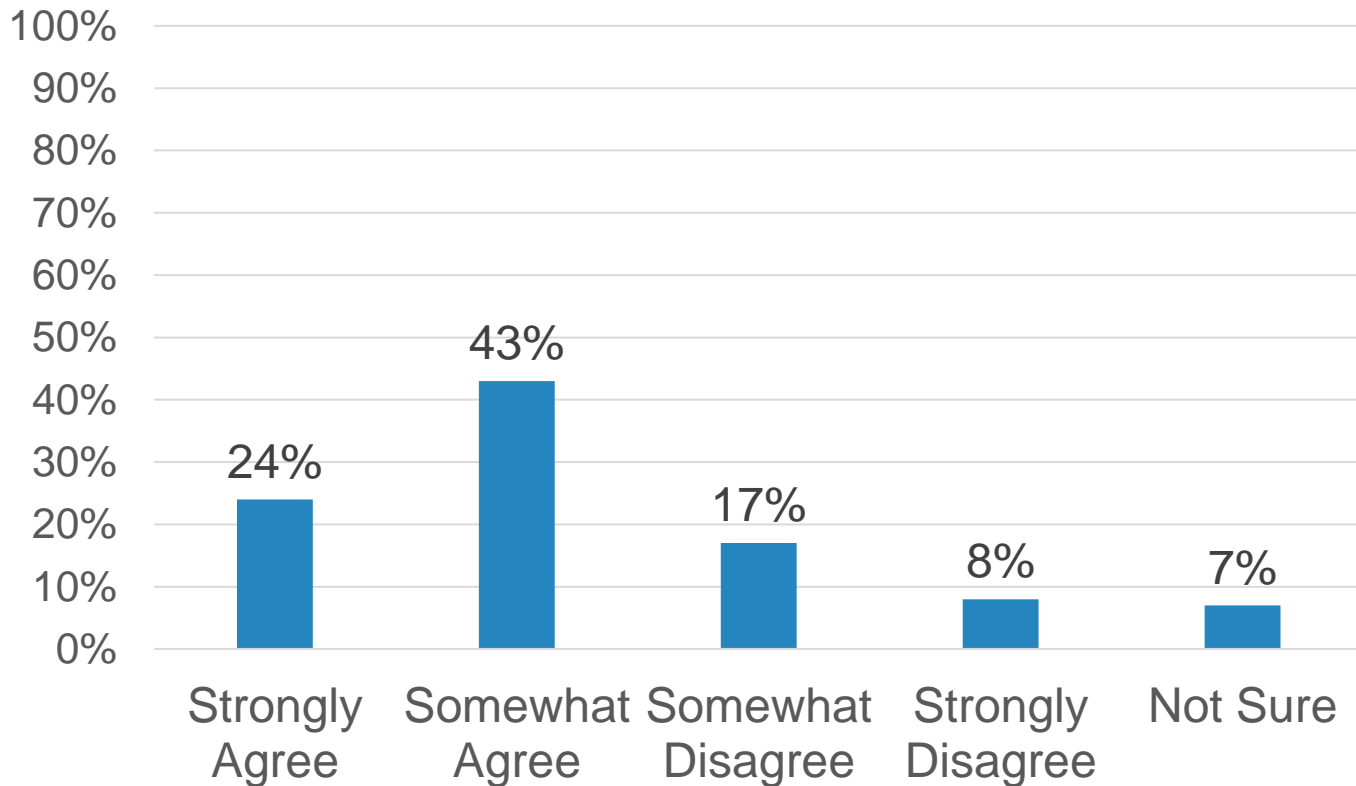
# Compared to 2011 fewer strongly agree there is an ultimate purpose and plan for every person's life



Lifeway research

Q: "There is an ultimate purpose and plan for every person's life."

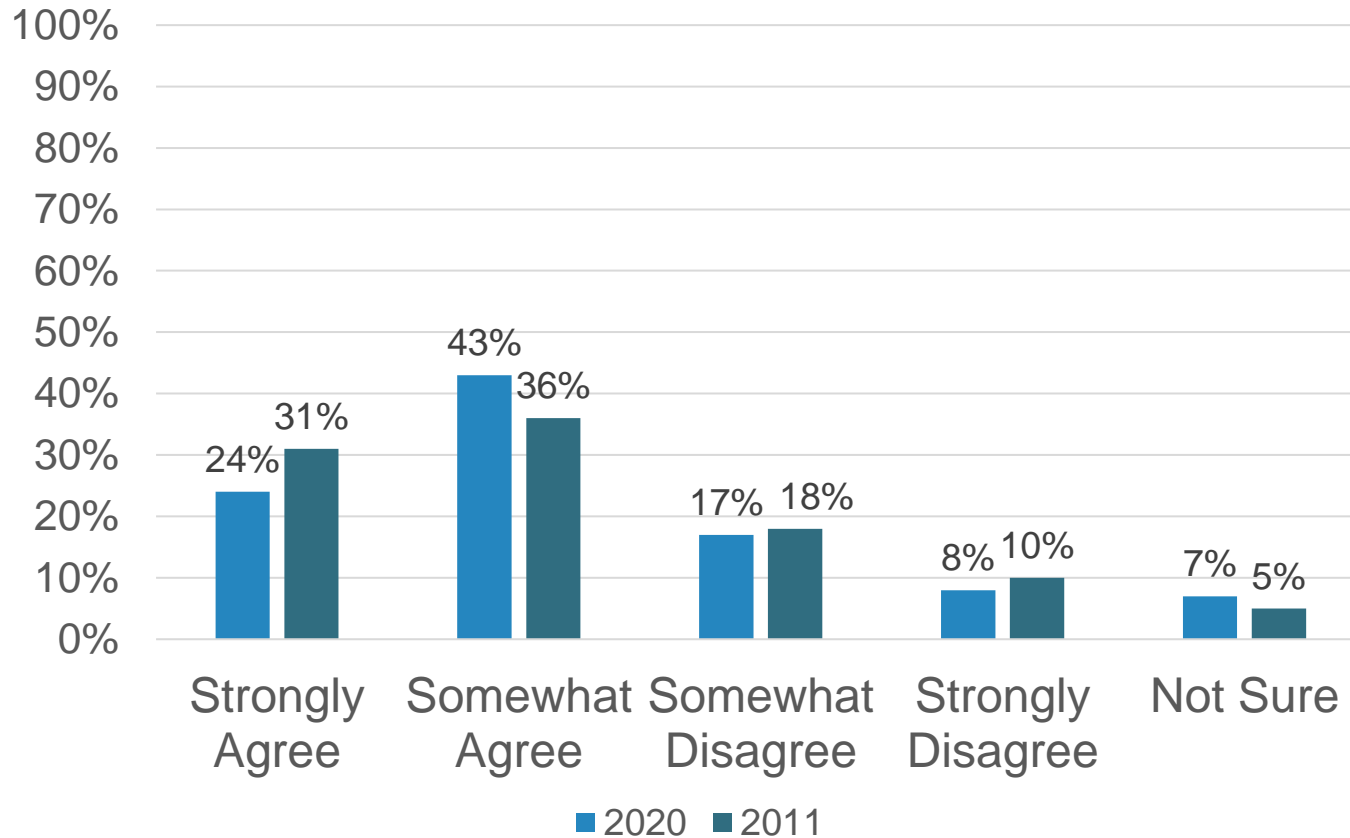
# 68% say that a major priority in their life is finding deeper purpose



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Q: "A major priority in my life is finding my deeper purpose."

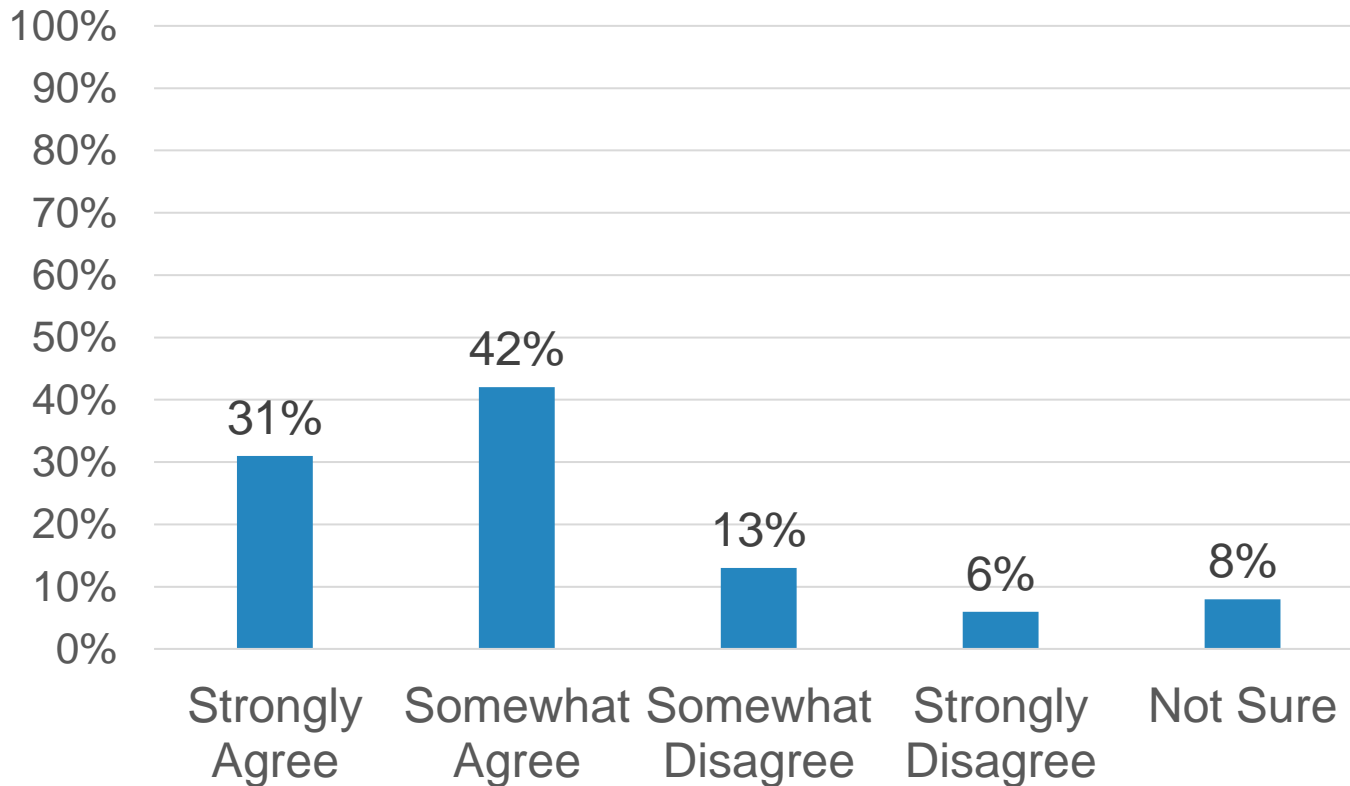
# While total agreement is similar to 2011, 7% fewer strongly agree finding their deeper purpose is a priority



Lifeway research

Q: "A major priority in my life is finding my deeper purpose."

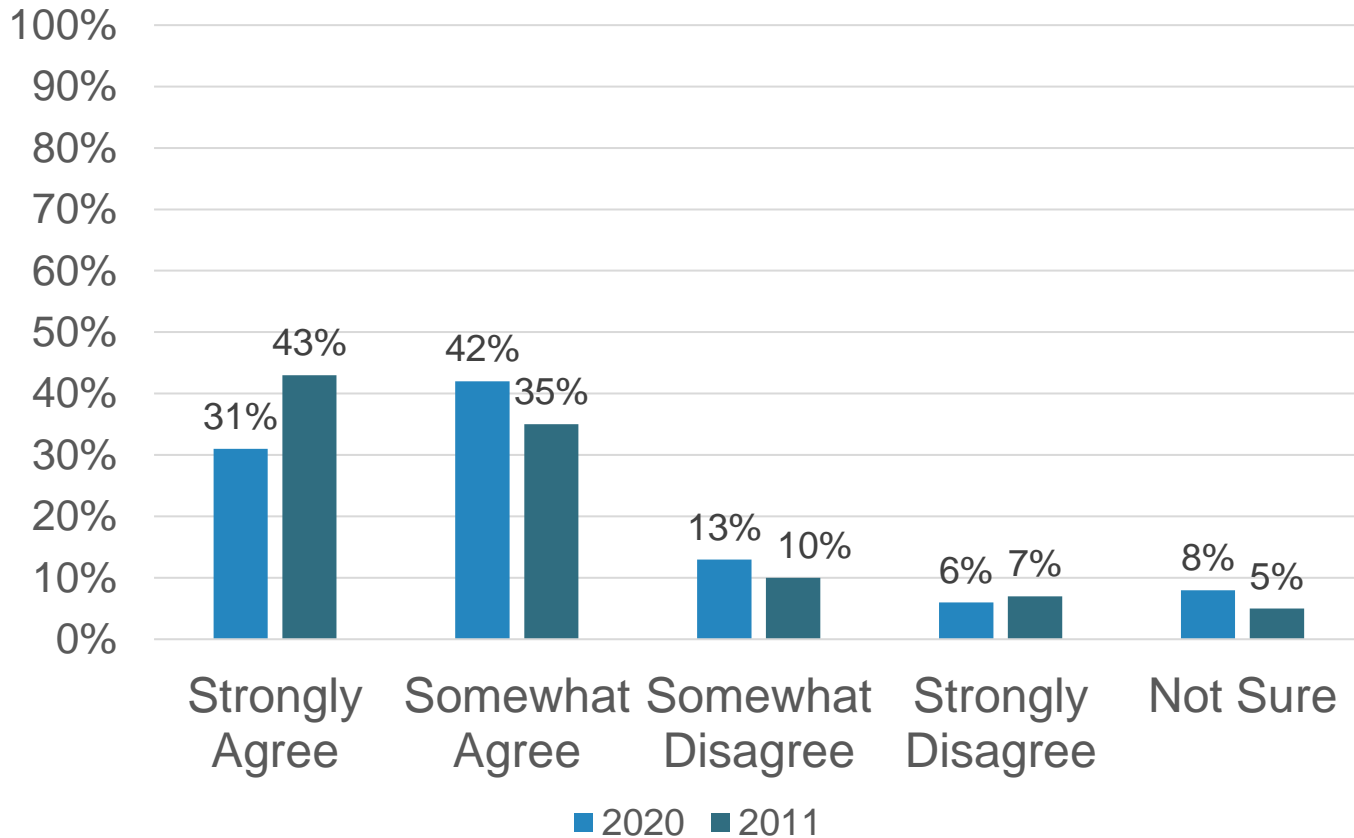
# 73% believe it is important to pursue a higher purpose and meaning for their life



**Lifeway**research

Q: "It is important that I pursue a higher purpose and meaning for my life."

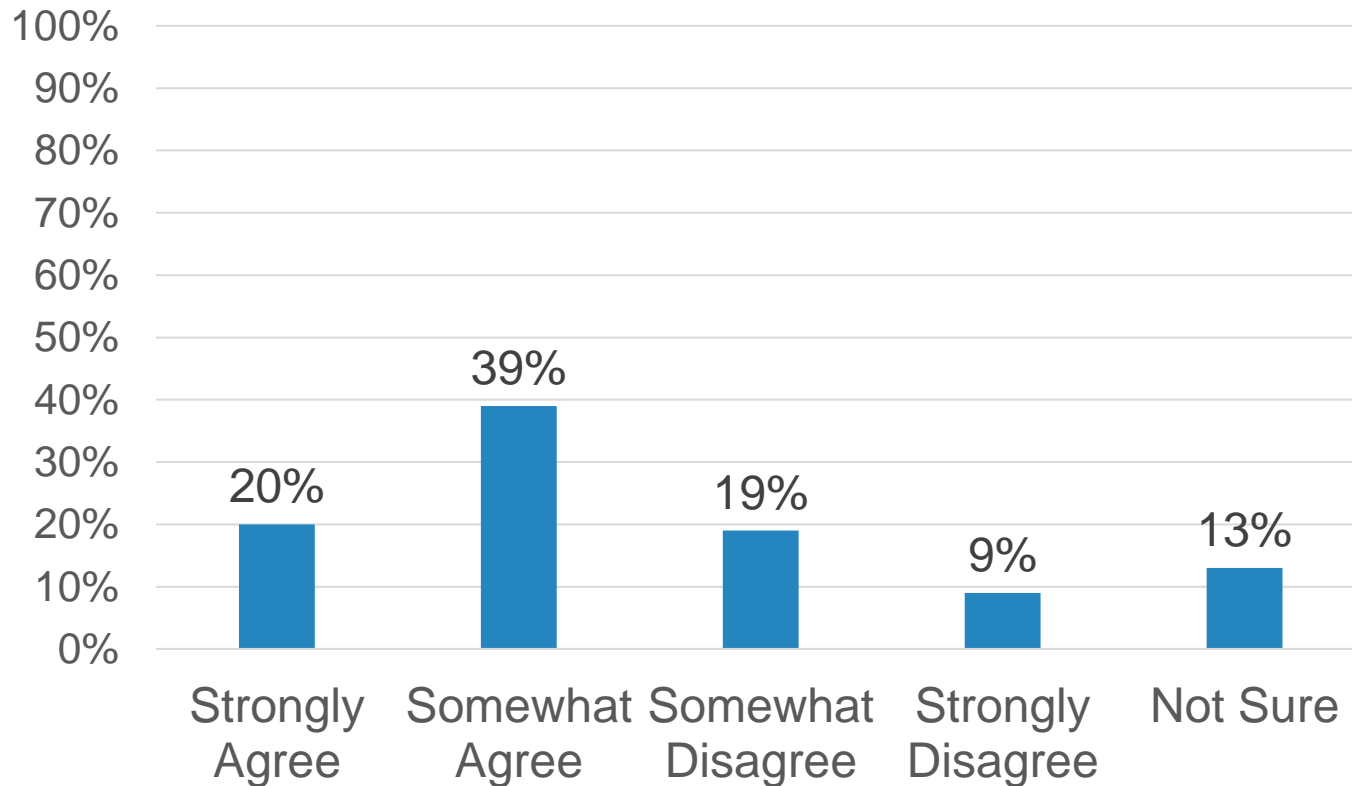
# While total agreement is similar to 2011, 12% fewer strongly agree higher purpose is an important pursuit



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Q: "It is important that I pursue a higher purpose and meaning for my life."

# 59% say they have found a higher purpose and meaning for their life



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Q: "I have found a higher purpose and meaning for my life."



# Significant Differences

Gender

Age

Ethnicity

Region

Education Level

Religion

Worship Service Attendance

Evangelical Beliefs

# Significant Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among gender, age, ethnicity, region, and education.

GENDER	AGE	ETHNICITY	REGION	EDUCATION
Male	18-34	White	Northeast	High School graduate or less
Female	35-49	African American	Midwest	Some college
	50-64	Hispanic	South	Bachelor's Degree
	65+	Other Ethnicities	West	Graduate Degree

Note: Region is defined by the US Census locations

# Significant Statistical Differences

Comparisons were made to determine if there are any significant statistical differences among religion, worship service attendance, and evangelical beliefs.

RELIGION	WORSHIP SERVICE ATTENDANCE AMONG CHRISTIANS	EVANGELICAL BELIEFS
Catholic	Less than once a month	Yes
Protestant	1 to 3 times a month	No
Other Religions	4 or more times a month	
Unaffiliated		

## **“How often do you wonder: ‘If I were to die today, do I know for sure that I would go to heaven?’”**

- Males are more likely to select “Never” than Females (41% v. 34%)
- Those age 65+ are the most likely to select “Never” (56%)
- Whites (40%) are more likely to select “Never” than African Americans (31%) or Hispanics (30%)
- Those in the West are the least likely to select “Daily” (9%)
- Those with some college (41%) or a Graduate degree (42%) are more likely to select “Never” than those who are High School Graduates or less (33%)
- Unaffiliated (47%) are more likely to select “Never” than Catholics (26%) and Protestants (37%)

**“How often do you wonder: ‘If I were to die today, do I know for sure that I would go to heaven?’”** *(continued)*

- Among those who identify as Christian, those who attend a Christian worship service 4 or more times a month are the most likely to select “Never” (46%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “Daily” than those without evangelical beliefs (28% v. 11%)

## **“How often do you wonder: ‘How can I find more meaning and purpose in my life?’”**

- Males are more likely to select “Never” than Females (27% v. 18%)
- Those age 18-34 (27%) are more likely to select “Daily” than those 50-64 (18%) and 65+ (12%)
- African Americans (34%) and Hispanics (26%) are more likely to select “Daily” than Whites (17%)
- Those in the Northeast (20%) are more likely to select “Monthly” than those in the West (12%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to select “Daily” (26%)
- Unaffiliated (28%) are more likely to select “Never” than Catholics (19%) and Protestants (21%)

**“How often do you wonder: ‘How can I find more meaning and purpose in my life?’”** *(continued)*

- Among those who identify as Christian, those who attend a Christian worship service less than once a month (24%) or 4 or more times a month (23%) are more likely to select “Never” than those who attend 1 to 3 times a month (14%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to select “Daily” than those without evangelical beliefs (31% v. 18%)

## **“There is more to life than the physical world and society.”**

- Females are more likely to Agree than males (88% v. 81%)
- Those age 18-34 (87%) and 35-49 (87%) are more likely to Agree than those 65+ (79%)
- Those in the South (87%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Northeast (81%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less (88%) are more likely to Agree than those with some college (82%) or a Bachelor’s Degree (82%)
- Unaffiliated are the most likely to Disagree (20%)
- Among those who identify as Christian, those who attend a Christian worship service 1 to 3 times a month (91%) or 4 or more times a month (94%) are more likely to Agree than those who attend less than once a month (85%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those without evangelical beliefs (94% v. 83%)



## **“There is an ultimate purpose and plan for every person’s life.”**

- Females are more likely to Agree than males (85% v. 76%)
- Those age 18-34 (82%) and 35-49 (83%) are more likely to Agree than those 65+ (74%)
- African Americans (88%) and Hispanics (85%) are more likely to Agree than Whites (78%)
- Those in the South (83%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Midwest (77%)
- Those who are High School Graduates or less are the most likely to Agree (87%)
- Unaffiliated are the most likely to Disagree (26%)

**“There is an ultimate purpose and plan for every person’s life.”**  
*(continued)*

- Among those who identify as Christian, those who attend a Christian worship service 4 or more times a month (94%) are more likely to Agree than those who attend less than once a month (86%) or 1 to 3 times a month (88%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those without evangelical beliefs (96% v. 77%)

## **“A major priority in my life is finding my deeper purpose.”**

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to Disagree (38%)
- African Americans (77%) and Hispanics (76%) are more likely to Agree than Whites (65%) and Other Ethnicities (59%)
- Those in the South (73%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Northeast (63%) and Midwest (61%)
- Those with some college (28%) or a Graduate Degree (31%) are more likely to Disagree than those who are High School Graduates or less (21%)
- Unaffiliated are the most likely to Disagree (36%)
- Among those who identify as Christian, those who attend a Christian worship service 1 to 3 times a month (80%) and 4 or more times a month (77%) are more likely to Agree than those who attend less than once a month (63%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those without evangelical beliefs (84% v. 64%)

## **“It is important that I pursue a higher purpose and meaning for my life.”**

- Those age 65+ are the most likely to Disagree (34%)
- Hispanics (79%) are more likely to Agree than Whites (71%) and Other Ethnicities (68%)
- Those in the South (79%) are more likely to Agree than those in the Northeast (66%) and Midwest (67%)
- Unaffiliated are the most likely to Disagree (31%)
- Among those who identify as Christian, those who attend a Christian worship service 1 to 3 times a month (85%) and 4 or more times a month (84%) are more likely to Agree than those who attend less than once a month (71%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those without evangelical beliefs (91% v. 68%)

## **“I have found a higher purpose and meaning for my life.”**

- Those with a Graduate Degree (68%) are more likely to Agree than those who are High School Graduates or less (54%) or with some college (59%)
- Other Religions are the most likely to Agree (80%); Unaffiliated are the most likely to Disagree (37%)
- Among those who identify as Christian, those who attend a Christian worship service 1 to 3 times a month (69%) and 4 or more times a month (76%) are more likely to Agree than those who attend less than once a month (51%)
- Those with evangelical beliefs are more likely to Agree than those without evangelical beliefs (77% v. 55%)

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