

**2021 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 96 SEPTEMBER 2021
FINAL TOPLINE
SEPTEMBER 20-26, 2021
N=6,485**

OTHER QUESTIONS PREVIOUSLY RELEASED**ASK ALL:**

GOD Do you believe in God?

Yes
No
No answer

ASK IF BELIEVES IN GODGODBIBLE Which of these statements comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right?
[RANDOMIZE]

I believe in God as described in the Bible
I DO NOT believe in God as described in the Bible, but I do believe there is some other higher power or spiritual force in the universe
No answer

ASK IF DOES NOT BELIEVE IN GOD:HGHPWR Which of these statements comes closer to your views, even if neither is exactly right?
[RANDOMIZE]

I DO NOT believe in God as described in the Bible, but I do believe there is some other higher power or spiritual force in the universe
I do not believe there is ANY higher power or spiritual force in the universe
No answer

ASK IF REFUSED GOD:

MISSINGGOD Which of these statements comes closest to your views, even if none is exactly right?

I believe in God as described in the Bible
I DO NOT believe in God as described in the Bible, but I do believe there is some other higher power or spiritual force in the universe
I do not believe there is ANY higher power or spiritual force in the universe
No answer

SUMMARY TABLE, BASED ON TOTAL

Sep 20-26 <u>2021</u>		Apr 20-26 <u>2020</u>	Dec 4-18 <u>2017</u>
91	Believe in God or higher power	89	90
57	In God as described in Bible	56	56
32	In higher power but NOT in God as described in Bible	31	33
1	Unclear	1	1
9	Does not believe in God or higher power¹	11	10
<1	Unclear²	1	1

¹ Includes those who decline to answer HGHPWR.

² Includes those who decline to answer both GOD and MISSINGGOD.

ASK ALL:
BIGQOFT

The coronavirus outbreak and other recent tragedies have caused some people to think about big questions such as the meaning of life, whether there is any purpose to suffering and why terrible things happen to people.

In the last year, how much, if at all, have you personally thought about these kinds of questions?

Sep 20-26

2021

61	NET A lot/some
23	A lot
38	Some
39	NET Not much/not at all
26	Not much
14	Not at all
<1	No answer

ASK ALL:

BADTHINGSOE

In your own words, why do you think terrible things happen to people through no apparent fault of their own?

NOTE: RESULTS DO NOT SUM TO 100% OR TO SUBTOTALS INDICATED BECAUSE MULTIPLE RESPONSES WERE PERMITTED.

Sep 20-26

2021

35	Life happens
13	NET God's will/God enables bad things
1	God works in mysterious ways
6	God's plan/will
3	God permits consequences of free will
2	Test or reminder from/related to God
2	Distance from/lack of faith in God
8	NET Sin/sinful nature/evil
5	Sin/sinful nature of humanity/fallen nature
2	Evil/evil people/evil systems
1	Satan/evil spirits
8	Free will
7	NET Destiny/fate/karma
3	Destiny/fate
2	Happens for a reason
2	Karma
6	NET People/systems are to blame
5	Flawed qualities in people/society
1	Societal inequalities
4	NET Growth/appreciation
3	Life lesson
1	Balance of good and bad
4	NET Other/unclear
1	Other
<1	Conspiracy-related
3	Unclear
28	NET Don't know/no response
5	Don't know
23	No response

ASK ALL:

BADFEELINGS When you see or hear news about terrible things happening to people, how often do you personally feel each of the following? **[RANDOMIZE; SPLIT OVER TWO SCREENS]**

		<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a.	Sadness for those who are suffering Sep 20-26, 2021	62	31	5	1	<1
b.	A desire to help those who are suffering Sep 20-26, 2021	40	51	7	1	<1
c.	The need to make changes in your own life so you don't end up in a similar situation Sep 20-26, 2021	20	51	22	6	<1
d.	The need to tune out the news because it's just too much to take Sep 20-26, 2021	24	48	20	8	1
e.	ASK IF BELIEVES IN GOD OR HIGHER POWER [N=5,868]: Angry with God for allowing so much suffering Sep 20-26, 2021	3	15	28	53	<1
f.	Worried that something similar will happen to you Sep 20-26, 2021	12	46	32	9	<1
g.	Thankful for the good things in your own life Sep 20-26, 2021	71	24	3	1	<1
h.	Happy if the person seems to have deserved it Sep 20-26, 2021	10	24	34	31	<1

ASK IF BELIEVES IN GOD OR HIGHER POWER [N=5,868]:

GODSUFF Some people have struggled to make sense of their belief in God and the fact that suffering exists in the world. How well does each of the following reflect your own views?

[RANDOMIZE a-c ON ONE SCREEN AND RANDOMIZE d-f ON SECOND SCREEN, DO NOT RANDOMIZE ORDER OF SCREENS]

		Very <u>well</u>	Somewhat <u>well</u>	Not too <u>well</u>	Not at all <u>well</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a.	Most of the suffering in the world comes from the actions of people, not from God Sep 20-26, 2021	48	40	7	3	1
b.	God chooses not to stop the suffering in the world because it is part of a larger plan Sep 20-26, 2021	24	32	21	21	2
c.	Sometimes I think the suffering in the world is an indication that there is no God Sep 20-26, 2021	4	11	19	64	2
d.	Sometimes the suffering in the world makes me doubt that God is all-powerful Sep 20-26, 2021	5	12	21	61	2
e.	Sometimes the suffering in the world makes me doubt that God is entirely loving and kind Sep 20-26, 2021	5	13	22	59	2
f.	Satan is responsible for most of the suffering in the world Sep 20-26, 2021	21	27	22	28	2

ASK IF BELIEVES IN GOD OR HIGHER POWER [N=5,868]:

PUNISH How much of the suffering in the world do you think is a punishment from God?

Sep 20-26

2021

4	All or most of it
20	Some of it
24	Only a little of it
50	None at all
2	No answer

ASK ALL:

BADTHINGSEXP

How well does each of the following explain why suffering exists in the world?

[RANDOMIZE]

		<u>Very well</u>	<u>Somewhat well</u>	<u>Not too well</u>	<u>Not at all well</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a.	To provide an opportunity for people to come out stronger Sep 20-26, 2021	19	43	24	13	2
b.	Sometimes bad things just happen Sep 20-26, 2021	44	42	9	4	1
c.	Suffering is mostly a consequence of people's own actions Sep 20-26, 2021	22	49	23	5	1
d.	Suffering is mostly a result of the way society is structured Sep 20-26, 2021	19	50	22	8	1

ASK IF BELIEVES IN GOD OR HIGHER POWER [N=5,868]:

FREEWILL

Which comes closer to your view, even if neither is exactly right? **[RANDOMIZE]**

Sep 20-26

2021

19

God or a higher power directly influences everything that occurs in the world

78

Human beings are free to act in ways that go against the plans of God or a higher power

3

No answer

**ASK ALL:
BELIEVE**Which of the following, if any, do you believe in? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

		Yes, I believe in this	No, I do not believe in this	No answer
a.	Heaven			
	Sep 20-26, 2021	73	25	2
	Dec 4-18, 2017	71	28	2
	May 30-Aug 9, 2017	74	24	2
b.	Hell			
	Sep 20-26, 2021	62	36	2
	Dec 4-18, 2017	60	38	2
	May 30-Aug 9, 2017	62	35	3

[NO ITEM c]

d.	Reincarnation (people will be reborn again and again in this world)			
	Sep 20-26, 2021	33	65	3
	Nov 19, 2019-June 3, 2020	31	67	2
	Dec 4-18, 2017	33	64	3

[NO ITEMS e, f]

g.	Everything in life happens for a reason			
	Sep 20-26, 2021	68	31	1
h.	Some things happen in life that can't really be explained by science or natural causes			
	Sep 20-26, 2021	83	16	1
i.	Fate (the course of your life is predetermined)			
	Sep 20-26, 2021	44	54	2

ASK IF DOES NOT BELIEVE IN HEAVEN AND DOES NOT BELIEVE IN HELL:AFTLIFE1 Do you believe in an afterlife?
RESULTS BASED ON TOTAL

Sep 20-26	
<u>2021</u>	
26	Do not believe in Heaven or Hell
7	Believe in afterlife
17	Don't believe in afterlife
1	No answer
74	Believe in Heaven or Hell or both

ASK IF BELIEVES IN AN AFTERLIFE ASIDE FROM HEAVEN OR HELL [N=442]:

AFTLIFE0E In your own words, what do you think the afterlife is like?

NOTE: RESULTS DO NOT SUM TO 100% OR TO SUBTOTALS INDICATED BECAUSE MULTIPLE RESPONSES WERE PERMITTED.

Sep 20-26

2021

21	NET Spirit/energy lives on
14	Spirit/energy continues to live on
2	Consciousness continues
6	Another dimension/reality
17	NET Reincarnation/coming back
9	Reincarnation/enlightenment
8	Cyclical existence/rebirth
8	NET Rejoin universe/universal energy
6	Rejoin universe/God
4	Spirit/energy is changed/transformed
4	Learning/growth
11	NET Peaceful/happy/without suffering
10	Peaceful/happy/without suffering
2	Reunited with loved ones
9	NET Other/unclear
8	Other
1	Unclear
42	NET Don't know/no response
15	Don't know
27	No response

ASK IF BELIEVES IN HEAVEN [N=4,701]:

HEAVENATH Do you believe that people who do not believe in God can go to heaven?

Sep 20-26

2021

53	Yes, they can go to heaven
44	No, they cannot go to heaven
3	No answer

ASK IF BELIEVES IN HEAVEN [N=4,701]:

HEAVENCHAR What do you think heaven is like? In heaven, people... **[RANDOMIZE, SPLIT ACROSS THREE SCREENS]**

		Heaven is definitely <u>like this</u>	Heaven is probably <u>like this</u>	Heaven is probably <u>not like this</u>	Heaven is definitely <u>not like this</u>	No <u>answer</u>
a.	Have perfectly healthy bodies Sep 20-26, 2021	54	28	9	6	2
b.	Can see what is happening on Earth Sep 20-26, 2021	21	38	25	12	3
c.	Are able to have relationships with people who are still living on Earth Sep 20-26, 2021	11	23	36	26	3
d.	Are reunited with loved ones who died previously Sep 20-26, 2021	51	38	6	3	1
e.	Are reunited with pets or animals they knew on Earth Sep 20-26, 2021	27	39	20	12	2
f.	Can meet God Sep 20-26, 2021	54	31	9	3	2
g.	Are free from suffering Sep 20-26, 2021	72	22	3	1	1
h.	Can choose whether they want to stop existing Sep 20-26, 2021	6	15	35	40	4
i.	Can become angels Sep 20-26, 2021	27	33	20	18	3

ASK IF BELIEVES IN HELL [N=3,833]:HELLCHAR What do you think hell is like? In hell, people... **[RANDOMIZE]**

		Hell is definitely like this	Hell is probably like this	Hell is probably not like this	Hell is definitely not like this	No answer
a.	Experience physical suffering Sep 20-26, 2021	48	34	11	4	3
b.	Experience psychological suffering Sep 20-26, 2021	49	36	9	4	3
c.	Cannot have a relationship with God Sep 20-26, 2021	50	29	13	6	3
d.	Become aware of the suffering they created in the world Sep 20-26, 2021	44	42	8	4	3
e.	Can meet Satan Sep 20-26, 2021	37	34	18	8	3

ASK IF BELIEVE IN HEAVEN [N=4,701]:ETERNALHEAV Which of these two statements comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right? **[RANDOMIZE]**Sep 20-26
2021

31	My religion is the one true faith leading to eternal life in heaven
66	Many religions can lead to eternal life in heaven
3	No answer

ASK IF CHRISTIAN AND MANY RELIGIONSHEAVENCHR Do you think... **[RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 & 2 IN SAME ORDER AS ETERNALHEAV]****RESULTS BASED ON CHRISTIANS [N=4,274]**Sep 20-26
2021

31	My religion is the one true faith leading to eternal life in heaven (in ETERNALHEAV)
58	Many religions can lead to eternal life in Heaven (in ETERNALHEAV)
13	Only Christian religions can lead to eternal life in heaven
44	Some non-Christian religions can lead to eternal life in heaven
2	No answer
3	No answer (in ETERNALHEAV)
92	NET Believe in Heaven (in BELIEVE_a)

ASK ALL:

SPIR1

Do you believe it is possible for people to experience each of the following? **[RANDOMIZE]**

		Yes, this is <u>possible</u>	No, this is not <u>possible</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a.	Getting a definite answer to a specific prayer request			
	Sep 20-26, 2021	67	31	3
b.	Receiving a direct revelation from God or other higher power			
	Sep 20-26, 2021	67	29	3
c.	Feeling the presence of someone who has died			
	Sep 20-26, 2021	72	26	2
d.	Getting help from someone who has died			
	Sep 20-26, 2021	51	46	3
e.	Communicating with someone who has died			
	Sep 20-26, 2021	47	50	3
f.	Having a near-death experience in which their spirit actually leaves their body			
	Sep 20-26, 2021	72	25	3

ASK ALL:

SPIR2

Have you, personally, ever experienced any of the following? [**DISPLAY IF POSSIBLE TO EXPERIENCE (SPIR1a-e=1); RANDOMIZE IN SAME ORDER AS SPIR1**]

RESULTS BASED ON TOTAL

		Yes, I have experienced <u>this</u>	No, I have not experienced <u>this</u>	<u>No answer</u>	Not asked because respondent does not believe this is possible in SPIR1
a.	Gotten a definite answer to a specific prayer request Sep 20-26, 2021	46	21	1	33
b.	Received a direct revelation from God or other higher power Sep 20-26, 2021	29	38	1	33
c.	Felt the presence of someone who has died Sep 20-26, 2021	44	27	1	28
d.	Gotten help from someone who has died Sep 20-26, 2021	20	30	1	49
e.	Communicated with someone who has died Sep 20-26, 2021	14	33	1	53

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics today, do you consider yourself a:

ASK IF INDEP/SOMETHING ELSE OR MISSING:

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to...

<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Something else</u>	<u>No answer</u>	<u>Lean Rep</u>	<u>Lean Dem</u>
26	32	26	14	3	16	19