

# Desire godly parents? Not most Americans

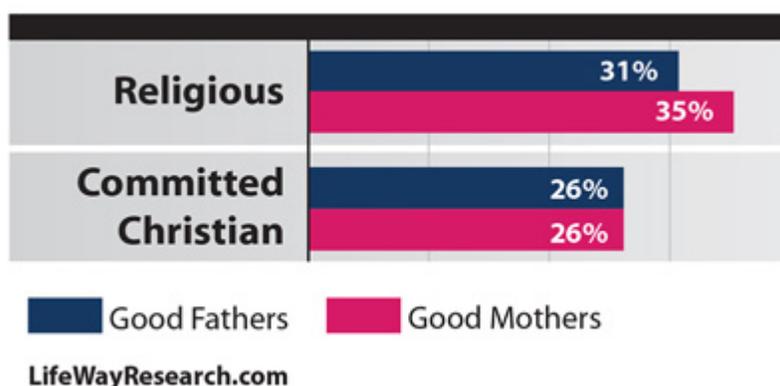
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NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Most Americans believe good mothers and fathers must be loving, supportive and protecting, but few see the necessity of parents having a commitment to Christianity or religion, a recent survey reveals.

[LifeWay Research](#) conducted a survey in March to gauge opinions of the expected roles of parents at a time when Americans typically think about Mom and Dad—the season surrounding Mother’s Day and Father’s Day.

## ‘Loving’ at the top

According to the survey, “loving” is the No. 1 characteristic deemed mandatory for mothers (85 percent) and fathers (79 percent). After “loving,” four of the next five characteristics are shared, including “supporting,” “protecting,” “encouraging” and “involved.”



American adults who consider these characteristics mandatory to be “good” parents. “The consistency of what Americans expect of fathers and mothers is a sharp contrast to many of the popular storylines in films and books,” said Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research, pointing out the characteristic

“fun” garnered consideration from just 57 percent for mothers and 54 percent for fathers.

“While a little more than half of Americans say mothers and fathers must be ‘fun,’ more people expect parents to be loving, supporting, encouraging and understanding,” he said.

What Americans don’t necessarily see as mandatory traits of good mothers and fathers are religious convictions, including being a committed Christian.

### **‘Religious’ not high on list**

Mothers (35 percent) and fathers (31 percent) being “religious” garnered a slightly higher return than being a “committed Christian” (26 percent for both mothers and fathers) on the survey of mandatory traits.

“Clearly Americans who are not Christians themselves would not be expected to value a Christian commitment among parents today,” McConnell noted. “However, three out of four Americans indicate their religious preference is Christian, Catholic or Protestant. This means only a third of these people appear to value parents modeling a commitment to Jesus Christ to their children.

“For many who indicate a Christian-type religion, this preference simply reflects something they were born with rather than something they feel they must nurture in the next generation.”

According to the survey, Americans who self-identify as born-again, evangelical or fundamental Christians are less likely to select “involved” (60 percent vs. 68 percent) and “generous” (44 percent vs. 51 percent) and more likely to select “religious” (56 percent vs. 26 percent) as mandatory traits to be a good mother.

## **Expectations are high**

“Being a good father or mother is subjective. Yet in America today, the expectations are both high and consistent,” McConnell said.

The LifeWay Research survey also reveals areas where expectations for mothers and fathers differ. More Americans expect mothers to be tender and loving, while the expectation for fathers more often is to be protecting, involved, consistent and providing.

While the average number of characteristics is the same for mothers and fathers, the survey also reveals women expect both mothers and fathers to have more of the characteristics.

“With such widespread expectations of parents today, the question rests less on what is expected than on how parents can live up to these expectations,” McConnell said. “Clearly, parents today need some support and encouragement of their own to consistently provide love and support to their children.”

LifeWay Research conducted the online survey of 1,054 adult Americans March 25 among a sample of an online panel representing the adult population of the United States. Responses were weighted by region, age, ethnicity, gender and income. The sample provides 95 percent confidence sampling error from the panel does not exceed plus or minus 3.1 percent. Margins of error are higher in subgroups.