

# Understanding Their Path to Choose



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# Executive Summary

## Purpose

Even after *Roe v. Wade* was overturned, abortion rates remained steady. While policy plays a role, this research study calls churches to recognize their responsibility to shape hearts and restore trust with compassion and clarity.

## Research Overview



**4,000** Gen Z women (ages 13–26) surveyed nationwide.



**500** in-depth interviews conducted for deeper insights.



**Diverse sample:** race, income, religious background, geography.



**Timeline:** February 21 – March 1, 2024.

## Key Findings



### Faith Perspective

Church attendance falls from 38% (teens) to 24% (ages 22–26).

One in three Gen Z women feel “let down” by the church.

Belief in the Image of God remains strong and connects deeply to pro-life values.



### Life Framework

Top Concerns: Financial security, Career goals, Mental health.

30% identify as LGBTQ+, correlating with higher pro-choice views.

Gen Z prioritizes self-care and mental health over faith development.



### Building Relationships

Only 20% would confide in someone if pregnant — fear of judgment and distrust are key barriers.

Dating ideals remain traditional: over 70% prefer exclusive dating.

Screens are tools for building trust but also deepen social anxiety.



### Pregnancy Attitudes

60% associate unplanned pregnancy with fear.  
51% see pregnancy as a possible source of purpose and empowerment.

Birth control is seen mainly as a health tool, which should be freely available to all with little (if any) restrictions.

Sexual education experiences are fragmented, with few receiving faith-based guidance.



### Choosing Life

80% say they would prefer carrying a pregnancy to term personally.

Major Barriers: Financial insecurity, Career pressure, Lack of support.

Gen Z teens show more hopeful, optimistic views about motherhood compared to college-age peers.

# Strategic Recommendations for the Church

1

## Focus on pre-college discipleship and formation

Because of the sharp drop-off in church attendance post-teen years, churches must prioritize faith formation while Gen Z women are still in youth group. This includes clear, compassionate teaching on sexuality, identity, and the value of life.

2

## Frame Life as Empowerment Rooted in God's Design

Frame pro-life messaging not just in moral terms but as empowering. Emphasize strength, dignity, and the fulfillment of God's purpose in motherhood, especially when the world says success requires avoiding parenthood.

3

## Provide Practical Support

Offer material, emotional, and spiritual support: baby supplies, daycare help, housing, career coaching, and access to trusted professionals. Pastors can also equip their churches to partner with community services and pregnancy resource centers.

4

## Rebuild Trust Through Authentic Ministry

Given that many Gen Z women distrust institutions, pastors must model integrity, empathy, and humility. Offer space for open conversations without shame, train lay mentors, and publicly affirm a woman's value regardless of her past or decisions.



## Conclusion

Gen Z is not abandoning spirituality — they are redefining it. To encourage life-affirming choices, we must meet their emotional, financial, and relational needs, speak to their dreams for self-empowerment, and rebuild trust with compassion and authenticity.

# Introduction

Despite the repeal of *Roe v. Wade* and the implementation of stricter abortion laws in 14 states, abortion rates have increased. The availability of abortion pills and the funding of out-of-state procedures by organizations like Planned Parenthood have helped sustain abortion rates, even in restrictive states. The persistence of abortion rates suggests that legal measures alone are not sufficient to change behavior. The study emphasizes that convincing more women to carry pregnancies to term rather than choose abortion will require a change in hearts as much as laws.

Gen Z women are at a unique stage in life because they are on the cusp of many romantic and relational firsts. Gen Z, like the Millennials who preceded them, are making partner and romantic decisions much later than Baby Boomers and Generation X. Therefore, a study of these young women's attitudes toward reproduction and relationships are as much about what they anticipate or aspire to, as they are reality. It is a window into their current state of mind, but also what they anticipate about their own future.

This is important because when a pregnancy is unexpected or unplanned, these attitudes will almost certainly be the driving force behind the actions that happen quickly.

Given that most abortions happen within six weeks of conception, primarily using chemical abortifacients (mifepristone and misoprostol) to end pregnancy, the views of these women before and at the time they discover they are pregnant are especially important as they make their decisions.

# Methodology

The study utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to provide a comprehensive view of the factors influencing pregnancy decisions.

The study relied on a nationwide survey conducted among 4,000 Gen Z women aged 13 to 26. The sample was selected to ensure diversity across race, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, and geographic location. The survey collected data on attitudes toward pregnancy, abortion, faith, financial stability, and social influences, providing statistical insights into the most common beliefs and decision-making factors.

In addition to the survey, in-depth interviews were conducted with a subset of 500 participants to gain richer, more detailed insights into their thought processes. These one-on-one interviews focused on personal stories, moral conflicts, and social pressures related to pregnancy decisions.

Of the 4,000 women interviewed:

- 1,500 between the ages of 13–17 years old
- 1,300 between the ages of 18–21 years old
- 1,200 between the ages of 22–26 years old

Interviews were conducted February 21 – March 1, 2024.

# Findings

## 1. Faith Perspective

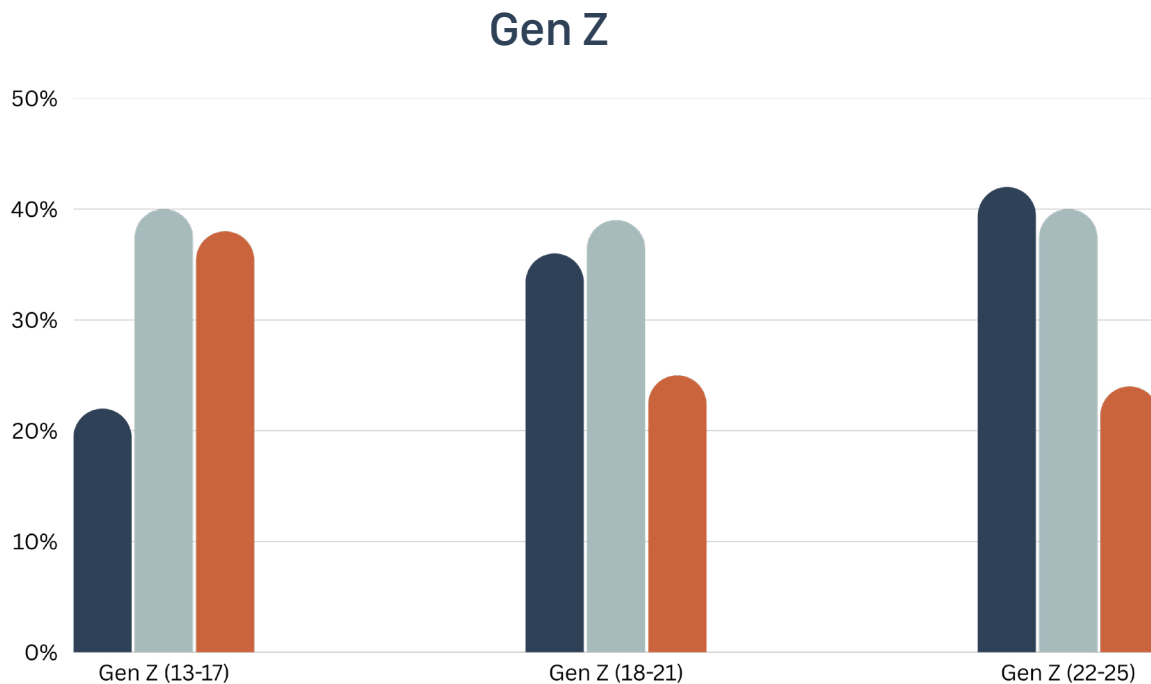
Faith plays a complex but influential role in Gen Z's attitudes toward pregnancy and abortion. While many Gen Z women express belief in God, regular church attendance declines sharply after their teenage years. Among teens, faith remains a strong influence, but by their mid-20s, this connection weakens significantly.

One third of Gen Z women feel “let down” by the church, and surprisingly, this feeling increases among those who stay engaged in their faith. This suggests that churches must reconsider how they engage young women in meaningful and supportive ways.

Despite this decline in institutional trust, the concept of being created in the image of God remains a powerful pro-life argument. Many young women resonate with this belief, even if they are not actively involved in a church. If churches can provide empathetic counsel, material support, and safe spaces for discussion, they may play a crucial role in helping Gen Z women choose life.

### ***Declining Church Engagement and the Growing Distance from Institutional Faith***

# How regularly did you attend church the past year?

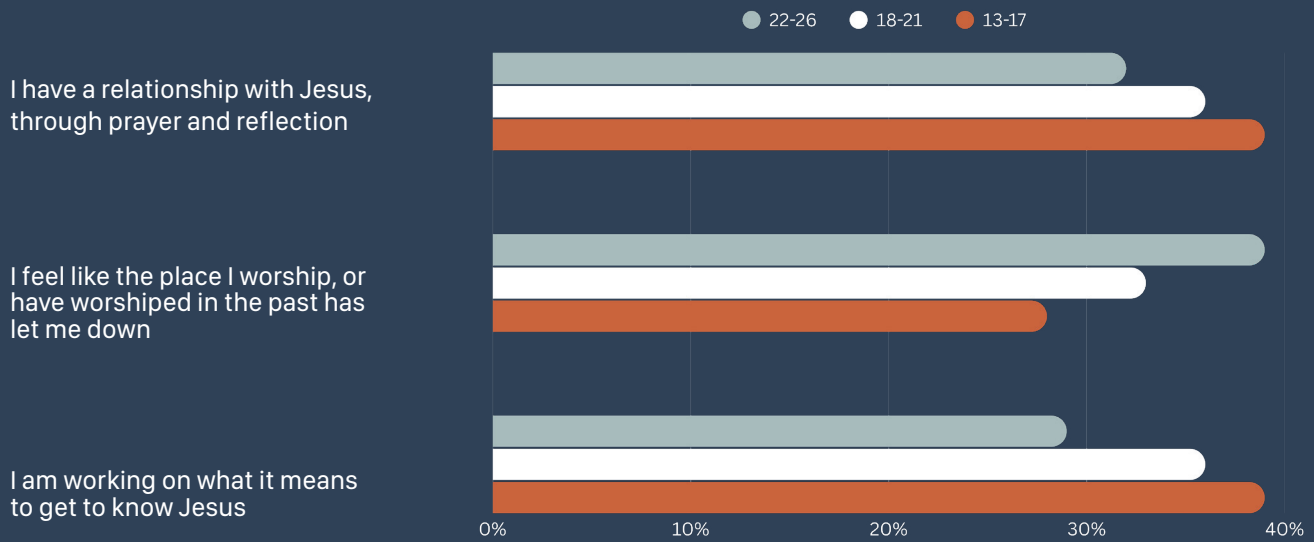


One of the most significant findings in this study is the decline in church attendance as Gen Z ages. While discussion of Gen Z has tended to emphasize its rising rates of non-religious identification, this study finds that when measuring by attendance and even particular beliefs they are more religious as teenagers than they will be when they age out of the youth group. While nearly 38% of Gen Z teens (ages 13-17) attend church regularly, this number drops to 25% for women ages 18-21 and falls again to 24% for those 22-26. This sharp decline suggests that as Gen Z women gain independence, they drift away from structured religious engagement.

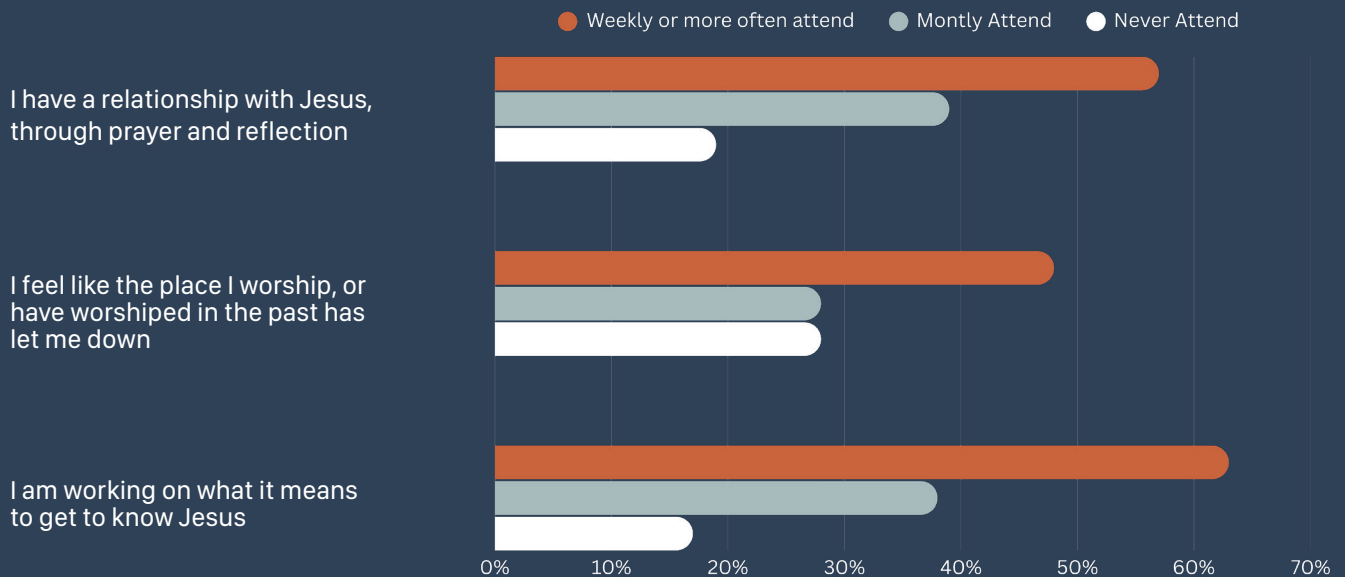
However, this does not necessarily mean they abandon faith altogether. Many still express a belief in God—87% of all respondents, and even 45% of those who self-identified as Non-Religion/Agnostic/Atheist—and the importance of spiritual principles, though they no longer see the church as a central influence in their lives. This tracks with previous studies that have found that while Gen Z is not as tied to institutional religion, it is still spiritually interested. Indifference or apathy are more emblematic of Gen Z women than the militant atheism of previous eras.

In this environment, the church's role as educator and disciple-maker is even more important than previous generations. Planned Parenthood and others' alternative vision for the person, sexuality, and the family are already engaging with these young women as they sit in the pew. When they leave the church, it becomes the loudest alternative voice. Thus, churches must focus on how they can disciple the Gen Z teenagers in their pews to make faith their own before they age out of youth groups and leave their congregations behind.

## Beliefs about church (by age)



## Beliefs about church (by attendance)



Notably, one third of Gen Z women feel let down by their church or religious institution. When broken by age segment, it ranges from over 25% to just under 40%. Unsurprisingly, the group with the highest agreement with this statement (women ages 22-26), is also the least likely to agree with the statements: "I have a relationship with Jesus, through prayer and reflection" and "I am working on what it means to get to know Jesus." Paradoxically, the group most likely to agree with that statement when measuring by attendance are the most frequent attenders. The hopeful interpretation of this data is that there are those who remain in the church even after being let down. However, given that the most frequent attenders are the younger generations, it is also likely that they would leave but are not yet able to do so.

There are other hopeful signs in this data. For those who are weekly attenders, over half described some form of active attempt to discern what it means to get to know Jesus, and six in ten claimed to currently have a relationship with Jesus through prayer and reflection. This would seem to indicate at least some personal identification with faith rather than an opposed attendance at the services of their parents. That provides a window of opportunity for pastors and ministry leaders seeking to keep these women engaged in a life of faith.

### **The Image of God as a Pro-Life Construct**

Despite declining church attendance, the study finds that the concept of being created in the image of God resonates deeply with a large portion of Gen Z women. Many respondents expressed that this belief instills a sense of dignity and value in all human life, including the preborn.

When asked about their thoughts on the image of God, responses fell into several key themes:

- **Moral Responsibility:** Many women felt that believing all people are made in God's image comes with an obligation to respect and protect life.
- **Finding Purpose:** Several respondents noted that if God creates each person uniquely, then every life—including preborn life—has inherent worth and purpose.
- **Self-Esteem and Identity:** Some women connected this belief to their own struggles with self-worth, saying that remembering they are created in God's image helps them see their own value.
- **Skepticism and Doubt:** A smaller subset of respondents expressed doubt about the concept, either questioning God's existence or rejecting the idea that faith should play a role in reproductive decisions.

## 2. Life Framework

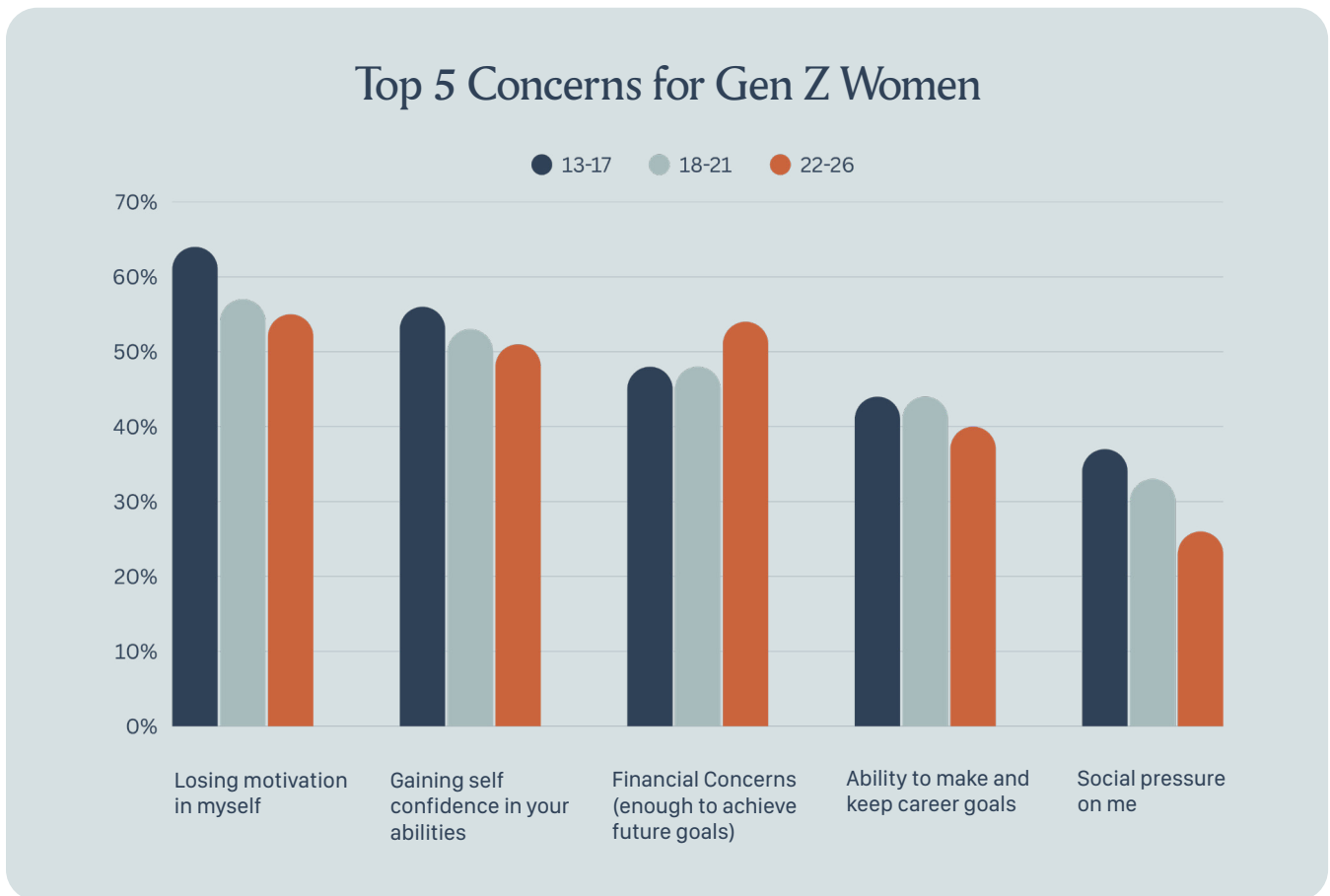
Gen Z women’s perspectives on pregnancy are shaped by their personal concerns, life goals, and gender identity dynamics. Many of them struggle with self-doubt and financial insecurity, which strongly influences their reproductive choices.

Their top concerns include losing motivation, financial stability, and career progression. Meanwhile, their most common goals revolve around health and self-care, with only about one third prioritizing faith development.

Additionally, about one third of Gen Z identifies as LGBTQ+, which creates both stigma across generations and a sense of belonging within peer groups. This identity influences reproductive attitudes, as LGBTQ+ women are more likely to support abortion rights and less likely to anticipate having children.

Understanding these broader life frameworks is crucial in developing pro-life messaging and support structures that resonate with Gen Z’s lived experiences.

### Anxiety & Mental Health

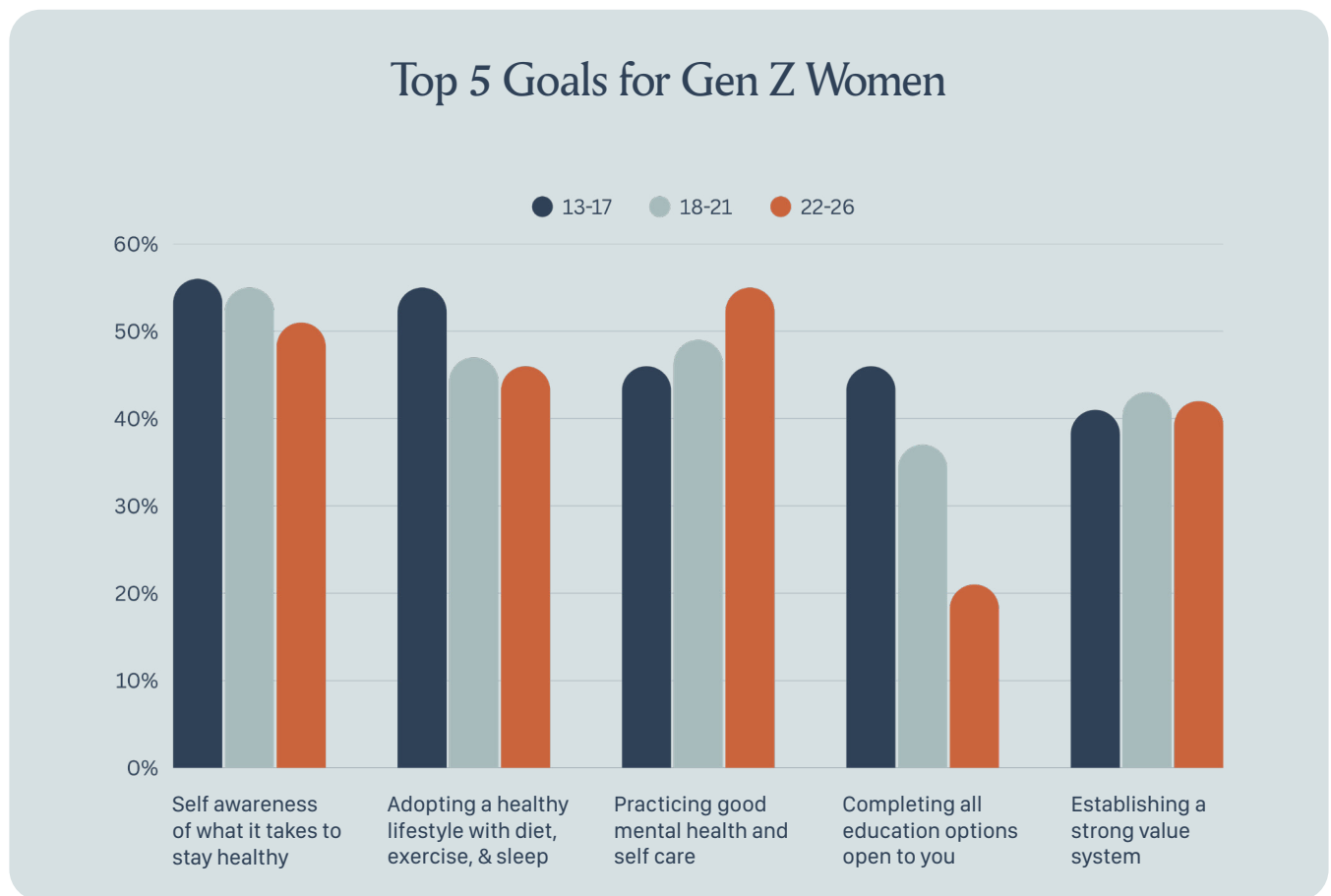


One of the key themes influencing Gen Z's reproductive decisions is their evolving sense of identity. Many young women in this generation experience self-doubt and anxiety about their future, which affects their confidence in making life-altering decisions such as pregnancy and parenting.

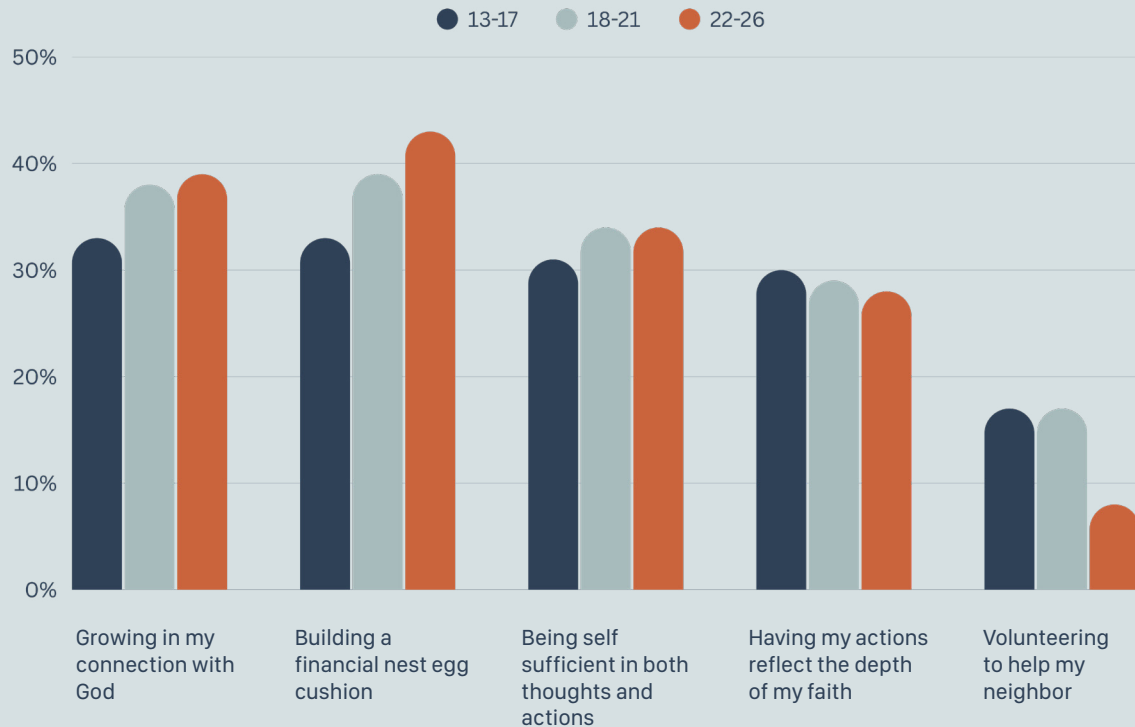
Survey data indicates that over 60% of these young women report struggling with self-confidence. This lack of confidence translates into hesitation when considering whether they can successfully raise a child. Many respondents shared concerns about their emotional readiness, financial stability, and support system.

Additionally, Gen Z is more likely than previous generations to delay major life events, such as marriage and parenthood, as they focus on self-discovery, career-building, and personal well-being. Because of this, many young women view an unplanned pregnancy as a disruption to their self-development, making abortion seem like a more viable option when faced with uncertainty.

### Competing Goals and Priorities



## Lowest Ranked Goals for Gen Z Women



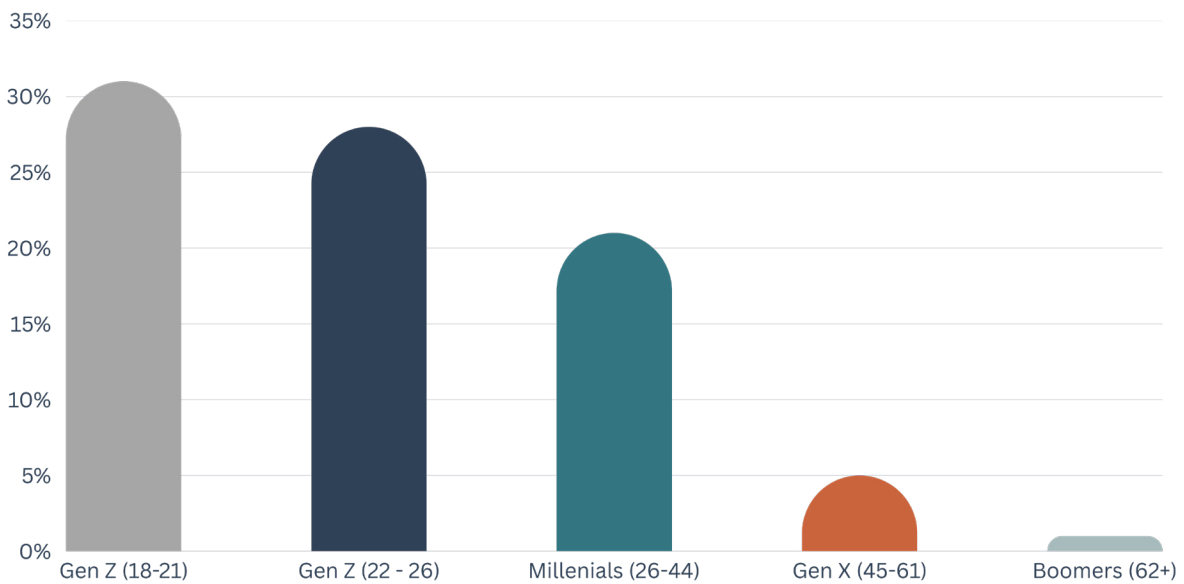
When comparing the highest and lowest ranked goals for Gen Z women, some general themes emerge. First, the top priorities for this group of young women revolve around physical and mental health. Three of their top five goals deal with cultivating habits that would create a healthier individual, whether that's through a lifestyle with proper diet, exercise, and sleep or practicing self-care to achieve better mental health. This is not unsurprising given the formative life experience that the COVID pandemic would have played for many of these women. Considering the isolation of lockdowns and the concerns over a worldwide pandemic, general goals of health and avoidance of anxiety are to be expected.

At the same time, goals of spiritual and moral formation are less important to this generation than other goals. For example, higher percentages of women in all three age segments wish to build a financial nest egg rather than grow in their connection with God. The one hopeful trend here is that the fifth most important category for these women is the establishing of a strong value system. This is not a commitment to a particular religious tradition or spiritual worldview, but it is at least an openness which lends itself to the moral discipleship offered by the church.

### **Generationally Unique: LGBTQ+ Identity**

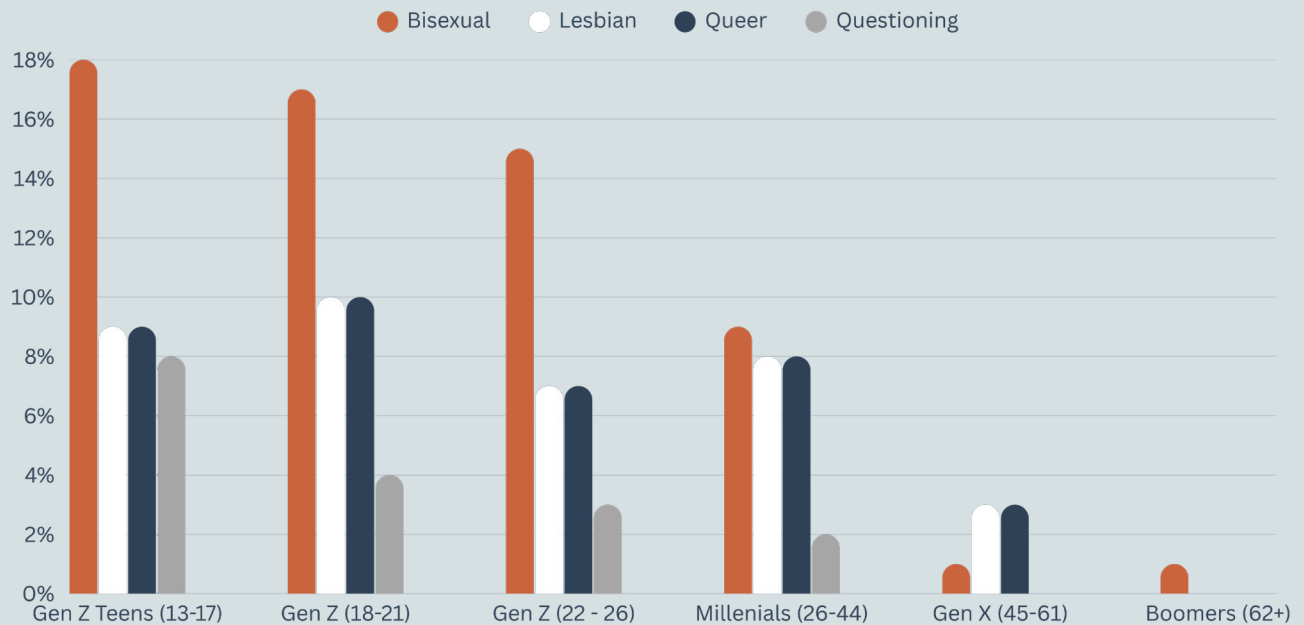
One of the factors which sets Gen Z apart from other generations is the increased number who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. For Gen X and Boomers, less than 5% of individuals count themselves in this community. For Millennials, it is much larger at just over one in five. However, the youngest segments of Gen Z identify at almost double that rate (37%), with the oldest cohort more likely than their Millennial peers to identify as LGBTQ+ (28% vs. 21%).

### Percent of each generation identifying as LGBTQ+



When considering just the women who identify as LGBTQ+, it becomes clear that for Gen Z, the most common understanding of sexual attraction is bisexuality. It is almost double the next largest categories of lesbian or queer, for each age range. Unsurprisingly, the youngest cohort of Gen Z is the most likely to select “questioning” though this identity decreases significantly as individuals age and a more developed self-identity takes root.

## Sexual Identity among women within generational cohorts



Note: Each person who identified as LGBTQ+ was given the choice of 10 "labels" that the community uses, these labels are the only ones with more than 1% of women in the community.

Respondents expressed an awareness that their identity as LGBTQ+ created stigma across generations but could also create a sense of community intra-generationally. A majority (and near majority for the other two segments) of the teens acknowledged that they did not disclose their identity to older generations. They also expressed a belief that rural locations were more likely to stigmatize LGBTQ+ identities, and that there was prejudice within the faith community. Roughly one in three Gen Z women said that their family has been very supportive. At the same time, the vast majority of Gen Z expressed little difficulty in talking with their classmates and friends about their identity.

The growth of this group is significant because it was within this population that two important trends were highest. First, those who self-identified as members of the LGBTQ+ community were the group who were most likely to say that they would consider abortion. Additionally, they were also the group who said that the choice for life is not one that they will ever face, signifying the divergent expectations of pregnancy and childbearing later in life as compared to their heterosexual peers.

### 3. Building Relationships

Gen Z places a high value on trust, loyalty, and open communication in relationships. However, they also report high levels of social anxiety and difficulty forming deep connections, which affects their ability to seek support during pregnancy.

Only one in five Gen Z women would confide in someone about their pregnancy decision, with many citing fears of judgment, privacy concerns, and lack of trusted advisors. While the importance of a supportive partner is acknowledged, few see the biological father as the primary influence in their decision.

When it comes to friendships, many struggle with building relationships due to social anxiety and trust issues. Digital communication plays a role, but Gen Z remains skeptical of authenticity in online relationships.

For pregnancy decisions, the absence of reliable support networks can push women toward abortion due to isolation and a lack of guidance. Strengthening relational support, whether through faith communities, peer groups, or counseling, is a critical factor in encouraging life-affirming choices.

#### ***“Traditionalists” in Romantic Relationships***

An ideal date	Teen (13-17)	Gen Z (18-21)	Gen Z (22-26)
I would only want to date one person at a time	75%	71%	64%
I would not continue to date someone I knew I would never choose as my life partner	42%	37%	41%
I would enjoy having as many dates with as many different people until one became serious	14%	21%	19%

Beyond the increased level of identification as LGBTQ+, Gen Z women are surprisingly traditionalist in their conceptions of dating. Three-quarters of the teenagers and two-thirds of the oldest members of Gen Z expressed a desire to only date one person at a time. There was little desire for casual dating as a precursor to a more serious romantic relationship with one individual. Additionally, two in five of Gen Z women would not continue dating someone who they could not envision as a life partner. The same percentage (25%) of women who expected to screen their date by Snapchat or other digital methods before agreeing to go out also expected their romantic partner to pick up the check for the evening.

Traits of a good partner	Teen (13-17)	Gen Z (18-21)	Gen Z (22-26)
The partner is committed to being loyal	67%	59%	63%
The partner is totally trustworthy	57%	54%	53%
Relationship partner wants to communicate openly	55%	53%	51%
I can maintain my independence and individuality	30%	32%	30%
The partner wants to grow in faith	23%	22%	22%
I am truly interested in their areas of passion	14%	14%	13%

As they are considering who would make a good partner, Gen Z women describe patterns and traits that would be expected. Loyalty, empathy, communication, and trustworthiness top the list of desirable traits. Interestingly, one third of the women surveyed expected to maintain their independence and individuality in the relationship. In terms of religion, faith matters less than other traits, only one in five women agreeing that a partner's desire to grow in their faith was important. They also do not expect to be truly interested in a partner's passion, only 14% of women stating such a shared interest was needed to build a good partnership.

Traits of a bad relationship	Teen (13-17)	Gen Z (18-21)	Gen Z (22-26)
Lack of respect toward you	67%	68%	67%
Toxic behavior when you are together	63%	59%	54%
My partner becomes controlling	44%	44%	44%
Not trying to communicate fully	42%	47%	43%
Bickering or being ghosted happens too often	31%	24%	20%
We have very different levels of faith	13%	14%	15%

The list of traits for a bad relationship are likewise unsurprising for Gen Z. Lack of respect, toxic behavior, a controlling partner, or lack of communication top the list as signs that a relationship should end. Central to several of these is a sense that there is a lack of security and safety: toxic behavior, controlling, being ghosted. And while it was not required that a partner be willing to grow in their faith for the relationship to be good, if there are wildly divergent levels of faithfulness that would be a problem, though only for a small minority.

### ***The Screen Question***

The narrative of younger generations and their excessive screen time is well established. Yet, this study troubles one part of that narrative by highlighting that though Gen Z does spend time on their phones, they are not engaging in person for matters of trust as opposed to a preference for digital interaction.

The open-ended interviews for the pilot study, confirmed that this generation is aware of the dangers and risks for online and digital interactions: lack of authenticity, social bullying, false perceptions online, etc. One in six of the women surveyed admitted that they would need to “deal with their own addiction” at some point because of their excessive use of screens. For most of the young women surveyed, the screen becomes a way to mediate that distrust before developing a more in-depth relationship. Over two-thirds say that screen relationships are ways to build trust and ensure people are authentic. Additionally, one third say that screen relationships are ways to test how truthful another individual is.

This tracks with other questions which described Gen Z women’s fears of how to find friends. The primary concerns for finding friends were: getting past social anxiety, trying to get to know friends of friends, and getting past shyness. As discussed above, Gen Z women struggle with anxiety and self-confidence. Young women see their screen as a helpful barrier while they seek to build trust with others. However, data is continually showing that the very tool they may be turning to meet their anxiety is feeding and deepening it.

One final note on phones and digital relationships, between 40% - 50% of Gen Z women said that the screens were not primarily for any relationships, but merely for self-entertainment. They agreed with the statement that they wanted to “have fun,” “stay informed,” and “see what happens.” For these women, the screens are not about making an initial connection but rather staying informed about what is happening in their social networks. In this way the screens are one other avenue for providing connection to existing networks rather than creating new links to others.

#### 4. Information and Feelings About Being Pregnant

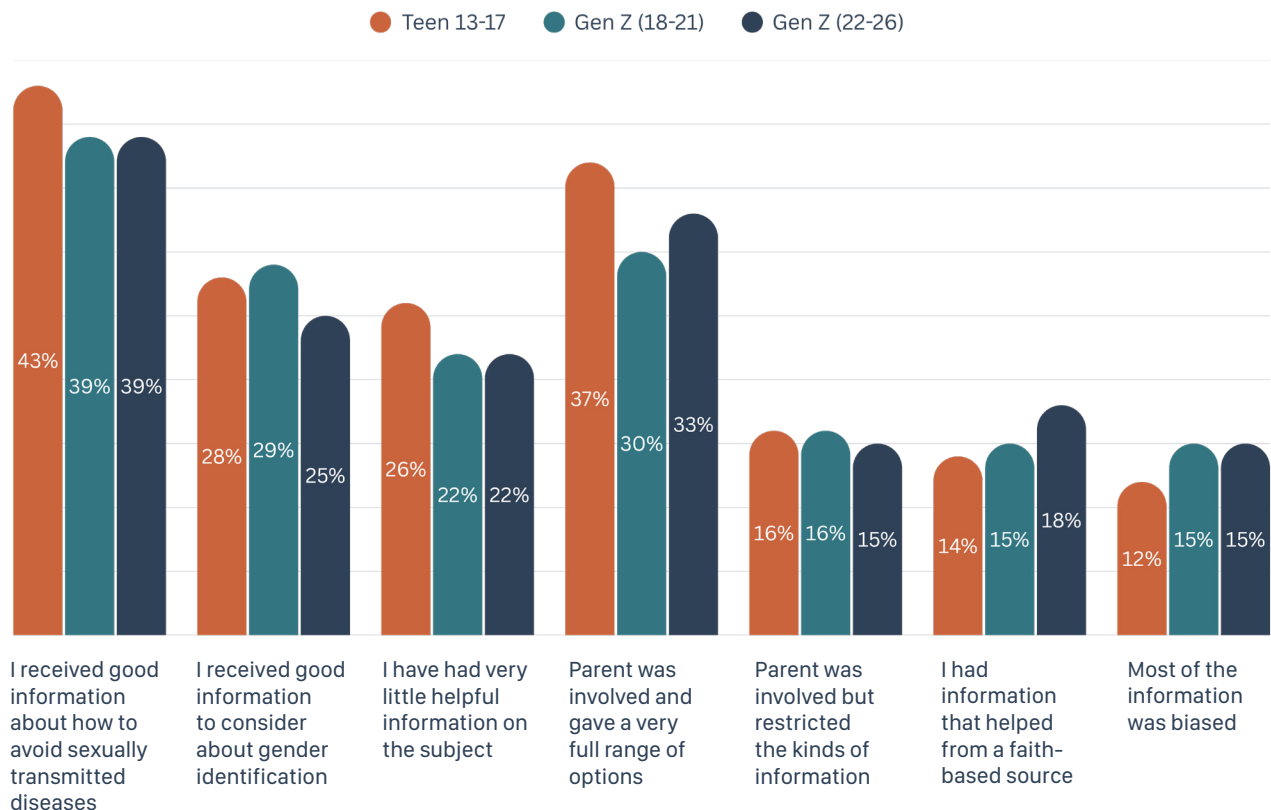
Gen Z women have complex and often contradictory thoughts about pregnancy. While many associate it with fear, anxiety, and uncertainty, others also describe feelings of hope, empowerment, and a sense of purpose. These mixed emotions highlight the internal conflicts Gen Z women experience when faced with an unplanned pregnancy.

Survey data indicates that over 60% of Gen Z women would experience initial fear if they found out they were pregnant unexpectedly. However, 51% also believe that pregnancy could provide them with a newfound sense of purpose. This dual perspective underscores the need for both emotional and practical support to help young women navigate pregnancy decisions with confidence.

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Haidt, *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness* (New York: Penguin Press, 2024).

#### Birth Control and Sexual Education

### Information about birth control and sexual education

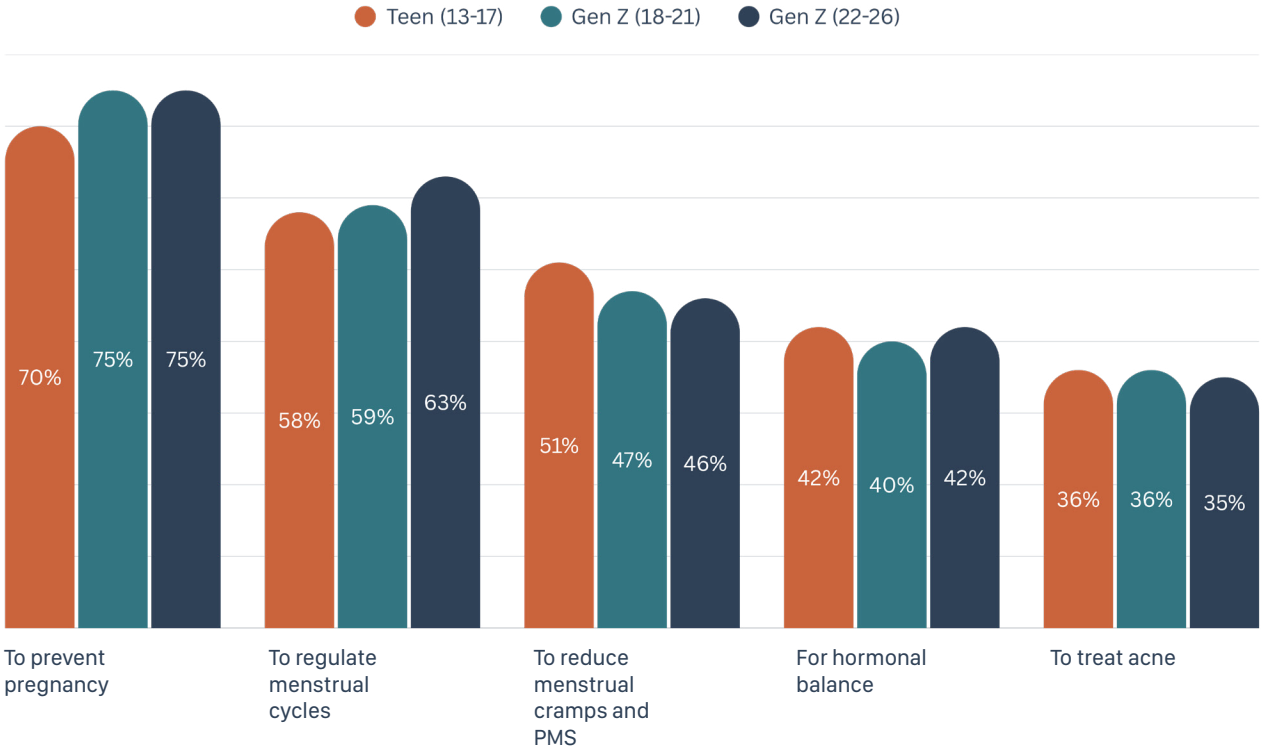


There is no institution or group that has a majority on where individuals received their sexual education. One third positively described how their parents had given them the full range of options, and nearly a quarter said they received good information about gender identification (this description was nearly 50% in those who identified as LGBTQ+). A quarter of women said that they had very little that was helpful on the subject, and one out of eight said that their parents were involved but restricted the kinds of information they received. Just over 10% said that the information they received was biased. Just over 10% of teenage members of Gen Z said that they had information shaped by a faith-based source which helped, though that number was higher (18%) among the oldest generation of Gen Z women.

Given Gen Z's lack of trust in institutional religion, it is unsurprising that they would not turn to faith-based resources for help on a topic such as sexual health. However, church and ministry leaders have an opportunity to equip parents and shape the conversations of those who are already engaging with their children. Discipleship of parents to have the conversation, and to have it in a way that is unbiased, is an opportunity to shape the worldview of these young women who are not already being shaped by another institutional.

This is especially the case when considering the reasons offered by Gen Z women for taking birth control. Though three-quarters said that the reason to be on hormonal contraception was to prevent pregnancy, they also listed various other reasons that were primarily medical.

### Reasons for birth control



In this context, Planned Parenthood's role as a trusted medical institution dispensing cost-effective hormonal birth control feeds the trust they have with young women. They freely dispense birth control under the auspices of caring about patient health. As such, the pill is understood by Gen Z women as just another medicine like antibiotics or steroids for treating medical conditions, which many of their peers are on for a variety of reasons, rather than primarily about sexuality.

And as their responses to questions about the availability of birth control indicate, they are supportive of dispensing it widely and freely.

- Four in five Gen Z women agree that birth control should be available to minors, a slight majority of which would do so with or without parental consent.
- Between one third and one half of Gen Z women believe that birth control should be covered by Medicaid or other national health insurance program or a free good altogether.
- One third of Gen Z women also support making the morning after pill available to everyone, a belief which increases as they age and are more likely to face a choice to use it.

### ***Initial Reactions to Pregnancy***

When posed the hypothetical scenario of how they would feel if they were unexpectedly pregnant, Gen Z women reported a range of conflicting emotions.

Expectations for negative emotions were highest among the youngest cohort (13-17). Guilt (64%), sadness (60%), and anger (56%) are the three most commonly expected emotions young women expect to feel if they were to find out they were unexpectedly pregnant. The same was true, though to a marginally lesser extent, for the older cohort of Gen Z women. One in three women in each age segment expected to feel "isolated and alone."

Despite these negative emotions, many young women also recognized the potential positives of pregnancy:

- 47-51% of Gen Z women anticipated feeling "more in control of my life"
- 33-41% of women anticipated feeling a sense of freedom to pursue their goals
- 38-42% of women expected to have peace of mind upon finding out they were pregnant

At the practical level, the first action they anticipate after finding out they are pregnant is about ensuring financial security.

## Reasons for birth control



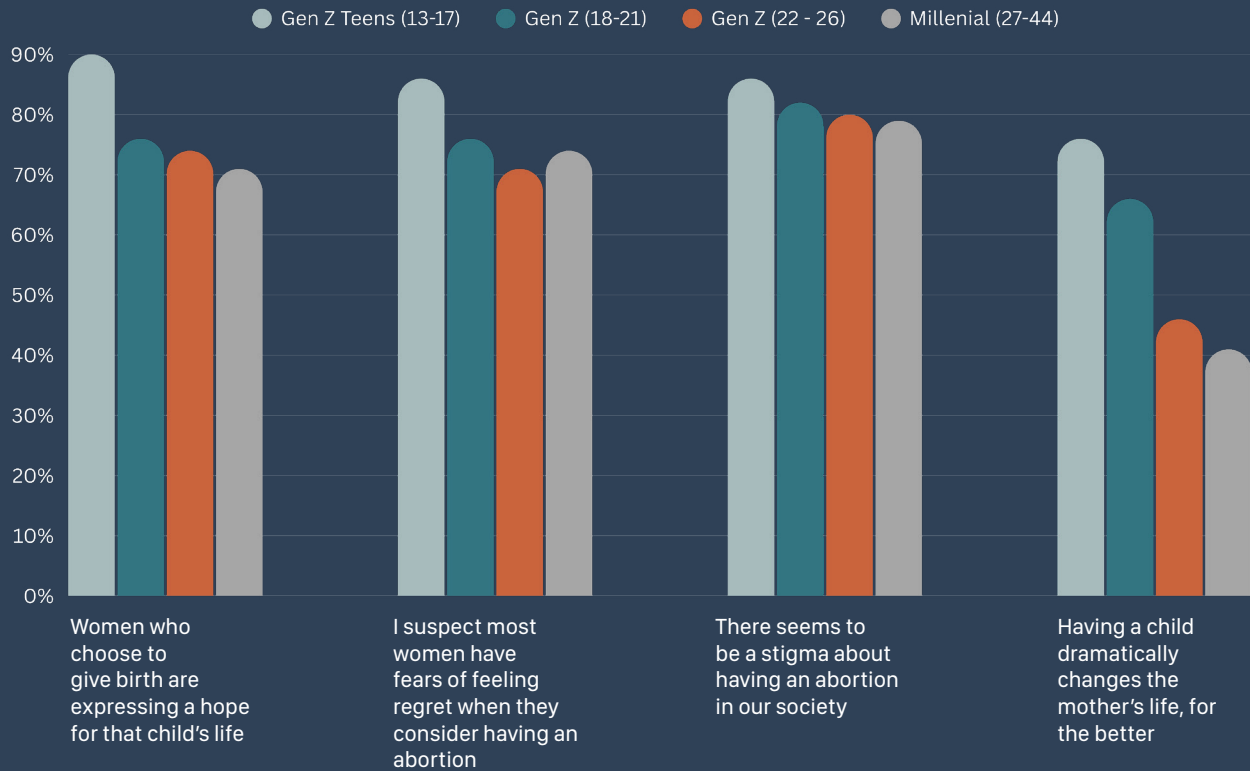
Given financial security for the future is one of Gen Z women's top three concerns, they obviously see the impending birth of a child as an added strain on limited resources. For those who are age 22-26, financial well-being is the strongest predictor of considering abortion, a fact that was exacerbated for young Black and Hispanic women who already faced greater economic insecurity.

### 5. Attitudes Connected to Choosing to Have a Child

Gen Z women, despite overwhelmingly identifying as pro-choice politically, demonstrate a strong personal inclination toward choosing life when faced with pregnancy. This contradiction between political beliefs and personal decisions highlights the complexity of reproductive choices within this generation.

Survey data reveals that 80% of Gen Z women would prefer to carry a pregnancy to term, even in difficult circumstances. However, significant barriers—such as financial insecurity, career ambitions, lack of partner support, and societal pressure—often make abortion appear to be the more practical option. Understanding the motivations and deterrents behind pregnancy decisions is crucial to encouraging more women to choose life.

## Gen Z Teens More Optimistic Than Older Gen Z and Millennials

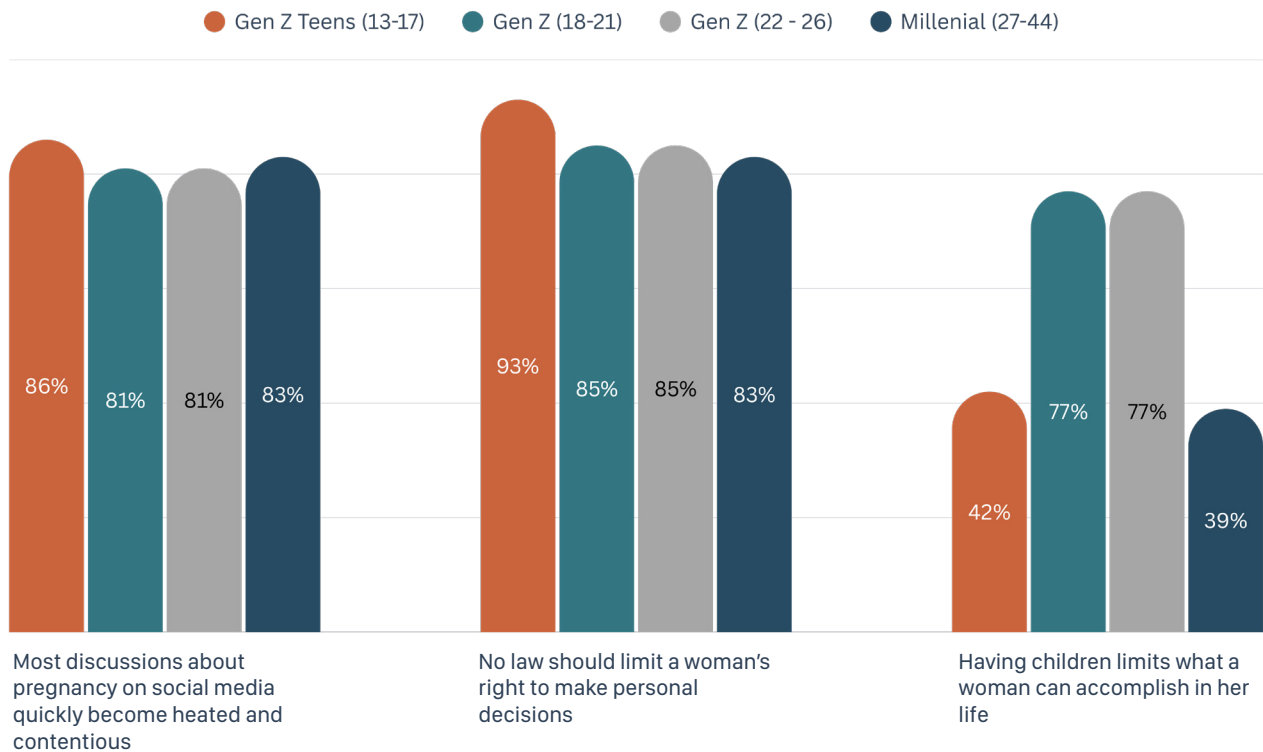


When comparing Gen Z teens to their older counterparts in prime child-bearing years, it is clear that they have an optimism about birth that is not shared by older peers. They are 20% more likely to agree that women who give birth are expressing hope for the child's life than their Millennial peers, and 15% more likely than the rest of Gen Z. They also express greater levels of expecting regret after an abortion. The most striking statistic might be the final one in which they are 30% more likely to believe that having a child dramatically changes the mother's life, for the better.

By contrast, Gen Z women who are in college or early career are not substantially different from Millennials in their views. Again, this points to the window that is open to reaching these women whose views have not yet hardened against choosing life and who have a more positive view of motherhood and pregnancy.

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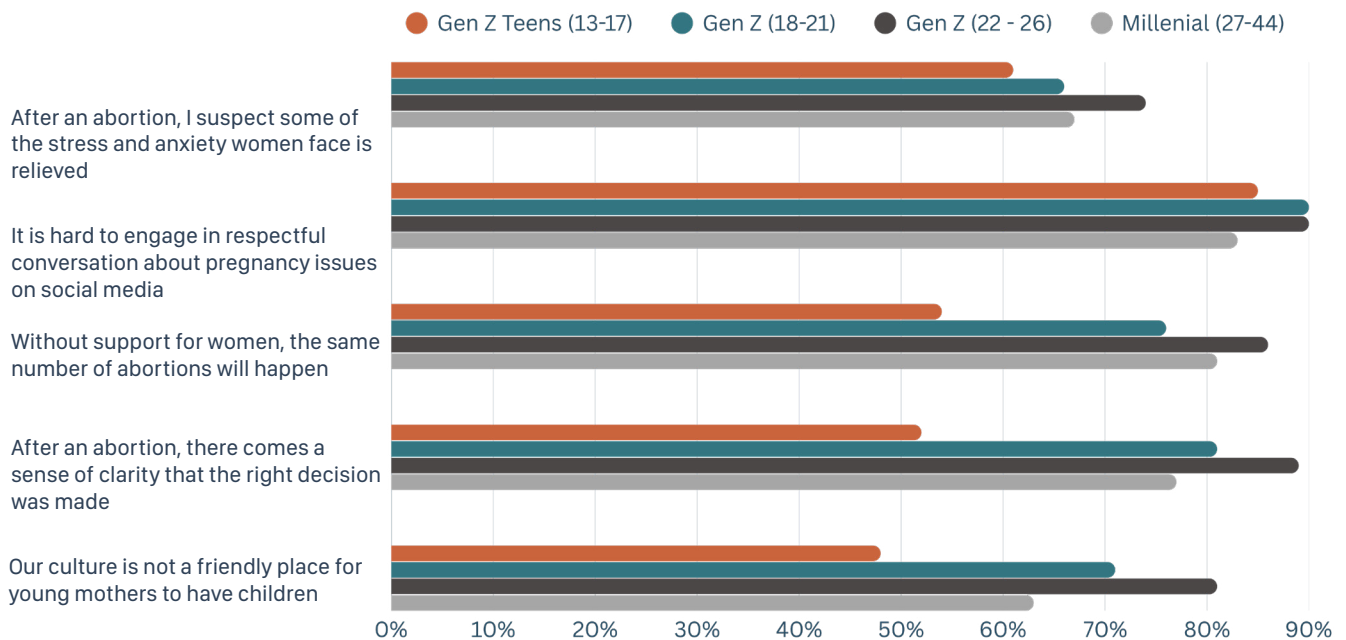
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Interestingly, Gen Z teenagers are also the most ardently pro-choice in their politics, though not so different from their older peers as to be an outlier. Given that there should be no limit on personal decisions, this may indicate a possible messaging strategy for pro-life advocates focused on empowerment. By speaking of pro-life policies as enabling women to choose fully, rather than be constrained by economic concerns, there may be ways to cast a vision that cuts against the talking points of pro-abortion advocates.

Additionally, it should be noted that those in college or entering the work force (18-26) are the most likely to agree that having a child will limit what a woman can accomplish in life. However, those on either end of the spectrum show markedly lower agreement with this statement. This is a positive sign that teenagers do not see pregnancy as an impediment to accomplishment. Similarly, those who are several years into their careers are the least likely to believe it can hinder accomplishment. By addressing the concerns which the women in the middle raise about achieving (particularly in career), the pro-life movement will be able to counter the narrative that gains at work can only be achieved by sacrificing family and parenthood.

## Attitudes that lead to choosing abortion peak at the age when most women will first make that decision

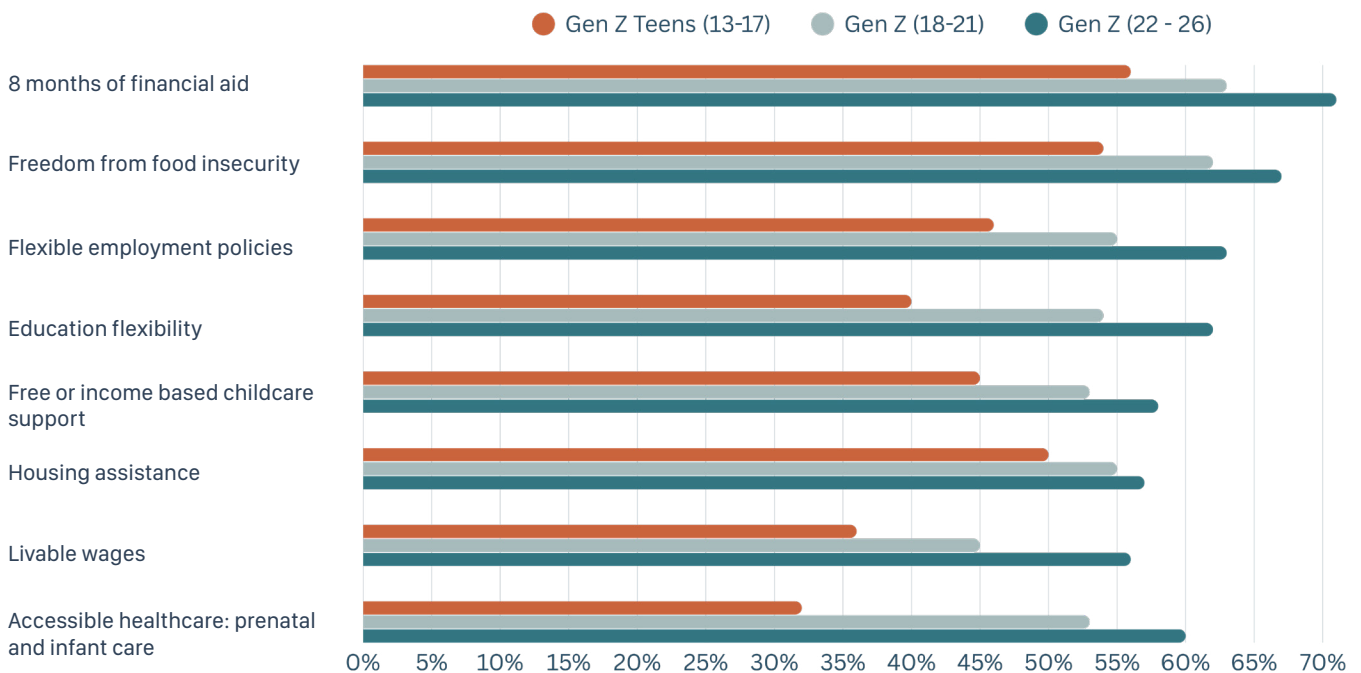


That same pessimism shared by the two older segments of Gen Z is also highlighted in attitudes that correlate with high agreement to hypothetically choosing abortion. Women between the ages of 18 – 26 were the most likely to anticipate that after an abortion, a woman would feel a sense of relief, and that she had made the right decision. They were also the most pessimistic to believe that abortions would decrease (even if abortions were banned) if women were not supported. Their view is summed up in the statement held by 70-80% of them that this is not a culture which is friendly for young mothers with children

### Resources desired if they were to become pregnant

In an effort to determine which resources Gen Z women anticipate needing if they were to become pregnant, they were presented with several options ranging from healthcare insurance to economic and employment policies and childcare coverage.

## Resources desired if I was to become pregnant



Those who were already entering the workforce or departing college expressed a clear majority for each of the policies proposed, with the most popular being 18 months of financial aid, with food security and flexible employment policies rounding out the top three options. This reflects a theme of the study that economic concerns frame both the anticipated and actual attitudes that Gen Z women bring to bear on pregnancy. Though each of these is not necessarily possible in the American political climate, the broad support that these women expressed for the specific proposals highlights the way that the church and other social support services could be marshalled to alleviate the financial burdens they expect would come with pregnancy and parenting.

## **6. Recommendations for the Church**

The church has a unique and necessary role in reaching Gen Z women, particularly the youngest members, and shaping their worldview before they face the choice to have an abortion or not. To this end, the following suggestions are a starting place for churches seeking to minister to these young women in their congregations and communities.

### ***Create Nonjudgmental Spaces for Discussion***

Many young women hesitate to share their pregnancy decisions with religious figures because they fear judgment. The church must work to create spaces where open, honest conversations can happen without shame or condemnation. This could include:

- Confidential support groups for young women navigating unplanned pregnancies.
- One-on-one mentoring programs with older women who can provide guidance and support.
- Online communities or social media platforms where young women can seek faith-based advice in a low-pressure environment.

### ***Focus on Practical Support, Not Just Moral Arguments***

While faith-based messages about the value of life are impactful, Gen Z women also emphasize financial and emotional concerns when making pregnancy decisions.

Churches and faith organizations can play a vital role by providing:

- Material assistance, such as baby supplies, housing support, or emergency financial aid.
- Career and education counseling to help young mothers continue their goals while raising a child.
- Partnerships with pregnancy resource centers that offer medical and emotional support.

## **Reframe Pro-Life Messaging Around Empowerment**

Rather than focusing solely on abortion as a moral issue, faith communities should frame pro-life choices as empowering decisions. This resonates more strongly with Gen Z's values of independence and self-fulfillment. Messaging that emphasizes strength, resilience, and the ability to overcome obstacles can help shift the conversation in a way that feels less restrictive and more encouraging.



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