

The Christian Life Survey 2014-2015 Administration at 22 Christian Colleges



TAYLOR UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR
**SCRIPTURE
ENGAGEMENT**

tucse.taylor.edu

Students' spiritual foci: God, others, Bible

The Christian faith is built around a focus on God (Matthew 22:37), others (Matthew 22:39), and the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16). Having a “focus” in your life means that something has become central to who you are and what you do. A focus in your spiritual life means something is central to who you are and what you do spiritually.

In the process of taking the half-hour Christian Life Survey, the students were asked a variety of questions about what they believe and how they live. Included in that larger set of questions was a set of questions focused on the extent to which God is a focus point in their spiritual lives, the extent to which others are a focus point in their spiritual lives, and the extent to which the Bible is a focus point in their spiritual lives.

The questions used to see if the students have a focus on God asked, in several different ways, about their beliefs and desires relative to God. The questions used to see if the students have a focus on others asked, in several different ways, about the extent to which they acted proactively for others. The questions used to see if the students have a focus on the Bible asked, in several different ways, about the ways the Bible is involved in their daily lives.

The students indicated a very high average focus on God. Each of the spiritual focus indexes is constructed by taking the group of questions and calculating the average answer. This average answer is on the original answer scale, which asked them to strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, or strongly agree with the questions. If a student strongly agreed to all the questions asking about a focus on God, he or she would have a value of 5 on each question and an average answer of 5. An average value of 4 would indicate that the student generally agreed with the questions, a value of 3 would indicate some averaging of agreement and disagreement, a value of 2 would indicate that the student generally disagreed with the questions, and a value of 1 would indicate that the student disagreed with all of the questions about having a focus on God.

When the results for all 6,000-plus students are considered, we see (Chart One) that they have a high amount of focus on God. In fact, one-fourth of the students strongly agreed with every question, and even the 25th percentile is at 4.6, which is closer to strongly agree (5) than agree (4). These students have a very strong focus on God.

The students' focus on others and focus on the Bible, however, were between the values 3 and 4 (an average neutral response and agreeing, respectively). Most students do tend to be closer to agreeing that they have a focus on others and/or a focus on the Bible than being neutral. Overall, the students indicate that they have a slight focus on others and the Bible but a strong focus on God.

Chart One: Students' spiritual focus scores (index scores)

	25th percentile	Mean	75th percentile
Focus on God	4.5714	4.7035	5
Focus on others	3.3333	3.7115	4.1667
Focus on the Bible	3.3333	3.7577	4.3333

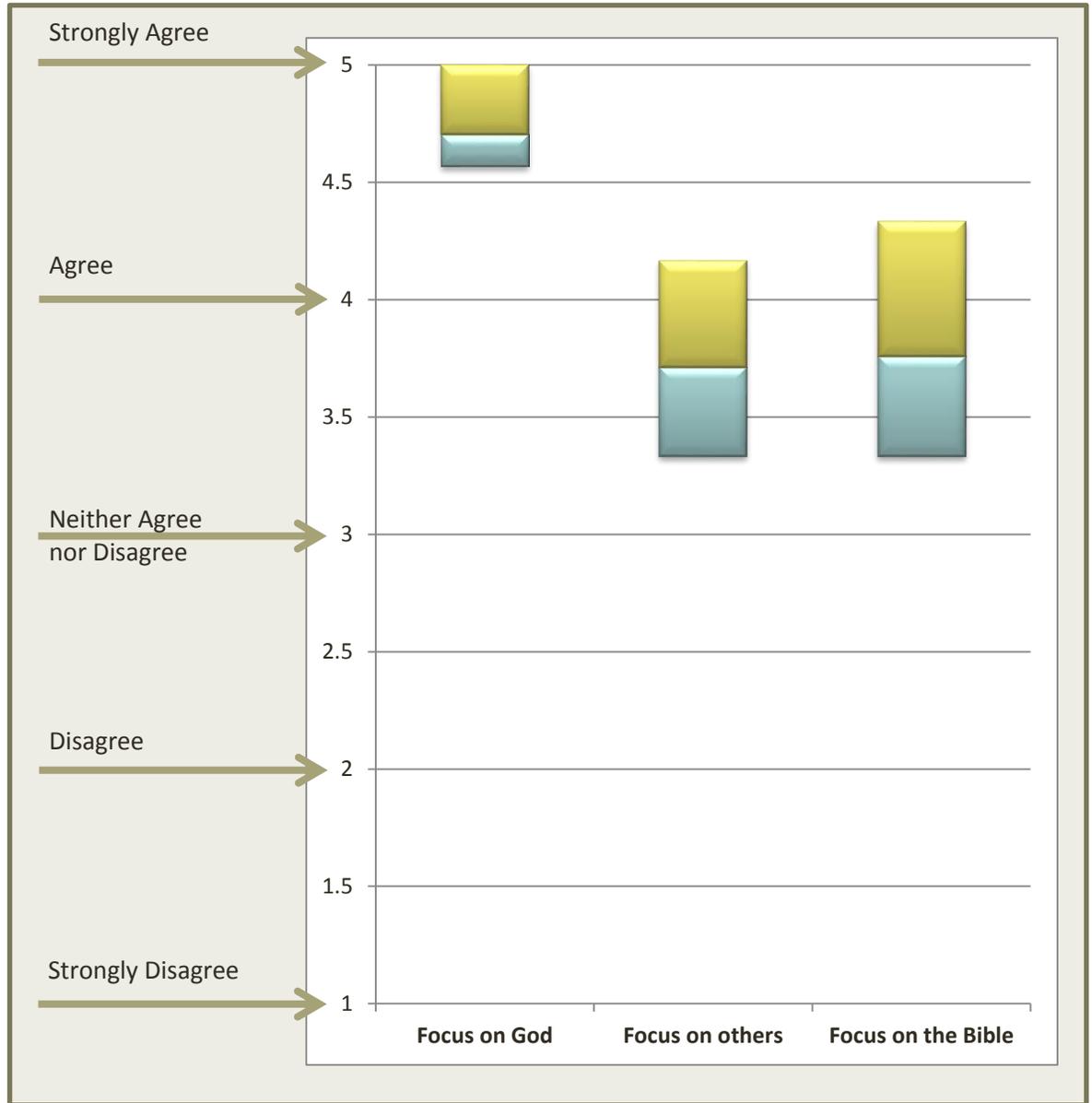
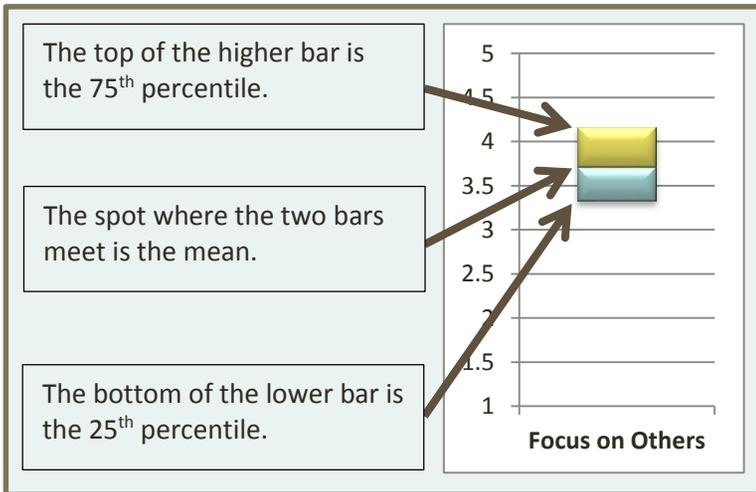


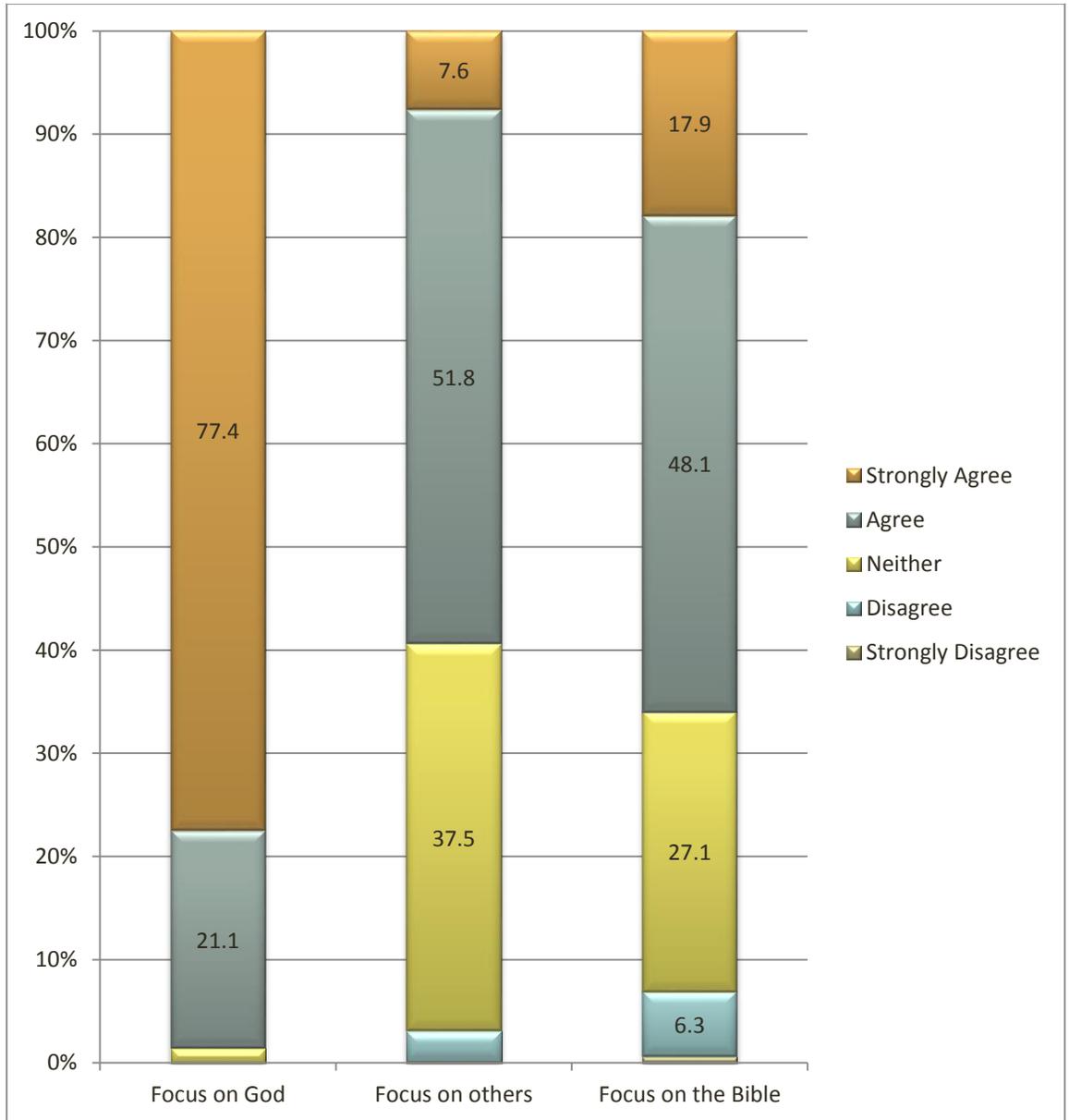
Chart Two: Students' spiritual focus scores
(collapsed to discreet values and summarized in percentages)

While the distribution of index scores shown in Chart One is the more common way to present such findings, the students' values on the index (their average answer across all the questions) can be collapsed into discreet values like those on the original questions. This is done in Chart Two where the students' average answers are collapsed to the answer closest to their average score.

As can be seen in Chart Two, a huge percentage have an average answer on the "focus on God" index that aligns with *strongly agreeing* that they have a focus on God in their spiritual lives. Seventy-seven percent had this answer.

Students were more likely to indicate they agreed or had a neutral stance for the questions that measured a focus on others. Fifty-two percent agreed while 38 percent neither agreed nor disagreed.

The students' had a greater diversity of stances for their "focus on the Bible" value. While 18 percent had an average answer of strongly agreeing that they have a spiritual focus on the Bible and 48 percent agreed, 27 percent had a neutral stance and six percent disagreed.



Who are the students in this study?

In the 2014-2015 school year, the Christian Life Survey was administered to students at 25 Christian colleges in the United States. The results shown in this summary brief, however, are only for the traditional-age, traditional-program freshmen through seniors from the 22 colleges that provided population proportions that allowed representative weighting to be used. Students are weighted to be proportionately representative for sex and year in school for their colleges.

These results are for 6,074 students from 22 Christian colleges in the United States.

The students are overwhelmingly Protestant Christians who are serious about their spiritual life (they chose to attend a Christian college and they agreed to participate in a half-hour survey about their spiritual life).

The students represented here, then, are traditional-age, devout Christians attending 22 Christian colleges in the USA. Great care should be employed when generalizing these results to any other groups.

How was this topic measured?

The survey questions used:

Participants were presented with six statements about their focus on God:

I believe in Jesus.

I believe the God of the Bible is the one true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

What God says is what is true, right, and good.

I believe God is actively involved in my life.

I want God to be pleased with me.

I know my mission in life is to participate in the Kingdom of God.

I have a personal relationship with Jesus.

Six statements about their focus on others:

I live in ways that help others as much as myself.

I have tremendous love for people I don't know.

I go out of my way to discover the people in need around me that I normally wouldn't see.

I use what I own for others as much as for myself.

I think about others' well-being and want what is best for them.

I rejoice with those who rejoice no matter how I personally feel.

And three statements about their focus on the Bible:

The Bible is an important part of my daily life.

As I go through a normal day I think of Bible passages relevant to what I am doing.

I talk about Bible passages with my friends.

The Survey:

The Christian Life Survey (CLS) is an online, half-hour survey on Spiritual Formation, Spiritual Orientation (lifestyle), and Scripture Engagement and was conducted in the 2014-2015 school year at the following Christian colleges: Bethel; Biola; California Baptist; Charleston Southern; Corban; Cornerstone; Crown; Fresno Pacific; George Fox; Gordon; Houghton; Judson; The Kings; LeTourneau; Northwest Nazarene; Nyack; Patrick Henry College; Spring Arbor; Tabor; Taylor; Union; Wheaton.



TAYLOR UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR
**SCRIPTURE
ENGAGEMENT**

tucse.taylor.edu