

New IFS Survey: How Young American Men View Marriage, Fatherhood, and Purpose

YouGov Survey of 2,000 Men Ages 18–29 Finds a Generation That Hasn't Given Up and a Society That Has Failed to Meet Them

CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA, UNITED STATES, March 16, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- They haven't checked out. They haven't given up on marriage. They still believe in fatherhood, sacrifice, and becoming men worth respecting. But a sweeping new survey from the Institute for Family Studies reveals that America's young men are demoralized and feel caught between legitimate aspirations and a society that has left them without the structure, the pathways, or the partners to get there.

The report, *America's Demoralized Men, Part 1: Worthy Aspirations, Trying Circumstances*, is based on a nationally representative YouGov survey of 2,000 men ages 18 to 29 conducted in April 2025, the most comprehensive study of its kind. The findings challenge nearly every dominant narrative about young men in America.

KEY FINDINGS

- 68% of unmarried young men want to get married someday — with only 10% saying no. Among those who want children, 90% also want marriage. For most young men, the two remain inseparable.
- 62% of childless young men want to become fathers. The data directly contradicts the assumption that young men are opting out of family life.
- 74% of men not currently in a relationship are open to dating. But nearly 6 in 10 say fear of rejection makes them reluctant to ask.
- Nearly half of men ages 18–23 (46%) say they feel like a failure — yet married men are twice as likely as unmarried men to feel they've reached full adulthood.
- Andrew Tate ranked last among all role models tested. Who ranked first? Their mothers (79%) and fathers (69%). The manosphere panic may be obscuring the real story.
- 89% of young men say manhood requires willingness to sacrifice for others. 85% say it involves strength, responsibility, and leadership. These are not the values of a radicalized generation.
- Trade school graduates are employed at nearly the same rate as four-year college grads (77% vs. 80%) — and are more likely to be married.
- Even college graduates are skeptical of college: half of men with a four-year degree say college wasn't worth the time or money.

WHAT THE RESEARCHERS ARE SAYING

"What stood out was not indifference or a lack of worthy aspirations but the trying circumstances facing today's young men. They are not where they want to be, often feel trapped, and are unsure of what to do."

— Joseph E. Davis, Lead Researcher, Institute for Family Studies

ABOUT THE REPORT

America's Demoralized Men, Part 1: Worthy Aspirations, Trying Circumstances is the first installment of a two-part series from the Institute for Family Studies. The survey was conducted by YouGov between April 7–15, 2025, with a nationally representative sample of 2,000 American men ages 18 to 29. Part II will be covering social connection, alienation, and distress and will follow in the coming months.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR FAMILY STUDIES

The Institute for Family Studies is a nonpartisan research organization dedicated to strengthening marriage and family life in America. IFS publishes original research, analysis, and commentary on the social, cultural, and policy factors shaping American families. Learn more at ifstudies.org.

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