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# Perception of Religious Experience by Adult Americans

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## PERCEPTION OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE BY ADULT AMERICANS

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The effects of age, education, and family background on perception of one's relationship with God are examined using 1989 General Social Survey data. Younger respondents and older respondents are very likely to report having had a powerful religious experience, but the middle-aged ones are not. The older people feel closest to God. Results also show that among females, the more educated ones are less likely to have had a powerful religious experience. In addition, females who had at least one parent die before age 16 are more likely to feel extremely close to God than those females whose parents had divorced or separated. The findings show that there are very significant differences among age groups and some differences between genders when observing people's perception of their relationship with God. These should be taken into account by anyone working in the religious field or any other area that deals closely with people and their attitudes and beliefs.