

Craving forgiveness, but choosy in giving it

by [Whitney Jones](#) in the [November 30, 2010](#) issue

Most Americans have a desire for more forgiveness in their lives, but they are more critical when choosing whom to forgive, according to a new survey.

Sixty-two percent of American adults said they need more forgiveness in their personal lives, and 94 percent wanted to see more forgiveness in the country, according to a study by the Michigan-based Fetzer Institute.

"Americans express a near-universal desire for a more loving and unified world," said the Survey of Love and Forgiveness in American Society, released October 28.

Researchers found that even though the U.S. is composed of people who are usually forgiving, more than half of Americans said there are situations where people should never be forgiven, including abuse, sexual crimes, murder and other intentionally committed crimes.

The survey found that a majority of Americans also believe that forgiveness is conditional: 60 percent said "forgiving someone would first depend on the offender apologizing and making changes."

Most people said they sought the advice of friends and family rather than religious leaders when grappling with issues of forgiveness, while one in four said they did not know where to go for help with spiritual needs, and a third said they struggle with spirituality.

Although most Americans are not running to churches and religious professionals for guidance with forgiveness and other personal issues, 60 percent said they are more spiritual now than five years ago.

These findings were based on an online survey conducted with 1,000 adults August 4-15 by StrategyOne, a Washington-based market research firm. —RNS