

Study: Most Born-Again Christians Living With Regret

Regret weighs down many Americans. According to a new study from LifeWay Research, almost half feel the weight of a bad choice from their past, even though a vast majority believe God gives second chances.

When asked to respond to the statement, "I am dealing with the consequences of a bad decision," 47 percent of respondents agree.

While self-defined Protestant or non-denominational Christians are less likely to agree (42 percent), a majority (51 percent) of those who said they are a born-again, evangelical or fundamentalist Christian agree they are still dealing with a wrong choice from their past.

Recognizing a sizeable percentage of people are suffering consequences from past mistakes allows Christians to show grace, according to Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research.

"Christians minister grace out of grace," said Stetzer. "Caring for those dealing with pain and regrets is not about fulfilling obligations or relieving guilt, as all of that has already been taken care of by Christ."

The study, sponsored by *Bible Studies for Life: Do Over*, a group study from LifeWay Christian Resources, also found the vast majority of Americans believe God gives second chances for those who have made a bad decision.

Overall, 84 percent believe so, while 94 percent of Protestants and 98 percent of evangelicals agree God gives second chances.

Nearly one in five Americans believe God gives a second chance

when a person depends only on God (19 percent), followed closely by when a person makes restitution (18 percent), does enough good (15 percent) or promises not to repeat the mistake (11 percent). Fewer than one in six Americans say they are not sure why God gives second chances.

“In all, some 44 percent of respondents believe God’s offering of a second chance depends on some kind of human action,” said Ronnie Floyd, general editor for *Bible Studies for Life*.

For Floyd, this viewpoint creates unneeded issues. “The problem with trusting in one’s self to gain a second chance from God is that we cannot trust ourselves to get it right,” he said.

“Why put extra pressure on ourselves to fix things?” Floyd asked. “We shouldn’t. The most scriptural response to a failure is to ask God to intervene to accomplish His will.”

Bible Studies for Life commissioned the study to demonstrate the need for a better understanding of what the Bible teaches about past mistakes and God’s grace in providing second chances.