By Gary Andrews
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In today's society we run across someone every day that has been in trouble or have some skeletons in their past. Most of us will say that we are forgiving people and what you have done in the past, well that is in the past and has been forgiven.

I remember working with a young man that was incarcerated by the state. He was a model inmate and was allowed to help with some community projects. We were putting out stakes to help line up that year's Christmas parade. As we walked along the street I was able to ask this young man why he was a prisoner.

His initial response was, "I was stupid." He told me that he was a school teacher, had a master's degree in education, and thoroughly loved his job. From being around him I could tell he was a person that kids would relish to follow and listen to in a classroom. His goal in life was to help kids grow and become successful participants in life.

"At a low point in my life I allowed one so-called friend to talk me into delivering drugs to another person," he said. "I was caught, sentenced, and about to finish serving my time in jail."

He had paid his debt to society however, since he has been incarcerated he can no longer teach school or work with children. He did one thing wrong and was caught even though the person that talked him into it is still on the streets. Is this right or is this fair? Society says it is but what does Jesus say?

Another incident about a class room teacher that taught middle school, was well respected and well-liked by the students and parents has been dismissed and will probably never finish her career as a teacher because some students found out she was in porn ten years before. Is this fair? Society says it is.

I remember another man that had been in prison for torturing men and women, being an accomplice to murder, and treating all who did not agree with him with disrespect and harm. He was of a fiery temperament and very outspoken. However for all the bad he had done his life was changed and he became a noted writer and a well-disciplined person for his beliefs. He was the Apostle Paul of the New Testament. He had been forgiven for his persecution of the Christians by Jesus.

I am not saying that drug trafficking or porn people will be the best teachers of our children, I am just wondering when we say you are forgiven, are you?

Prayer: Thank you Lord for your forgiveness for our sins. May we realize that we need to forgive others as you have forgiven us? Lead us in the path you would have us travel and let us always look to you for guidance. Amen.

(Suggested daily Bible readings: Sunday – Genesis 50:15-21; Monday - 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Tuesday – Jonah 3:1-10; Wednesday – 1 Peter 4:7-11; Thursday – Psalm 103:11-18; Friday – Acts 7:54-60; Saturday – Micah 7:14-19.)

Gary Andrews is the author of Encouraging Words: 30-days in God's Word. To obtain a copy go to his website www.gadevotionals.com