

# Forgiveness: Free at Last

## Something to Think About

*The writer Ken Gire remembers a kid he hurt a long time ago.*

I was eight, I think, maybe nine. A friend and I were playing catch, and a kid named Reese from around the block wanted to horn in on our game.... We pushed him and hit him, and by the time it was all over we had split his lip and broken one of his permanent teeth. As he ran home crying, my friend and I laughed and congratulated ourselves with "That'll-teach-him" kind of talk.

A few minutes later his sister came running around the corner. She was older than we were and bigger, and as angry as she was she could have beaten up the both of us. She didn't. But through her tears she yelled at us and told us off and made me feel the way I should have felt all along — ashamed.

I was not a bad boy. The boy I was playing catch with was not a bad boy. But together we did something terribly bad that to this day I terribly regret.... Not long after that, Reese moved. His father was in the Air Force so I suspect he moved a lot over the years, and I suspect it was always difficult being the new kid on the block.... As for me ... I have moved a total of ten times.... Few things have survived those ten moves and almost nothing from my old neighborhood.

Except this. A letter from Reese ...

I beat him up.

*"Dear Kenny."*

I broke one of his permanent teeth.

*"I hope you're OK."*

And I laughed about it.

*"Sincerely, Reese."*

... Between the lines in Reese's letter, there was forgiveness ... forgiveness I desperately needed. I didn't know it then. I do now.

*From Windows of the Soul by Ken Gire*