

question was prompted by the instruction Jesus had previously given to His disciples in verse 15 of this chapter. In this verse Jesus ^{says,} ~~says,~~ "Moreover, if ~~thy~~ brother shall trespass against thee," i.e., if your brother shall violate the law of God and you are the victim of the violation, "go and tell him his fault," i.e., go and convince him that what he has done against you is sin against God, "between thee and him alone," i.e., in private. But many times this is the very thing we don't do, for many times when a brother violates the law of God and we are the victim, we publicly broadcast it to everyone else before going to that brother. But Jesus ^{says} ~~says~~ we are to go to that brother in private, and seek to convince him that what he has done against us is sin against God. Then Jesus ^{says,} ~~says,~~ "if he shall hear thee," i.e., if your brother will recognize that what he has done against you is sin against God, and will repent of his sin and ask God's forgiveness for it and your forgiveness, "thou hast gained thy brother," i.e., the fellowship between you and your brother will be maintained.

Now Peter knew this implied he had to forgive his brother before he went to him, for he knew if he didn't do it, his brother would sense it, and he wouldn't get to first base in dealing with him.

Peter also knew what the Jews taught about forgiveness. They had a quota system. They said they only had to forgive a person three times, and after that, they didn't have to forgive that person any more. Therefore, they kept track of how many times a person offended them and they forgave him, and when they had fulfilled their quota, they wouldn't forgive that person any more.