How did Jesus Practice Forgiveness?

King Louis XII of France articulated man's fleshly abhorrence toward forgiving others when he said: "Nothing smells so sweet as the dead body of your enemy." (MacArthur, p. 142)
"I don't get mad, I get even" (Clint Eastwood in a film)
The greatest problem in most troubled marriages is unforgiveness.
The underlying problem most counsellors deal with is unforgiveness (old, hardened, fossilized "bones of contention"). What is the cause for most divorces, or broken relationships? Unforgiveness

See: John 8:1-11

John 8:11
She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

See: Luke 23:34
Luke 23:34
Then said Jesus, **Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do**. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

Follow Christ's Pattern of Forgiveness

Eph. 4:32 - *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*

Col. 3:13 - *"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."*

Christ's forgiveness is:
1) Undeserved
2) Complete
3) Personal (*"you"*)

1. How did Jesus forgive?

Jesus forgave...

a. By suffering for the sins of others (Colossians 2:13-14)

"Forgiven" - the word literally means to shower grace upon someone. To forgive out of grace.

God's forgiveness is not earned nor deserved; it is graciously given.

"All trespasses" - one of the clearest N.T. references to the efficacy and extensiveness of God's forgiveness. In Christ, each and every trespass is washed away. Past, present, and future sins, sins of commission and sins

of omission; overt sins and covert sins; sins we knew about and sins we were ignorant of.

V. 14

"Blotting out" - to wipe out; to wash off and remove away.

"Blotting out" - "The word was used for wiping out a memory of an experience or for canceling a vote or annulling a law or canceling a charge of debt. It was also used for "the washing out" of the writing on a papyrus" (Rienecker, p. 574).

In Bible days, financial records (debts) were often kept on parchment (dried animal skins), and the writing could be washed off. God washed off the sin debt we owed. How? By paying for it Himself. Hymn - "Jesus paid it All"

Therefore, we are "delivered from the Law" (Rom. 7:16); "we are not under the Law" (that is, not under its condemnation) but under grace" (Rom. 6:14).

"Handwriting" - "It was used for a written acknowledgement of a debt. It is an 'I.O.U.' - a statement of indebtedness, personally signed by the debtor" (Rienecker, p. 574).

"The handwriting" = a reference to God's handwriting. His inscribed Law.

(Example: the handwriting on the wall in Babylon. All of us were "weighed and found wanting" in God's moral balance - Dan. 5:27; cp. Rom. 3:23)

"Ordinances" - Greek "dogma" - a decree or a legal obligation which was a binding law or edict, which was placed on a public place for all to see (Rienecker, p. 574).

"Against us" - the Law condemned us. It proved our guilt and worthiness to be punished eternally.

"Contrary to us" - God's Laws were directly in opposition to our old sin nature. The Law did not save us (Gal. 2:16); it only showed us to be transgressors and worthy of death and judgment (Rom. 3:20); and it actually <u>aroused</u> our pride and <u>quickened</u> our fleshly tendencies. It <u>challenged</u> our ego (our selfishness).

ILLUS: of a child who is told "don't touch" - suddenly wants to do nothing other than violate your command (Rom. 7:7-14).

"Took it out of the way" - lit. removed it out of the <u>midst</u>. The violated Law came <u>in between</u> us and a Holy God. Every time God looked toward us, He saw His holy Laws violated. When we came to grips with our sinfulness, we saw ourselves as being Lawbreakers. We could not escape the continual reminders of our transgression (EX: warnings on videos - "Do not duplicate").

But one day we saw that Christ died to remove the sign that said "Guilty!"

We realized that Christ pardoned our condemnation and set us free!

No condemnation - Jn. 5:24 - "Verily, verily, I saw unto you, He that heareth My word, and believed on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."

In Roman days: "When someone was crucified, a list of his crimes was often nailed to the cross directly above his head. His death was payment for those crimes. The crimes that nailed Jesus to the cross were not His, but ours. Because He bore our penalty, God erased the certificate (summons) of debt against us" (MacArthur, "Our Sufficiency" - p. 175).

EX: Hymn - "It is well" - One stanza says: "My sin, O the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, Praise the Lord, Oh, my soul!"

Not only was our sin nailed to the cross, but the Law (which condemned us, having proven us lawbreakers, spiritual criminals and renegades) was also nailed to the cross.

Christ paid the demands of the Law - "There is therefore now no condemnation . . . in Christ" (Rom. 8)

(In order for forgiveness to be real, someone has to pay the debt)

b. By praying for His enemies (cp. Mt.5:43-44)

It's hard to be bitter against someone and to pray for them at the same time.
("*Father forgive them for they know not what they do*")
Learn to distinguish between weakness and wickedness
Ignorance is not innocence, but it is a reason for mercy (Acts 3:17; I Tim.1:13)

Wickedness =	To be sold out to sin; Pre-meditated vengeance or rebellion; Deliberate transgression; Not caring about the cost to the offended; A desire to hurt another.
Weakness =	To be overtaken in a fault; Deceived by the Devil; Ensnared by the flesh; Concern for the fulfillment of an appetite (see: Gal.6:1-2)

c. By focusing on the principle of sin, rather than the person of sin

("*For this purpose was He manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil [Not the workers of iniquity Jn.3:17-18])*

d. By envisioning God's Higher Purpose

(Heb. 12:2 - "*[Jesus envisioning] the joy that was set before him endured the cross...")*
You can comfort others with the comfort you received (II Cor.1:3-6)

You can see that God can even work through the evil sins of others for a good purpose (Gen.50:20)

EXCURSIS:

See: Matthew 18:21-35

"Seven times" - The rabbis said to forgive three times ("3 strikes and you're out") so Peter thought seven would certainly be a generous number. Perhaps he figured that "seven" being the "perfect number" (the number of completion) would be a good limit to one's forgiveness.

Peter asked: "Is seven a good number to put a limit or a ceiling on my forgiveness? Isn't seven a good cut-off point?"

V. 22

"Seventy times seven" - 490. By this phrase Jesus is not really putting a cap on forgiveness, but He is making the point that we should always be willing to forgive.

As a matter of fact, on this same occasion Luke records that Jesus also said this: *"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn against to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."*

V. 23
"Take account" - settle accounts (i.e. straighten out all debts and get the books in order; to deal with unpaid debt; to see who owed what).

V. 24
"Ten thousand talents" - Amounted to anywhere from 580,000 lbs to 800,000 lbs. of precious metals. In terms of cash, this is a mammoth debt! A multi-million dollar debt!
The practice of selling a servant, his family, and every possession he owned to pay off a debt was a common in the ancient world (Lev. 25:39; II Ki. 4:1). Today, if you own a house and you don't pay your mortgage the banks will take it away from you (same goes for a car, etc.).

V. 26
"I will pay thee all" - What pride and insincerity! By today's average American family income (of $30,000) it would take this man 320 years to pay the debt off! His case was hopeless.
The debt was <u>unpayable</u>.
The servant, realizing the predicament he was in and the utter despair of his situation, falls down and begs the king for patience and time. He promises in time to pay the debt (all of it), yet the king--knowing that the debt was unpayable--was moved in his heart by the pitiful plight of this man and released him from the chains that bound him and totally forgave him the debt, saying: "You don't owe me anything."

V. 35

"From your hearts" - God expects our forgiveness to be real, genuine, sincere.
Not a "surface" forgiveness (EX: the plastic smile, the cold handshake, the distant hug, the shallow words "It's okay," the quick "I forgive you", etc.) Rather, when we forgive, it must come from within, from our innermost being.

"Everyone" - Every child of God must be forgiving (no matter how high and mighty you are; no matter what your brother did against you); if he requests forgiveness, all of us must grant it.

"His brother" - This ties in with the word ***"fellow-servant"*** (v. 28), showing that Jesus' primary point of emphasis is toward His children (saved people).

***Shouldn't you forgive others, the same way God has forgiven you? (v. 33)**

How can I forgive what he/she did to me?

I. Compare the <u>QUANTITY</u> of sins you are asked to forgive with the great legion of sins God forgave you (v. 21-22)
"Seventy times seven"

You have been forgiven far more than you will ever forgive!

Do you realize how many times the average person sins in a day? How many selfish or lustful thoughts he entertains? How many covetous, envious, jealous or angry desires he has?

If one sin separated Adam from God, and one sin violates God's whole law (Ja. 2:10), how great is our sin in God's eyes!
The psalmist recognized that if God held our iniquities against us no one would stand a chance (Ps. 130:3-4 - *"If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared")*
God, however, is of great mercy and ready to forgive.
David said: Ps. 86:5 - *"For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee."*
Daniel said: Dan. 9:9 - *"To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him"*
Record keeping is not the occupation of a loving Christian. *"Love keeps no records of wrongs"* (I Cor. 13:5)

II. Compare the <u>MAGNITUDE</u> of sin God forgave you with the trivial sins you are asked to forgive others (v. 23-28)
"Ten thousand talents (v. 24) *. . . a hundred pence"* (v. 28)

V. 24
10,000 talents (figured at $960.00 per talent) would equal 9.6 million dollars.

V. 28
A ***"pence"*** (denari) was equal in metal value to 16 cents. Hence, 100 pence = $16 (16 measly bucks!).

> --Based on Bible weights and Measurements (Ryrie Study Bible [1978], p. 1868)

100 pence would equal 100 days wages for a common laborer in monetary value.

"An hundred pence" - Sixteen dollars is a trivial sum compared to the 9.6 million dollars this servant had owed the king.

10,000 talents is the equivalent of 600,000 denarii (*"pence")*. Hence, Jesus when comparing the 600,000 denarii to the 100 denarii is using the ratio 6000:1 (Blumberg, <u>Interpreting the Parables</u>, p. 242).

III. Compare the <u>COST</u> of God's forgiveness with the cost of your own forgiveness (v. 27)
"God gave up His Son for your forgiveness (John 3:16); all you give up is your sin of anger and resentment" (Dr. Jim Binney)

It <u>costs</u> to forgive (when you forgive, you have taken upon yourself the effects of that person's sin and freed him/her from their obligation of personally paying you for it)

What do Stephen (Acts 7:60) and Jesus (Lk. 23:34) have in common? The ability to forgive at great cost.

IV. Compare the <u>CONSEQUENCES</u> of unforgiveness with the blessings of forgiveness (v. 34-35)

"Perhaps he had the <u>legal</u> right to thrown the man in prison, but he (having been forgiven) did not have the <u>moral</u> right. . . The servant exercised justice and cast his friend into prison. 'So you want to live by justice?' asked the king. 'Then you shall have justice! Throw the wicked servant in prison and torment him! I will do to him as he has done to others'." (Wiersbe, p. 67).

Justice is now executed. This man now reaps (v. 34) exactly what he sowed (v. 34) (Gal. 6:7).

The punishment he exacted on his fellow-servant now comes back (like a boomerang).

He gets hit with the same penalty which he required of the other man.

The Bible teaches that God shall have judgment without mercy on those who showed no mercy (James 2:13).

Compare the consequences of unforgiveness with the blessings of forgiveness:
(by Jim Binney)

1. Unanswered prayer (Mt. 6:4)
   vs. answered prayer (I Pet. 3:7)

2. Give place to the devil (Eph. 4:26; cp. II Cor. 2:10-11)
   vs. freedom from Satan (Ja. 4:7)

3. Grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30)
   vs. receiving the comfort of the Holy Spirit

4. Hurting others (Heb. 12:15)
   vs. being a blessing (Eph. 4:29)

5. Broken fellowship with God (I Jn. 1:5)
   vs. intimate fellowship

6. Physical ailments
   vs. health and good days (I Pet. 3:10)

   (they say that 90% of physical ailments are psychosomatic - the mind effected by guilt and anger effects you physically)

Unforgiveness is like a cancer in the bones; it cripples and destroys relationships and you.

Forgiveness is not "forgetting" (although when you truly forgive, the memory of the evil committed against you will fade away).

A man's *"glory is to overlook a transgression"* (Prov. 19:11).

Joseph forgave his brothers (Gen. 50:19-21); David forgave King Saul (I Sam. 24:6, 12; 26:11). They were both blessed because of it.

2. To what EXTENT did Christ forgive us? (See: Col.2:13-14)

a. Christ graciously forgave us

The word "forgave" means to bestow grace upon someone. It not merely describes the negative aspect of removing our guilt and condemnation, but it depicts the positive aspect of replacing our death sentence with the gift of eternal life.

When our forgiveness is not accompanied by giving and doing good and being kind to the one we forgave, we are not forgiving the way Christ forgave us.

b. Christ impartially forgave us (He indiscriminately forgave us. Note the phrase: "against any" 3:13)

Christ forgives all who come to Him, regardless of rank, race, or riches (Ja. 2:5) (I Jn. 2:2; I Tim. 2:4, 6; Is. 53:6).
When we forgive only particular people, we are not forgiving the way Christ forgave us.

c. Christ totally forgave us. (Col.2:13)

All our sin, despite its enormity, ugliness, shame, etc., has been forgiven us.

When we forgive some sins that someone commits, but not any and every sin, then we are not forgiving the way Christ forgave us.

"And if he trespass again thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him" (Lk. 17:4).

d. Christ eternally forgave us. (Col.2:14)

Our sin is forever cleared from the record once and for all time. it will no longer be held against us; it will never be brought up again.

If it were to be brought up, we would be condemned for it (Explain the difference between the Judgment Seat of Christ [I Cor. 3; II Cor. 5:10] and the Great White Throne Judgment - Rev. 20:10-15).

If your forgiveness is only momentary and temporary, you have not forgiven the way Christ has forgiven you.

When we do not forgive, we will not be forgiven (Mt. 6:14-15).

WE NEED THE COURAGE TO LOVINGLY & TRUTHFULLY CONFRONT OTHERS who sin against us

See: Matthew 18:15

Do you know the feeling you have when someone sins against you? Most of the world goes through these stages:

1. Shock - How could he/she do that?
2. Anger - when your temperature increases; your ears turn red; you get hot
3. Resentment - You "replay" what was done in your mind over and over
4. Bitterness - Whenever that person comes to your mind, negative emotions grip your heart
5. Scheming - I'll think of some way to get back at him/her
6. Mean or violent actions or words

Verses 15 - 17 give us the Lord's way of preventing bitterness from growing in between His people.

If Matthew 18:15 were carried out by all Christians, there would rarely be gossip, grudges, hurt feelings, anger, resentment, church schisms (splits), etc.

In verses 15-17, Jesus describes 3 steps to take in seeking restoration with a sinning brother:

1) Personal confrontation (*go. . . alone)*
2) Private confrontation (*one or two more)*
3) Public confrontation (*tell it to the Church)*

And the hardest step is the <u>first</u> one! (Today, we will focus on this one)

***You need courage to lovingly confront a believer who sins against you.**

I. <u>WHY</u> should you confront a believer? (v. 15a)

If he or she has sinned against you and has not acknowledged it nor asked for your forgiveness.

"Thy brother" - Your brother in Christ (a fellow-believer)

When Christ saved you, you were "born again"; He adopted you into His family. This meant you became united with Him and everything related to Him. God became your Father, and each other believer in Christ became your brother and sister (cp. I John 5:1). We are fellow adoptees.

--We share the same name (*"Christian"* - Acts 11:21)

--Have the same nature (the *"new man"* - I Pet. 1:4)

--We eat the same food (the Bible - Mt. 4:4; I Pet. 2:2)

--We live in the same *"spiritual house"* (we are each building blocks, *"living stones"* of God's temple - I Pet. 2:5)

--We share the same Spirit (I Cor. 6:19-20)

--Fight the same enemy - Satan (I Pet. 5:8)

--Have the same goal - to glorify God (I Cor. 10:31)

--Look forward to the same future (the Rapture and eternal life with Christ - I Thes. 4; Rom. 6:23)

. . . Therefore, we should care for all men, but *"especially those of the household of faith"* (Gal. 6:10).

***"Trespass"* =** to sin by missing the mark of God's standard of behavior. To come short of the Bible's expectations of proper Christian conduct.

One reason many are tolerant of sin in the lives of others (even when it is directed at them) is because they are tolerant of sin in their own lives.

Before Mt. 18:15 will ever be carried out, you must have a love for God and His truth. You must have a personal quest for righteousness, both in your life and in the lives of your brethren.

II. <u>HOW</u> should you confront a believer? (v. 15b)

A. Take the <u>initiative</u> (*"go"*)

"Go" - This is the hardest step. It is easier to ignore the problem. It is easier to hold a grudge or to counter his trespass with one of your own.

It takes conviction, courage, love, and a desire to please God to confront someone who sinned against you.

ILLUS: I heard of a man who flew from California to Pennsylvania to meet with a Christian who had slandered his character and hurt his reputation.

No one (in their right mind) enjoys confrontation. It is easier to simply walk away from conflict than to lovingly settle it.

"Go" - This is a mandate, not a suggestion. (an obligation, not an option)

In Matthew 5:23-24, our Lord commands the offender to go to the offended. Now, Jesus calls upon the offended to *"go"* and confront the offender.

Because he (not "I") is at fault, we can rationalize and say: "I don't need to go to him/her, he/she needs to come to me!"

"I'm not going to talk to him/her until he/she comes up to me and apologizes, kisses my feet, and sheds tears of genuine sorrow."

We should not "stew," "steam," "boil," "plot," "scheme," . . . God says to *"GO"*!

B. Speak the truth (*"tell him his fault"*)

"Tell him his fault" -

For many, it is easier to admit your own fault than to confront someone about theirs.

"Tell him his fault" - (*elen cho*) - to bring to light; to expose (Rienecker, p. 54).

To bring under conviction by humbly and clearly (no "beating around the bush") bringing to light the sin committed against you.

Why does God command us to lovingly "bring to light" the sin some brother commits against us?

1) That person may not be aware of what he did (perhaps what he did had no malicious intent. It may have been simply foolishness not intended to hurt, but ended up being offensive).

   The Bible speaks of sins of ignorance (the Old Testament even had a sacrifice to be offered for sins of ignorance - Num. 15:22).

   Many misunderstandings are quickly and immediately resolved by obedience to our Lord's command.

   "In some situations the sin is apparent and there is little or no doubt that the brother or sister has sinned. But it is wise in most initial confrontations to allow for the possibility that the sin is not actual. The person initiating the confrontation should explain his concern and then ask, "Am I understanding this situation correctly? Is there a matter of sin that needs to be dealt with or is there some clarification that can be made?"." (Carl Laney, The Biblical Practice of Church Discipline [Bibliotheca Sacra - Oct-Dec. 1986, p. 359])

2) That person if not confronted may continue down that road and continue to hurt others (and by so doing destroy himself).

In his sermon, "Reproof, a Christian Duty," Charles Finney remarked, "If you see your neighbor sin,a nd you pass by and neglect to reprove him, it is just as cruel as if you should see his house on fire, and pass by and not warn him of it" (Laney, p. 358)

Just as the Good Shepherd seeks out the lost sheep that went astray (v. 12-13), so a good Christian will seek to contact the erring brother (realizing the damaging and deadly effects of sin), and seek to help him come back to a Godly walk.

3) That person if confronted will be more convicted by your sincere, humble, loving rebuke than by his own unagitated conscience

Attitude is everything in confronting a brother. How should you deal with someone who sins against you?

You need -

--The motive of <u>love</u>

Prov. 10:12 - *"Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins"*

I Pet. 4:8 - *"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins"*

--The kinship of a <u>brother</u>

II Thes. 3:15 - *"Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother"*

--The spirit of <u>meekness</u> (gentleness)

Gal. 6:1 - *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."*

"Restore" - (*katartizo*) meant to adjust, to put in order, to restore to its former condition - like a medical doctor would "set a bone." Such only can be done with gentleness. The word also was used of "mending" torn or tangled fishing nets (Mt. 4:21; Mk. 1:19). No one can effectively mend or pull out tangles without gentleness.

"Pointing out someone's fault is (in a sense) risky, for there is no way of knowing how he will respond. But if done gently and graciously,

the offender will be more likely to recognize the error than become stubborn and bitter" (Laney, p. 358-59).

"A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger" (Prov. 15:1).

Seek to restore your brother the same way you would want him to restore you if the situation were reversed (Wiersbe, p. 65)

C. Deal with the matter <u>privately</u> (*"between thee and him alone")*

"Between thee and him alone" - Because the trespass was against you privately and personally, you should not broadcast his sin to others; you owe it to him to deal with it privately and personally.

RULE: Personal sin demands personal confession
Private sin demands private confession
Public sin demands public confession

"Any discussion of the sin must be with the offender, not behind his or her back. Many 'pious' gossips express concern for sin, often in the form of 'prayer requests'." (Laney, p. 358)

It's supposed to be a private meeting or phone call.

"But how different is our action many times! We say, 'Oh, have you heard about so and so?' Tongues begin to wag, and before long the brother that could have been corrected and restored is (more) deeply alienated from the fellowship of believers" (Paul R. VanGorder, <u>The Call for Church Discipline</u>, RBC, p. 19)

III. <u>WHAT</u> is the result of confronting a believer? *A brother won back from sin.*

"If he shall hear thee" = if he humbly listens to you, agrees with you, and asks your forgiveness -- then forgive him (18:21-22, 35).

(A willingness to *"hear"* shows humility - pride is the biggest reasons people don't seek restoration with each other)

"Listens" - The word often takes a stronger nuance, "to agree, follow, heed or obey" (John 5:25, 9:27; Acts 28:28) (Laney, p. 359)

"Thou hast gained thy brother" -

--To "gain" a brother is to win him from the clutches of Satan

--To "gain" a brother is to perhaps gain a better, closer, more meaningful relationship than you have ever had with him/her. Some of the closest,

sweetest friends are those who did not allow a conflict, grievance, hurt to do permanent, irreparable damage to their relationship.

As long as we are in the flesh (given enough time and given the right circumstances) we are sure to offend each other. What we do at times like that will determine the future life of the relationship.

Why are there so many divorces? They don't know how to handle differences and offenses Biblically (reconciliation is not sought because a commitment to the relationship is not there)

There is something more important (valuable) than:

--Our hurt feelings
--Our stubborn pride
--The time and effort it will take to get in the "trenches" and battle with Satan and win back the brother or sister

The goal (purpose, reason) for confronting is:

1) Not to vent your anger and frustration

2) Not to "get even" (revenge, vengeful vindictiveness)
--Rom. 12:17 - *"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men."*
--I Thes. 5:15 - *"See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."*

3) Not to give reasons for why you want your relationship to end

--Rather, the goal is to get the sin confessed and *"covered"* so that it does not come in between you anymore.

The goal is RESTORATION.

Going up to a brother who sinned against you says "I care about my relationship (friendship) with you" (one who ignores the problem is saying, "I don't care; I don't want to be bothered - Get out of my life").

"Love will confront and rebuke, but love will never ignore."

"Open rebuke is better than secret love" (Prov. 27:5).

"He that rebuketh a man afterwards shall find more favour than he that flattereth with the tongue" (Prov. 28:23).

"Above all else, go to him with the idea of winning your brother, not winning an argument. It is possible tow in the argument and lose your brother" (Wiersbe, p. 65).

Luke 17:3 - *"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him."*

James 5:19 - 20 - *"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."*

1) Make a list of people you believe have sinned against you (and that sin has affected your relationship with them)

2) Set a date to go visit their home (or call them by phone) and seek to have the hurt mended and the relationship restored.

Conclusion:

The Bible teaches that God shall have judgment without mercy on those who showed no mercy (James 2:13).

Lord Herbert once said, "He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he himself must pass" (MacArthur, p. 155).

It has been said that 90% of physical ailments are psychosomatic - the mind effected by guilt and anger effects you physically. Unforgiveness is like a cancer in the bones; it cripples and destroys relationships and you.

Forgiveness is not "forgetting" (although when you truly forgive, the memory of the evil committed against you will fade away).
A man's *"glory is to overlook a transgression"* (Prov. 19:11).
Joseph forgave his brothers (Gen. 50:19-21); David forgave King Saul (I Sam. 24:6, 12; 26:11). They were both blessed because of it.

Practical Pointers on Forgiveness

1. Focus on restoration, not retaliation (Rom. 12:17-21)

2. Initiate the restoration process (Mt. 18:15)

3. Don't put a limit (ceiling) on your forgiveness (Mt.18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4)

4. Don't put conditions on your forgiveness, other than the condition that he/she repents and asks for forgiveness (Luke 17:3,4)
   (If he/she does not repent, you still must forgiven him/her in your heart and not let bitterness grow)

5. Be sincere in your forgiveness (Mt. 18:35 - *"from the heart"*)
   Not a "surface" forgiveness (EX: the plastic smile, the cold handshake, the distant hug, the shallow words "It's okay," the quick "I forgive you", etc.) Rather, when we forgive, it must come from within, from our innermost being.

6. Forgiveness is not forgetting, but it seeks to forget
   (God forgets in that He no longer holds the sin against us, nor does He allow it to come in between He and us)

7. Be willing to be made willing to forgive (Eph.4:31)
   (Pray for God to change your heart and let Him do so [cp.Phil.2:13])

8. If you need forgiveness, be forgivable
   (Its easier to forgive a humbled person)