


**Messy Life:**  
**The Story of Jacob**  
Part 4  
**The Blessing of Water**  
**in the Wilderness**

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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A publication of , the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

### Observation—*What do I see?*

- From Genesis 26:12-33, list all of the injustices Isaac endured.
- From 1 Peter 3:8-12, list all of the attitudes and actions which are commanded.
- From Hebrews 10:32–39, list all of the attitudes and actions which are commended.

### Interpretation—*What does it mean?*

- How do you think the Philistines interpreted Isaac's capitulation to their oppressive actions?  
With what internal thoughts might Isaac have struggled even as he chose the path of the peace-maker?  
What rationalizations might Isaac have been tempted to make in order to justify a belligerent response?
- How do we reconcile Paul's actions (Acts 21:13-14; 22:22-29; 25:10-12) with the teachings above?  
Was Paul a hypocrite? *"Do as I say—not as I do!"* What's going on here?
- Respond to this statement: *"Christians shouldn't be doormats!"*

### Application—*What do I do with this?*

- According to Hebrews 12:1–3, **how** should Christians navigate confusing, painful situations?  
Extract principles from this passage. When, why and how do we decide the godly response?
- We've all seen this yard sign...



But what if our neighbors saw **this one** in **our** yards?

- How might it change **our** response to difficulties?
- How might it change **our neighbor's** response to **us**?
- Craft a "James 4:7 response" to a current painful situation.



## Sermon Summary Genesis 26:12-33

Last week, we saw that there was some family dysfunction that shaped Jacob in unhealthy ways. There was a fatal family flaw that he never could escape. It was a pattern of lying and deceiving. It is important to know that while God does not condone sin, he uses sinful people to carry out his purposes in the world. You don't have to be perfect for God to use you. But you do need to be available. No question, the more faithful and obedient you are, the greater your usefulness and the less problems you will have. But you don't have to be a perfect vessel for God to use you. There are no perfect people, save one—Jesus (v. 12-14). The situation described here is a small example of something you might face in a far more serious way—where people see your good fortune and try to seize it for themselves. The truth is, success often breeds envy.

When confronted with opposition, our natural tendency is to defend our rights, to protect what is rightfully ours. But in most cases, we don't have to do that. As God's children, the reason we don't need to fight back is because God is in control. He owns the supply. He is the one who bestows favor. He is our provider! He determines the timing and degree of our blessing. You don't have to protect any blessing, because God is able to keep the flow coming. God's blessing is not determined by what others may do.

Jacob sees this truth in action as he watches his father gain wealth beyond expectation. God, in his continuing goodness, gives the family unbelievable success in their business ventures. Isaac is the only one of Israel's patriarchs depicted as cultivating grain. God gives him incredible success in this new business, wealth beyond expectation—an astounding yield per acre, an unbelievable return on their investment. God's promise to this family is coming true—they are becoming great in keeping with the promise God made to Abraham years earlier (Genesis 12:2).

God's goodness is bringing success and wealth beyond imagination. But there is a downside to success. Often, God's favor leads to envy and opposition. That's what happens here. The Philistines strongly desired what Isaac had and attempted through conflict to obtain it. They try to take away his wealth by destroying the family's wells. In an arid environment, this is an extremely hostile action. Water is life (v. 15-16). Isaac doesn't have to let this happen. He has a legal right to these wells. Furthermore, Isaac could probably field a fighting force large enough to win a battle with Abimelech. But rather than forcing the issue, which would damage his reputation and destroy his relationships in the area, he chooses to let go and trust that God will provide for him (v. 17-18). They find (מַצָּא masa) a vast underground reservoir, one far beyond their expectations! Opposition follows again. The locals claim that the water belongs to them, and they seize the new well (v. 20-21).

As each well is disputed, Isaac realizes they're going to face continual hostility in this area. So, he moves his family and livestock another ten miles, confident that wherever he's forced to dig, or how often the wells are contested or stopped up, God will continue to provide (v. 22). Isaac knows nothing can stop God's goodness to him (v. 23-25). Even a pagan king, like Abimelech and his officials, recognized that Isaac's success was due to God's favor. Seeing that this is a God thing, he desperately wants there to be peace between his people and Isaac's people (v. 26-29). Isaac didn't cling to the wells that were rightfully his. He lets them go without a fight. He refuses to hold a grudge. He even extends hospitality (v. 30-31). And for the third time we come across our word of a surprising discovery (מַצָּא masa), a blessing beyond imagination (v. 32-33)!

Isaac learned something that we need to learn. What the world can take away, God can restore (James 1:17)! God wants us to trust him as Isaac did here. He can bless us despite the actions and reactions of others. God wants us to put our hope in Him. Here are some takeaways from today's study:

1. God's blessing may bring envy and opposition from the world.
2. Don't seek revenge against those who jealously mistreat you.
3. Trust God to provide for your needs.
4. Don't be surprised when God's blessing towards you is acknowledged by the world.

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

*Psalm 37 gives powerful guidance for godly living amidst opposition.  
Let's use the "Five Question Bible Study" method to learn how to do just that...*

**Monday**— Study Psalm 37:1-11.

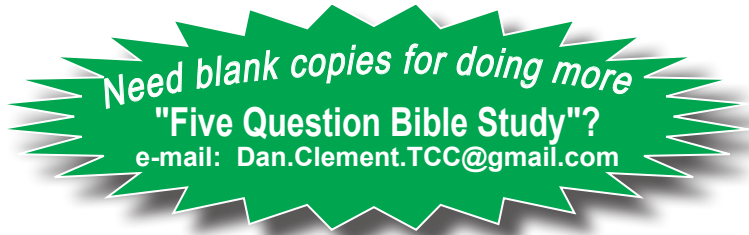
**Tuesday**— Study Psalm 37:12-15.

**Wednesday**— Study Psalm 37:16-22.

**Thursday**— Study Psalm 37:23-26.

**Friday**— Study Psalm 37:27-34.

**Saturday**— Study Psalm 37:35-40.



Bible Text: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would *this text* answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]