

Forgiveness

The Bible tells us: 'Isaac's servants dug... a well... But the herdsmen of Gerar quarrelled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water is ours." So... they dug another well, and they quarrelled over that one also... And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called it... Rehoboth, because he said, "For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." What a great example of practising forgiveness. During a drought, Isaac dug wells and his enemies moved in and claimed them. It wasn't fair, but instead of retaliating, he moved on and dug new wells—and God blessed him greatly. The truth is this: God will fill the emptiness in your life when you forgive those who have hurt you. Let's face it; as long as we share this planet with other imperfect human beings, they will hurt us. There is no way to avoid it. And when the hurt goes deep, it can be hard to forgive. Does that mean you should go around pretending that nothing is wrong, and denying how you feel? No, the first step towards healing is acknowledging your feelings. And Jesus gives us the second step: 'Pray for those who mistreat you.' When you do that, something unexpected happens. Your heart softens and you start to see the offender through God's eyes instead of your own raw emotions. 'But I don't want to forgive them!' you say. Then here is step three. Acknowledge your unwillingness to forgive and ask God to make you willing. Pray, 'Take me back so that I may come back.'

Genesis 26:18–22

18 Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the days of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died. And he gave these wells the same names his father had given them. 19 Then Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found a well of fresh water there. 20 But the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen and said, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek, because they contended with him. 21 Then they dug another well and quarreled over that one also; so he named it Sitnah. 22 He moved on from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. He named it Rehoboth and said, "At last the LORD has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land."

Luke 6:27-30

27 But to those of you who will listen, I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 29 If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone takes your cloak, do not withhold your tunic as well. 30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what is yours, do not demand it back. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you. 32 If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.