

## **FOUNDATIONS #7**

### **“Laying on of Hands”**

#### **Review**

The Christian life is a construction site where Jesus Christ Himself is the Cornerstone and the foundations consist of 6 doctrines listed in the Book of Hebrews:

#### **Hebrews 6:1-2**

**Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of (1) repentance from dead works, and of (2) faith toward God, (3) of the doctrine of baptisms, and (4) of laying on of hands...**

#### **Theme**

**This 4<sup>th</sup> foundational doctrine of the Christian faith, laying on of hands, is a physical act of faith through which God imparts a variety of spiritual blessings.**

The practice of laying on of hands begins in the Old Testament.

### **I. Laying on of Hands in the Old Testament**

#### **A. The Father’s Blessing**

1. One of the first mentions of laying on of hands in the Bible is found in Genesis 48, where the Joseph bring his sons to his elderly father Jacob to receive his father’s blessing.

#### **Genesis 48:9**

**Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me in this place." And he said, "Please bring them to me, and I will bless them."**

a. And how did this grandfather bless them? Verse 14 tells us that he laid his hands upon their heads and proceeded to speak a blessing over their lives. And this becomes a pattern repeated throughout the Bible.

#### **Gen 48:14**

**And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn.**

2. This is so rich in meaning because it teaches us that God has designed the laying on of hands as a means by which blessings are imparted; especially *generational* blessings.

**Genesis 48:15-16**

**And Jacob blessed Joseph, and said: "God, before whom my fathers, Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed me all my life long to this day, the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil, Bless the lads; Let my name be named upon them, And the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac; And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."**

3. And of course it came to pass as the sons of Joseph became the heads of 2 of the 12 tribes of Israel, a nation that today is a multitude in the midst of the earth.

a. A second purpose of the laying on of hands is...

## **B. Commissioning of Authority**

1. In Numbers 27, God commands a very elderly Moses to provide a new leader to take his place.

**Numbers 27:18-21 NASB**

So the Lord said to Moses, "Take Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; and have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation; and commission him in their sight." And you shall put some of your authority on him, in order that all the congregation of the sons of Israel may obey him."

2 Here we have a powerful picture of how God uses the laying on of hands in 2 ways:

- As a public "commissioning" of new leadership
- As a means of transferring authority from one generation to another

**Numbers 27:22-23 NASB**

**And Moses did just as the Lord commanded him; and he took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation. Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, just as the Lord had spoken through Moses.**

(now notice the result)

**Deuteronomy 34:9 NIV**

**Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him.**

3. Another example in the Old Testament is Elisha's commissioning of the King of Judah in 2 Kings 13:

**2 Kings 13:14-17**

**14 When Elisha became sick with the illness of which he was to die, Joash the king of Israel came down to him and wept over him and said, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" 15 And Elisha said to him, "Take a bow and arrows." So he took a bow and arrows. 16 Then he said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." And he put his hand on it, then Elisha laid his hands on the king's hands. 17 And he said, "Open the window toward the east," and he opened it. Then Elisha said, "Shoot!" And he shot. And he said, "The Lord's arrow of victory, even the arrow of victory over Aram; for you shall defeat the Arameans at Aphek until you have destroyed them."**

4. It is clear from these examples that the New Testament church was familiar with the power of the laying on of hands; and we find 6 ways it was employed in the New Testament.

## **II. Six Purposes for Laying on of Hands in the New Testament**

### **LAYING ON OF HANDS**

- To pray a blessing
- For healing and deliverance
- For the baptism of the Holy Spirit
- For the impartation of spiritual gifts
- For the ordination of Elders and Deacons
- For the commissioning to a special task

## **A. One: For Blessing**

1. Jesus employed the laying on of hands when He prayed for the little children:

### **Matthew 19:13-15 NASB**

**13 Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." 15 And after laying His hands on them, He departed from there.**

2. As in the Old Testament, the laying on of hands is a primary way that the blessing of God is passed from generation to generation!

## **B. Second: For Healing the Sick**

1. Jesus employed the laying on of hands in His healing ministry:

### **Luke 4:40-41 NKJV**

**When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, "You are the Christ, the Son of God!"**

2. Notice that after the resurrection, in Saint Mark's version of the Great Commission, we read:

### **Mark 16:15-16**

**15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.**

### **Mark 16:17-18**

**17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; 18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.**

3. Healing by the laying on of hands is to be practiced in the church:

**James 5:14**

**Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:**

- a. Make note of the implications here: the sick person is in the church, knows who the elders are, and calls for prayer to be healed!
- b. With what result?

**James 5:15**

**15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.**

**C. Three: For Ministering the Baptism of the Holy Spirit**

1. The laying on of hands is consistently connected to ministering the baptism of the Holy Spirit:

**Acts 8:14-16**

**14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John:  
15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.)**

**Acts 8:17**

**Then they began laying hands on them and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.**

2. And again in Acts 19:

**Acts 19:1-4**

**And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,  
2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.**

**3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.**

**Acts 19:5-6**

**5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.**

3. In Acts 9, a virtually unknown disciple restores sight to Saul who would become the great Apostle Paul!

**Acts 9:17-18 NASB**

**And Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and was baptized...**

#### **D. Fourth: For the Impartation of Spiritual Gifts**

1. In his letter to the church at Rome, the Apostle Paul refers to his desire to impart spiritual gifts to them:

**Romans 1:11-12**

**For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me.**

2. Then, in 1 Timothy 4, we are told how the gifts were imparted:

**1 Timothy 4:14-15**

**Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all.**

3. In the last letter he wrote on earth, Paul said this to his spiritual son Timothy:

**Stir up the gift of God (fan into flame the gift of God) which is in you through the laying on of hands.**

**2 Timothy 1:6**

a. The initial gift was imparted by the laying on of hands; not it's Timothy's responsibility to "stir it up" or "fan it into flame"!

### **E. Fifth: For the Ordination of Deacons and Elders**

1. The laying on of hands is employed in the ordination of Elders and Deacons:

#### **Acts 6:1-7**

**Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. 2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; 4 but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, 6 whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. 7 Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.**

#### **2. All ordination services include the laying on of hands, which accomplishes 3 things:**

- 1-A public acknowledgement by the leadership that these men were trusted to hold the office of deacon
- 2-A public committal of these men to God for the task
- 3-A transmittal of some of the grace and wisdom from the elders to the men; Evidenced by how 2 of these, Stephen and Philip, went on to have outstanding spiritual ministries of their own.

### **F. Sixth: For the Commissioning to Special Tasks**

1. The early church employed the laying on of hands in the commissioning of disciples for a special task.

### **Acts 13:1-3 NKJV**

**Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3 Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.**

2. The early church considered these “missionaries” as extensions of the local church and “commissioned” them to do the work as such.

3. So these are the 6 purposes of laying on of hands in the New Testament:“

### **LAYING ON OF HANDS**

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**a. It should encourage us that our current President has submitted himself more than once to be prayed for with the laying on of hands by Christian leaders!**

This means he has publicly acknowledged the power of prayer and a recognition of the scriptural doctrine of laying on of hands...

**Not only in church services but also in the Oval Office.**

4. The function of the laying on of hands in the early church was so powerful one tried to buy it with money!

### **Acts 8:18-19**

**And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money saying, “Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.”**

b. Peter’s reply teaches us the seriousness of our subject!

### Acts 8:20-24 NASB

But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 "You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 "Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 "For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity." 24 But Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

5. The laying on of hands is so powerful that there must be safeguard for using it.

### III. Safeguards for Laying on of Hands

#### A. Reading Between the Lines

1. You do not have to be a Christian to understand the power of touch!

**"No other form of communication is as universally understood as touch. The compassionate touch of a hand or a reassuring hug can take away our fears, soothe our anxieties, and fill the emptiness of being lonely."**

**Randi G. Fine**

- a. New born infants need it immediately
- b. A parent's first instinct toward a sick child is to touch them
- c. We put our hand on the shoulder of a friend
- d. We pat someone on the back when we hug them

#### 2. **Scientists tell us that:**

- Touch stimulates the release of endorphins, the body's natural pain-killers. There are about 5 million touch receptors in our skin, 3000 in each fingertip.
- A 20 second hug releases the bonding hormone oxytocin, which is nature's anti-depressant and anti-anxiety hormone.

3. But the power of touch in the New Testament church is so powerful that we are warned to be careful with it.

## B. Safeguards

**1 Timothy 5:22 NKJV**

**Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.**

1. The first warning here is the danger of promoting or exalting someone too quickly; this has been one of the great mistakes I have made in ministry!

2. **Derek Prince** gave these guidelines for the laying on of hands:

- **It should ever done lightly or carelessly but always in a spirit of prayer and humility**
- **We must trust the Holy Spirit at every turn: who to pray for? When? How?**
- **The one praying must know how to claim and apply the power, purification, and protection of the blood of Jesus for his own life from any spirit that may be operating in the person being prayed for**

3. So let us recommit ourselves to practice this foundational doctrine of the Christian faith with a full knowledge of its power and purpose!

## MINISTRY TIME

**Title**