

Lesson 7:

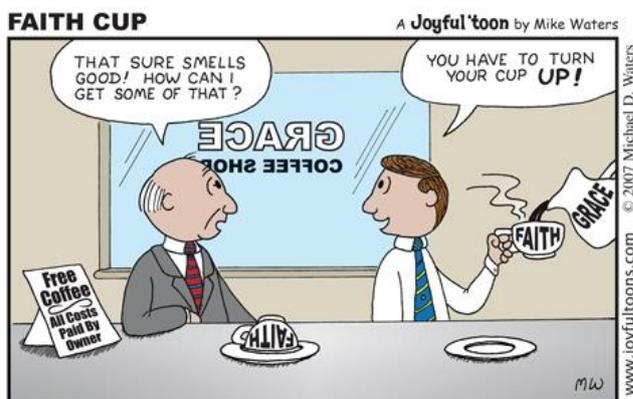
Laying On of Hands

✚ Objectives

At the end of the lesson, it is expected that the attendees should have:

1. Learned the definition of laying on of hands
2. Known the scriptural references of LOH
3. Acknowledged the purposes and significance of the LOH
4. Experienced being laid hands on and laid hands on another

✚ Introduction



By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
- ROMANS 5:2 KJV

The Laying on of Hands has great significance as a Covenant Rite in the Bible. This is the method used to bestow a special Divine blessing or a special form of recognition. It can be a formal family/public announcement or blessing relating to a point of honor, or a special spiritual request. Even if there is no audience, the Angels are watching and recording.

Technically, it is the Jerusalem Rite of Formal Declaration of Identification. "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches . . .,"

Proverbs 22:1. The "laying on of hands" is the method used by families to confirm a birthright and protection (Gen.48:14-18; Mat.19:15). And it is used to convey a special blessing, or it could infer a transfer of authority (Num.27:18-20).

It is performed by simply laying your hands on the recipient, left hand on the shoulder and the right hand on the head, or both hands cupped around on the recipient's head. Then make a simple public statement or prayer, invoking the Sacred Names. The "laying on of hands" ceremony might begin with a kiss or a hug of love (1Sam.10:1).

Definition:

Laying on of hands is an act in which one person places his hand on the body of another person with definite spiritual purpose. This laying on of hands is accompanied by prayer or prophecy.

✚ Lesson Proper

I. THE OLD TESTAMENT RECORD

Laying on of hands in the Old Testament was used for the following purposes:



1. Transference of spiritual blessing or authority. [Transference means that something spiritual flows from the one laying on hands to the one he is touching.]
2. Public confirmation of a spiritual blessing or authority received from God.
3. Commitment to God for a special ministry.

Three Old Testament examples illustrate these purposes of laying on of hands:

ISRAEL:

Genesis 48 is the first record of the laying on of hands for spiritual benefit. Joseph brought his two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, to his father to bless them:

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 first born. (Genesis 48:14)

The blessing of Jacob was transferred to his two grandsons by laying his hands upon their heads.

LEVITES:

The Levites were ordained by God to serve the congregation of Israel as spiritual leaders. In this position they represented the people before God. The laying on of hands was confirmation by the people of the Levite's authority before God:

And thou shalt bring the Levites before the Lord; and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites. (Numbers 8:10)

MOSES:

Numbers 27:15

As Moses approached the end of his earthly ministry, he asked the Lord to appoint a new leader over Israel:

And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay your hand upon him;

And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight.

And put some of your honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.

And Moses did as the Lord commanded him: and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation:

And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses. (Numbers 27:18-20,22-23)

The results that this laying on of hands produced in Joshua is recorded in Deuteronomy: And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses. (Deuteronomy 34:9)

Moses laying hands on Joshua was important both for Joshua and for the whole congregation of Israel. By this act, Moses transferred to Joshua a measure of the wisdom



and honor which he had received from God. Moses also confirmed to the people God's selection of Joshua as the new leader.

II. NEW TESTAMENT RECORD

The New Testament records five general purposes for the laying on of hands.

- **SUPERNATURAL SIGNS:**

Jesus practiced laying on of hands in His ministry:

...He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. (Mark 6:5)

Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with diverse diseases brought them unto Him; and He laid His hand on every one of them and healed them. (Luke 4:40)

And He laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. (Luke 13:13)

In His final message to the disciples at the close of His earthly ministry, Jesus listed supernatural signs which were to accompany the preaching of the Gospel:

And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils they shall speak with new tongues; 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. (Mark 16:17-18)

One of these supernatural signs was the laying on of hands through which God would heal the sick and perform other miracles. Mark 16:17-18 confirms that this practice was to continue after the end of Christ's earthly ministry.

The laying on of hands in the name of Jesus is used to minister physical healing to the sick. The person who lays his hands on one who is sick transfers the supernatural healing power of God. Sometimes the sick person actually feels the power of God in his body. At other times there is no feeling at all, but this does not mean healing will not occur. The laying on of hands is an act of faith and obedience to God's Word. Its effectiveness does not depend on feeling.

The timing of healing varies. Sometimes complete healing is received instantly as soon as hands are laid on the sick. Other times healing comes gradually (Mark 8:22-25). It is important to instruct those seeking healing concerning the importance of maintaining faith until their healing is complete.

The book of Acts records how God used the laying on of hands by believers to perform miraculous healings and other supernatural signs confirming His Word:

Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the word of His grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands. (Acts 14:3)

And by the hands of the Apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. (Acts 5:12)

And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hand on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me that thou mightest receive thy sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. (Acts 9:17)



And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul. (Acts 19:11)

And it came to pass that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and a bloody flux; to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid hands on him and healed him. (Acts 28:8)

- **BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:**

Another purpose of laying on of hands is for baptism in the Holy Spirit. There are five examples recorded in the book of Acts of how people received baptism in the Holy Spirit. The first example is that of the disciples in the upper room in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. You can read about this in Acts 2:1-4. The other examples are of the new converts in Samaria in Acts 8:14-20; Saul of Tarsus in Acts 9:17; Cornelius and his family in Acts 10:44-46; and the disciples at Ephesus in Acts 19:1-6.

In three of these examples those seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit were ministered to by other believers through the laying on of hands:

-Acts 8:18 states that "through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given."

-In Damascus, Ananias laid his hands on Saul that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

-In Ephesus, the disciples to whom Paul ministered received the Holy Ghost after Paul laid his hands on them.

Laying on of hands is not the only way people receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the upper room in Jerusalem and in the house of Cornelius people received the experience without anyone laying hands on them. But on the basis of these examples, it is Scriptural for those seeking baptism in the Holy Spirit to be ministered to through the laying on of hands.

- **IMPARTING SPIRITUAL GIFTS:**

Another purpose for the laying on of hands is to impart spiritual gifts. Paul wrote Timothy: Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. (I Timothy 4:14)

Paul refers again to Timothy's spiritual experience:

Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. (II Timothy 1:6)

Laying on of hands was combined with the gift of prophecy to direct, encourage, and strengthen Timothy to fulfill his God-given ministry.

- **COMMISSIONING CHRISTIAN WORKERS:**

Another purpose for laying on of hands is to commission Christian workers. "Commission" means to authorize, delegate, or send on a mission.

As spiritual leaders were waiting before the Lord in Antioch...

...the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.



And when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hand on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. (Acts 13:2-4)

The Bible indicates God had already spoken privately to Paul and Barnabas about the work He wanted them to do before He spoke publicly to the church leaders. The public revelation was a confirmation of the call they already had received.

The leaders did not send Paul and Barnabas on their mission immediately. They took time for fasting and prayer. The sending forth of these two men was completed by the laying on of hands by church leaders.

Paul also laid hands on Timothy to commission his ministry:

Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. (II Timothy 1:6)

The practice of laying on of hands to commission Christian workers was not used openly for missionaries and ministers. The appointing of the first deacons (Acts 6:1-6) was accompanied by the laying on of hands:

Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. (Acts 6:6)

The office to which these men were appointed in the church at Jerusalem came to be known by the title of "deacon". The method for appointing deacons is outlined in Acts 6:3-6. The apostles gave the people the responsibility to choose men qualified to fill the office. These men were brought before the apostles who laid hands on them and prayed. By this act the apostles showed they accepted these men as qualified to hold this office. They committed them to God for the task for which they were chosen and transmitted to them a measure of their own spiritual wisdom necessary for the task.

- **DEDICATION OF INFANTS:**

It is not Scriptural to baptize infants, as they cannot repent or believe which are the requirements for baptism. But through the laying on of hands, infants can be dedicated and committed to God's protection, guidance, and blessing:

And He [Jesus] took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them. (Mark 10:16)

III. A SPECIAL CAUTION

The New Testament provides a word of caution regarding laying on of hands:

Do not be in a hurry in the laying on of hands. (I Timothy 5:22)
The Amplified Bible

Because an act of spiritual transference occurs when you lay hands on someone or they lay hands on you, it is wise to be cautious in using this practice. If the person laying on hands is not spiritually qualified, the practice is not effective. The Bible is specific about who is qualified to lay hands on another to impart spiritual benefit:



BELIEVERS:

Believers may lay hands on others:

These signs shall follow them that believe...they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. (Mark 16:17-18)

APOSTLES AND DISCIPLES:

Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles hands the Holy Ghost was given... (Acts 8:18)

A certain disciple, named Ananias, putting his hands on him...be filled with the Holy Ghost. (Acts 9:17)

The apostles and disciples were men appointed and anointed of God. They were mature believers and examples of qualified leadership.

MEMBERS OF THE ELDERS:

...the laying on of the hands of the elders. (1 Timothy 4:14)

The high standards set for elders are recorded in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

SUMMARY

The five purposes for the laying on of hands in the New Testament are:

- Supernatural signs
- Baptism of the Holy Spirit
- Imparting spiritual gifts
- Commissioning Christian workers
- Dedication of infants

Understanding and using the laying on of hands is important because Jesus indicated the practice was to be part of the ministry of the Church.

Workshop:

- Application of Laying On of Hands starting from the Pastors to the Council/Ministry Leaders to the Workers

Life Application:

- Laying On of Hands should be practiced on Church activities as necessary.