

The doctrine of the “*Laying on of hands*” is the next foundational stone included in the spiritual foundation mentioned in [Hebrews 6:1-2](#).

In this lesson we will consider the significance of , “*Laying on of hands*”, its purpose, power, and the authority it plays in the believer’s life.

1. FOR WHAT PURPOSE WAS THE LAYING ON OF HANDS PRACTICED WITHIN THE OLD TESTAMENT?

In the Old Testament the “*Laying on of hands*” was practiced constantly. The word, “lay”, according to the Hebrew definition, actually means ***to lean heavily upon an object***. By the laying on of hands, the object was meant to feel the weight of responsibility that was being bestowed upon them. It was also used for the purpose of consecration and impartation. Through the laying on of hands a relational identity was shared.

1. To Impose The Weight of Responsibility

A. Lay: ‘samak’

*“Thy wrath **lieth hard** (samak) upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. Selah.”*
Psalms 88:7

*“...or went into the house, and **leaned** (samak) his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him.”*
Amos 5:19

*“Thus saith the LORD; They also that **uphold** (samak) Egypt shall fall... “* *Ezekiel 30:6*

The idea of imposing a weight of responsibility through the laying on of hands was seen constantly by the various offerings in the Old Testament. By laying hands upon the heads of these animals the sins of the people were imposed upon the innocent victims before they were slain.

The Burnt Offering ([Leviticus 1:2-9](#)); The Peace Offering ([Leviticus 3:1-5](#)); Sin Offering For Individuals ([Leviticus 4:2-12](#)); Sin Offering for The Entire Congregation ([Leviticus 4:13-21](#)); Sin Offering For Rulers ([Leviticus 4:22-35](#)).

The Yearly Sin Offering For The Whole Nation:

“And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.”
Leviticus 16:20-22

2. To Impart A Generational Blessing

“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.” Genesis 48:14

_____ - Hebrews 11:21

3. To Impart Spiritual Authority

Read [Numbers 27:16-23](#). Please answer the following three questions.

A. For what purpose did Moses select Joshua?

B. What was Moses instructed to do with Joshua?

C. What did God instruct Moses to put upon Joshua?

According to the following verse we can see that Joshua received a definite impartation from Moses through the laying on of hands:

*“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*

Joshua served Moses faithfully for forty years and throughout the course of that time he was content to be known mostly as Moses' minister (servant) (Ex. 24:13; Josh. 1:1). Although at times, others had risen up in rebellion against Moses (Num. 16), Joshua never did.

God instructed Moses to select Joshua, a FAITHFUL man, to continue to lead the people after he was gone.

Through the laying on of hands, Joshua received three things:

1. The 'spirit' of Wisdom

"And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him..."

This was not natural wisdom, but a spiritual gift that Joshua received through the laying on of hands by his leadership / authority (Moses).

2. Spiritual Authority

"...and the children of Israel hearkened unto him..."

Joshua's words now held weight with the people, because of the spiritual authority he now possessed.

3. Spiritual Identification

"and did as the LORD commanded Moses."

Joshua was identified with Moses. Joshua became established within a new place of spiritual identity among the congregation because Moses laid his hands upon him.

Even God respected Joshua's new spiritual identity because of Moses...

"There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee." Joshua 1:5

2. HOW IS THE TERM, "HAND" USED IN THE SCRIPTURES?

The term, "hand" or "hands" are used in a variety of ways in addition to simply describing that part of the human anatomy. The same word is also used to describe:

1. Power & Might

"That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God forever." Joshua 4:24

"And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth." Deuteronomy 8:17

_____ -Acts 11:21

2. Authority

-Hebrews 10:12

*“And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in **thy power** (yad); only upon himself put not forth thine **hand** (yad). So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.”
Job 1:12*

3. To Set and To Establish Order

*“All these were **under the hands** (yad) of their father for song in the house of the LORD, with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's **order** (yad) to Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman.” 1 Chronicles 25:6*

4. To Set Into A Specific Place

“Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place (yad) by their standards.” Numbers 2:17

5. To Consecrate

*“And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and **consecrate** (yad) them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.” Exodus 28:41*

6. Ministry

*“I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by **the ministry** (yad) of the prophets.” Hosea 12:10*

Some additional meanings associated with “hands” include:

Healing:

“by stretching forth _____ to heal...” Acts 4:30

A Prophetic Anointing:

“...and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the _____ of the Lord came upon him” 2 Kings 3:15

3. FOR WHAT PURPOSE WAS THE LAYING ON OF HANDS PRACTICED WITHIN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

The same truths and principles that were seen in the Old Testament with regards to the laying on of hands continued into the New Testament, only with greater spiritual meaning.

First it carried the idea of making physical contact for the purpose of transmission and second to set and to establish something (*or someone*) within it's place.

1. **Greek: 'epithemi**

epi: upon something

tithemi: To place something upon; to affix; to establish

The following shows how the ministry of the "laying on of hands" was used in the New Testament for the purpose of: IMPARTATION, ORDINATION and CONFIRMATION:

A. IMPARTATION

1. **BLESSING**

"And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Mark 10:13-16

2. **HEALING**

a. Through the Ministry of Jesus:

"Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them." Luke 4:40

"And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." Luke 13:11-13

-Mark 6:5

b. Through the Ministry of the Apostles:

"By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus... and with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all." Acts 4:30, 33

"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul" Acts 19:11

c. Through The Ministry of Believers

*“**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*

3. THE INFILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

a. The Believers at Samaria

*“Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John... **Then laid they their hands on them,** and they received the Holy Ghost.” Acts 8:14, 17*

According to *verse 19*, what did Simon desire from Peter?

b. Saul of Tarsus

*“And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; **and putting his hands 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*

c. The Disciples at Ephesus

*“And when Paul had **laid his hands upon them,** the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.” Acts 19:6*

4. SPIRITUAL GIFTS

*“Neglect not **the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.**” 1 Timothy 4:14*

*“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.**” 2 Timothy 1:6*

5. ORDINATION

1. Deacons

*“Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, **they laid their hands on them.**” Acts 6:6*

Seven men were chosen for a special place of ministry (diakonia) within the young church. The growing needs of the church required the need for more ministry. Here we see the apostolic order for selecting and setting deacons into their place of ministry:

- a. **There was a need for them to function**
- b. **They were an extension of the apostles' ministry**
- c. **These individuals possessed a good spiritual reputation among the disciples**
- d. **They were set in and released to function within their ministry by the laying on of the apostles hands**

Notice what the results were when the apostolic order was followed:

“And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.” Acts 6:7

**** Note ****

God always blesses his people when they follow His divine order. Church offices were not obtained through a voting process and neither did the deacons constitute a ‘deacon board’ to run the church, after they were chosen. Instead, these were willing, spiritual and consecrated vessels who were prepared to serve the body under the ministry of the apostles with the mentality of being faithful to a spiritual calling.

2. Elders

*“For this cause left I thee in Crete, **that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders** in every city, as I had appointed thee.” Titus 1:5*

Once again we find that elders are appointed through a ‘set’ apostolic ministry. Here, Titus had received a spiritual appointment through the apostle Paul and now he was to **SET THINGS IN ORDER**. This included the appointment and ordination of elders.

In **1 Timothy 3:1-13**, we find the spiritual qualifications that Paul instructed Timothy to look for in individuals when choosing elders & deacons.

Ministry appointment is a very serious matter, and should therefore be approached slowly and prayerfully. **According to 1 Timothy 5:22, what instruction did Paul give to Timothy concerning the Laying on of hands?**

4. APOSTOLIC MINISTRY

*“And when they had fasted and prayed, **and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.** So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed...” Acts 13:3-4*

*Here is the beginning of Paul’s apostolic ministry. Although Jesus had called him to it nearly 10 years prior (**Acts 9**), he wasn’t released to function in this apostolic calling until hands were laid upon him by the apostolic authority that he had served under. Until then he was serving and teaching in the church.*

A. CONFIRMATION

Confirmed (GK: *episterizo*) *To establish, to strengthen the stance.*

*“**Confirming the souls of the disciples**, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” Acts 14:22*

*“And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, **and confirmed them.**” Acts 15:32*

*“And he went through Syria and Cilicia, **confirming the churches.**” Acts 15:41*

Through spoken words, prophetic words and the laying on of hands, the members within a local church were strengthened and established within their place of ministry and function.

According to [Romans 1:11](#), what was Paul’s desire for the church at Rome?

5. LESSONS FROM THE TABERNACLE & THE TEMPLE

Once again we can see the types and shadows which speak of greater spiritual truths when we consider *Moses Tabernacle* and *Solomon’s Temple*:

A. Moses Tabernacle

*“Two tenons shall there be in one board, **set in order one against another**: thus shalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle.” Exodus 26:17*

*The boards that made up the outer perimeter of the Tabernacle originally came from Acacia trees that grew in the wilderness. These trees grew twisted and gnarled. However through the ‘hands’ of skilled and anointed artisans, straight boards came forth from these trees so they could be ‘**set in order**’ one against the other.*

God’s glory dwelt in the ‘midst’ of a house where the boards were set into their place by the laying on of hands.

*“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; **In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.**” Ephesians 2:20-22*

B. The Temple Foundation

“And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house. And Solomon’s builders and Hiram’s builders did hew them, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber and stones to build the house.” 1 Kings 5:17-18

Here we find that great stones were hewed out of the earth and then were ‘prepared’ in order for them to become part of the foundation of the house of God. Like with Moses’ Tabernacle, this was done through the hands of skilled masons and artisans.

*“**Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house**, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 2:5*

*“And he gave some, **apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints**, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Ephesians 4:11-12*

Perfecting (GK: katartismos): To Furnish, To Restore, To Mend by setting into proper order like the setting of bones

As we can see, God has endowed the church with spiritually skilled, called and anointed ministry for the perfecting of the church. These have been given to the church by the grace of our Lord Jesus for the purpose of spiritually equipping the church to function according to a true spiritual and scriptural order and design.

As we’ve already seen, through the ministry of the laying on of hands (and prophecy) by the five-fold ministry, members receive important impartation and confirmation to strengthen their place of service in the body.

TRUTH IN REVIEW

**DEACONS
HEALING
JOSHUA
ESTABLISH
IMPARTATION**

**RESPONSIBILITY
CHILDREN
JACOB
PAUL
SET**

**PERFECTING
ORDINATION
POWER
CONFIRMATION**

1. _____ laid hands upon the sons of Joseph to bless them.
2. In Acts 13, hands were laid upon _____ before he was sent away to minister.
3. According to The Old Testament, to lay hands, spoke of imposing 'a weight of _____' upon the recipient.
4. Often times, the hands were associated with _____.
5. The Apostles laid their hands upon the _____ in Acts 6.
6. _____ can be imparted through the laying on of hands.
7. Moses laid hands upon _____ and as a result he received the spirit of wisdom and spiritual authority to function in leadership.
8. Through the laying on of hands there is the ministry of _____, _____, and _____.
9. Confirmation means to strengthen and to _____.
10. The boards in the Tabernacle were _____ into their proper order through the hands of skilled workers who were called and appointed.
11. The Lord Jesus has provided His church with a five-fold ministry for the _____ of the church
12. Jesus blessed the _____ through the laying on of hands.