

# The Laying on of Hands

## New Testament verses which include the words 'laying' and 'hands':

- Acts 8:18, "And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money..."
- Acts 9:17, "And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.'"
- 1Timothy 4:14, "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."
- 2Timothy 1:6, "Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands."
- Hebrews 6:2, "...of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

## New Testament verses which include the words 'laid' and 'hands':

- Matthew 18:28, "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!'"
- Matthew 19:15, "And He laid His hands on them and departed from there."
- Matthew 26:50, "But Jesus said to him, 'Friend, why have you come?' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him."
- Mark 6:5, "Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them."
- Mark 14:46, "Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him."
- Luke 4:40, "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."
- Luke 13:13, "And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God."
- John 7:44, "Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him."
- John 8:20, "These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come."
- Acts 4:3, "And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening."
- Acts 5:18, "...and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison."
- Acts 6:6, "...whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them."
- Acts 8:17, "Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit."
- Acts 13:3, "Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away."
- Acts 19:6, "And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied."
- Acts 21:27, "Now when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and laid hands on him..."
- Acts 28:8, "And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him."
- Hebrews 1:10, "And: 'You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands.'" (Note: This includes the words mentioned but most likely is not in the realm of what we are trying to study)

## New Testament verses which include the words "lay" and "hands":

- Matthew 21:46, "But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet."
- Mark 5:23, "...and begged Him earnestly, saying, 'My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live.'"
- Mark 16:18, "...they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."
- Luke 20:19, "And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they feared the people--for they knew He had spoken this parable against them."

- Luke 21:12, “But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake.”
- Acts 8:19, “...saying, ‘Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’”
- Acts 28:8, “And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and prayed, and he laid his hands on him and healed him.”
- 1Timothy 5:22, “Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.”

## Comments:

- Items highlighted in **blue** fairly obviously refer to the forceful taking of an individual into custody or controlling of an individual. Since this is rather straightforward, then we will dismiss these from our study today.
- Items highlighted in **green** refer to the passing on of the gift of the Holy Spirit. The apostles only had this power as seen in Acts 8:4-25. Thus, this does not have reference to us today since there are no apostles to pass on this gift.
- Items highlighted in **yellow** refer to the miraculous healing of various individuals which occurred through the laying on of hands. Again, since miracles through the agency of man have ceased, then these can be dismissed from our study.
- Finally, while Hebrews 1:10 (highlighted in **pink**) includes the words mentioned above, it most likely does not have reference to the realm of our study, so we will dismiss it.
- This leaves us eight passages that still have to be considered and treated:
  - John 7:44 and 8:20 indirectly refer to the forceful taking of an individual into custody. The people wanted to take Jesus in John 7:44 but were reluctant to do such. John mentions why Jesus was not taken in 8:20, namely, “...His hour had not yet come.”
  - 2Timothy 1:6 is most likely a reference to the use of miracles because the gift had come from Paul’s hands (remember Paul was an apostle) and Paul was here encouraging Timothy to use that gift.
  - Matthew 19:15, Acts 6:6 and Acts 13:3 seem to refer to some custom or practice of the first century.
    - The children in Matthew 19:5 were seeking the approval of Jesus and it seems that Jesus gave it to them by laying His hands on them. The text says nothing of any gift being passed on. Thus, one purpose of laying on of hands was approval.
    - The servants of Acts 6:1-7 were finally appointed by prayer and the laying on of hands. Again, the text says nothing of any gift being passed on. Another purpose then was appointment.
    - Paul and Barnabas were appointed as missionaries in Acts 13:1-3. This occurred through fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands. Again no gifts were passed on. Such would not have been necessary especially in Paul’s case as he was an apostle.
    - Notice that while we have an example of the laying on of hands in custom of an approval or an appointing fashion and while it would be alright to do such in the same way today, this example is not binding on us today as there is no command surrounding it.
- Now, we have only two passages to consider: 1Timothy 4:14 and 1Timothy 5:22.
  - 1Timothy 4:14:
    - Timothy’s place in this context was a matter of prophecy as seen in 1Timothy 1:18 and confirmed here.
    - This could be a reference to the ability to perform miracles given to Timothy by the elders. If so, it would be in addition to what Paul had given him mentioned in 2Timothy 1:6. Also, because of Acts 8:4-25, these elders would have had to double in their roles as apostles as well.
    - It could also be a reference to a custom or practice of the first century as in Matthew 19:5, Acts 6:6, and Acts 13:3. In this case, it would be appointing Timothy to his position (a preacher) by the elders of the congregation in Ephesus. Again this appointment was prophesied.
  - 1Timothy 5:22 (the following options taken from a commentary written by David Libscomb and J.W. Shepherd):
    - It could be a reference to the forceful taking of an individual but this does not fit the gospel of Jesus Christ which Paul was defending.
    - It could also be a reference to the accusation of sinful acts of men (see verse 20). Paul is then encouraging Timothy to use caution before laying his hands on anyone thereby asserting that they are sinful. In other words, make sure they have indeed sinned before rebuking them in the presence of all. Since there are no other examples in a negative appointing through the laying on of hands in the New Testament, this seems unlikely.
    - It could be a reference to the custom or practice of the laying on of hands used in the appointing of elders. This was something Timothy was instructed to do and the honor of elders is the context of 1Timothy 5:17-19. It may be a stretch to include in verse 22, but not too much. Timothy would have appointed elders as well as other positions here Paul is encouraging him to use caution.