

God's Touch

The Doctrine of Laying on of Hands

Steve Durham—July 1, 2023

I want to talk to you about something that we've been going over in 'Breaking Bread' recently in going through the Love Series. This is something that has been out there for a while, and this is the third time I've gone through it.

I want to encourage you to go through the Love Series *transcript book* {truthofGod.org} and study it. What we do is take notes as we go through each of the chapters.

It's brought me to this subject today: *The Laying on of Hands!* I'm seeing it in a different light and there's an overall principle that God is giving us and teaching us through the laying on of hands.

In Heb. 6 we find all the doctrines laid out, and the laying on of hands is a doctrine and teaching of the Church of God.

Hebrews 6:1: "Therefore, advancing beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ, we should go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith in God, of ***the doctrine*** of baptisms, and of ***laying on of hands***, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (vs 1-2).

Here we find *laying on of hands* listed as a doctrine, which are teachings of the Church of God, doctrines of Christ. What is *the laying on of hands* specifically? It's tells there in Heb. 6, but it doesn't tell us what it is. It doesn't tell us the principles behind, or the thinking of God's mind behind the *laying on of hands*.

The laying on of hands doctrine, to understand or get a paragraph description, let's go the Appendix M: Beliefs and Doctrines of the New Testament Church in *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* {afaithfulversion.org}

I think App. M is probably one of the most used helps; a very, very helpful section for all of us. That's why the *Faithful Version* is valuable Bible.

Appendix M {afaithfulversion.org}:

Beliefs and Doctrines of the New Testament Church Teachings and Doctrines of Jesus Christ and His Apostles as Revealed in the Holy Bible

XVII: The laying on of hands is ***a special act*** performed by ordained elders (with the exception of baptism which can be performed by senior men who have been designated by elders to baptize), in the churches of God while asking God the Father in prayer to confer a spiritual gift or

blessing upon someone. The laying on of hands is required for the receiving of God's Holy Spirit following water baptism, for anointing the sick with oil for healing, for ordination of those selected for spiritual or physical service to the Church, for blessing little children, for a special blessing during a marriage ceremony, ***and for other special blessings***.

I hadn't notice "...and for other special blessings" before, and we're going to go over one of them.

Here are all these needs and things that need to be taken care of by the Church, that we all need and God wants us to go through these doctrines.

- Why did God give us this doctrine of the laying on of hands?
- Have you ever thought about that?

When I was younger I used to say that it looked strange to put hands on someone. Why are they doing that?

The doctrine of *laying on of hands* is called *a special act!* God is teaching us something through this. Of course, there are physical things we know we need. Then there is the spiritual lesson for us.

- Could God accomplish this in a different way?
- Could He do it without having the physical touch of the laying on of hands? *Yes, it's possible!*

For example, in Rev. 7:3-4 He sends an angel out to the 144,000 at the end time to seal them. It doesn't mention the laying on of hands. They have the Holy Spirit given to them.

Anointing the sick for healing. A Centurion goes to Christ and asks for healing for his servant. Christ says, 'Okay, I'll come and heal him.' But the Centurion said, 'No, You don't have to, just say the word.' Christ was amazed at the faith, but in that moment in that same hour he was healed; without the laying on of hands.

So, it is possible to do that. But there's a reason why God gives us this physical interaction, this physical touch, and it conveys a message to us: *teaches us something in addition*.

This is a physical act that communicates something that has a spiritual counterpart, meaning or a spiritual lesson for us. It's a relationship builder.

Think about that, the laying on of hands is a

relationship builder:

- between one another
- between us and God

and is instrumental in the laying on of hands!

I want to talk you about this principle of laying on of hands and touch and conveys to us and teaches us. Touch is essential! We communicate through touch. God our Creator gave us the ability to feel and have receptors in our fingers and hands, and have skin that holds those nerve endings to the five senses: sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. We communicate and receive information, and God through this communicates His love to us, and our love back to Him and also to one another.

It's interesting that the #5 is... Five fingers on each hands. Five is the number of grace and God's love. Then God is communicating His love through touch. He's given us the ability to feel, hurt, pain, emotion, love joy, happiness, and to take in information through the senses and touch.

That's why the laying on of hands is so important. It's a teaching and doctrine. Those nerve endings are located in the skin, which is the largest organ in the body. It wasn't by evolution that this happened, but God has a purpose for that. He also has a purpose for the doctrines that He gives us.

There's much about touch; there are several Scriptures on God's hand in our lives.

Isaiah 41:10: "Do not fear... [fear takes away love] ...for I *am* with you; be not dismayed; for I *am* your God. I will strengthen you; yea, I will help you; yea, I will uphold you **with the right hand** of My righteousness." *God's right hand!*

God's right hand is going to hold us, and He says He'll never forsake us and never leave us. He wants us to know that He loves us. He made us and teaches us through touch. It's essential in human beings.

There are a couple of articles I want to refer you to:

Article: **Can Babies Die from a Lack of Touch?** {no exact reference found online}

Can people die from a lack of touch? Touch is essential for human survival. Babies who are deprived of touch fail to thrive. They lose weight and even die. Babies and young children who do not get touched also have lower levels of growth hormones.

So lack of touch can actually stunt a child's growth. When we interact with one another, you see people hugging. We

- hug
- shake hands
- pat each other on the back
- hold hands

We communicate through that touch; it communicates:

- acceptance
- belonging
- affection
- family
- love

All are communicated through touch, both physically and spiritually. That's why human touch is so important.

Article: **What Lack of Affection Can Do to You**; Aug, 31, 2013 by Kory Floyd Ph.D.
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/affectionado/201308/what-lack-affection-can-do-you>

If we don't have touch in our lives. They coined a phrase called 'skin hunger'!

Feeling deprived of meaningful human contact can be referred to as skin hunger.

This happens in adults!

People with skin hunger, or who are affection-deprived, are more likely to experience depression and stress, and in general, worse health.

That's why it's so important, as we're scattered, learn to come together, even if it's in a cyber room or online, as we're doing here today.

Come together, send a card, an e-mail, talk on the phone, and get together as often as you can; it very important.

It actually increases and facilitates the level of oxytocin in humans. This is something that increases the feeling of well-being, health and happiness and acceptance, belonging and love. That's what happens when we touch.

It shows us that we're appreciated, accepted and belong. It's very important in a family environment. We are family and we are the spiritual Church, God's Body. These things go together to communicate love to God and back to mankind:

- laying on of hands
- anointing with oil

which imparts the earnest down payment of God's character and His love to us

- prayer

which communicates from us back to Him! Bible

study is Him talking to us, but also He communicates to us through touch. Building a relationship with God through prayer and through these things.

Jesus uses touch, and there are occasions where He accomplishes something without touch. But he uses touch for an example; we already talked about the Centurion and Simon's mother-in-law.

Mark 1:40: "And a leper came to Him, beseeching Him and kneeling down to Him, and saying to Him, 'If You will, You have the power to cleanse me.' **Then Jesus, being moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him**, and said to him, 'I will. Be cleansed. And as soon as He had spoken, the leprosy immediately departed from him, and he was cleansed'" (vs 40-42).

Jesus was showing the leper acceptance, compassion and love! Jesus reached out and touched him and healed him. The leper had not seen that in Israel. Leprosy was a disease that people stayed away from. Leper's were segregated and put off to the side. In love, Jesus healed the leper and made him whole.

He was manifesting that love to him through touch, the physical act. Of course, He gave him forgiveness, mercy, compassion and all of that. But through that touch, the leper's life was changed.

Here's an example of Jesus healing many with touch and the laying on of hands:

Luke 4:40: "Now, as the sun was going down, all those who had sick *persons* with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on each one of them *and* healed them."

They must have been there a long time. The sun was going down and He was healing and healing, laying His hands on them and setting the example of touch and compassion, all the things that we benefit from.

Remember the special blessing that it talked about in Heb. 6. Reassurance is a special blessing. The laying on of hands gives us the blessing of reassurance. He gives us reassurance that if we are in the Father's hands, no one can take us out of His loving care.

Jesus uses the analogy of the sheep and He's the Shepherd:

John 10:27: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; and no **one shall take them out of My hand**. My Father, Who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one has the power to seize *them* from My Father's hand. I and the Father are one" (vs 27-30).

This love and communication, the fact that we're in His hands and we don't have to worry about anything. No one can take us from Him! That's reassurance. *A very important blessing!*

Another blessing is the blessing of little children. Jesus lays His hands on the little children who come to Him to bless them, to show that He cared for them and they were special, sanctified, and would be protected. It talks about an angel that is before the Father, each one.

Mark 10:13: "Then they brought little children to Him so that He might touch them. But the disciples rebuked those who brought them. And after seeing *it*, Jesus was indignant, and said to them, 'Allow the little children to come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the Kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child shall in no way enter into it.' And **He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them and blessed them**" (vs 13-16).

In Matt. 19 it says that He laid His hands on them and prayed for them. Here prayer and laying on of hands goes together. But He's showing them touch, hugging and holding them, and communicating to the Father that loving them, as well. It's very essential for human love.

Communicating our love through prayer, and communicating back His love through the laying on of hands. What about baptism? *Receiving the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands!*

Acts 8:14 "Now, when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent Peter and John to them; Who, after coming down *to Samaria*, prayed for them, that they might receive *the* Holy Spirit; for as yet it had not fallen upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit**" (vs 14-17).

So, we see it's very essential and important: ***the laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit!*** That is our earnest down payment. Acts 2:38 talks about repentance, and we recognize that we need that. God is drawing and calling us. Then we are baptized, go under the water and come up a new person and receive the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. *Then the work begins!*

Another special act, one that we probably don't think about. But remember the special blessings that it talks about through touch and the laying on of hands. The example of Christ to the Church, and the subsequent command for us to do this every year, throughout the year: it's foot-washing.

When you add foot-washing or touching the feet and washing them in an attitude of service and humility from one another, the doctrine of laying on of hands has a different perspective that comes to light. Touch is love and gives additional weight to the laying on of hands. We all do that when we touch feet to wash them.

John 13:14: “Therefore, if I, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also are duty-bound to wash one another’s feet; for I have given you an example, *to show* that you also should do exactly as I have done to you. Truly, truly I tell you... [here’s the lesson] ...**a servant is not greater than his lord, nor a messenger greater than he who sent him**” (vs 14-16).

Remember that it talked about going onto perfection (Heb. 6). *Become you therefore perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect (Matt. 5:48)*! We are learning from the example of Christ and His touch that we love one another. God loves us and we are to love Him. That’s what He wants; He just wants us to love Him!

We’re striving to become like Christ Who came to be a servant and to show us an example of service to our fellow man. That’s what the doctrine of laying on of hands points us to. The right example!

James 5:13: “Is anyone suffering hardship among you? Let him pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing praise. Is anyone sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the Church, and let them pray over him after anointing him... [with the laying on of hands) ...with oil in the name of the Lord” (vs 13-14).

He chooses to administer the doctrine of love through a physical representative. That conduit back to Him and to the brethren, from man/woman to God, and from God back to man/woman.

That’s what He shows, that He loves us and that we are to love Him as His children, His sons and daughters. This is how He chose to administer that love, and the doctrine of the laying on of hands. That’s why Christ talked so much about loving one another. He uses the family metaphor.

All these things that we do is relational, and He uses men through the ministry with these special acts. The physical representation. Those ministers are accountable and responsible to be loving sincerely from the heart, being sincere and loving. Being available without complaint and truly desiring to serve. Giving and being there to pull alongside in times of need and at other times, as well. Being truly compassionate and sympathetic and empathetic, comforting.

Who does the actual laying on of hands?

Taking those requests seriously and the responsibility soberly and conscientiously in God.

Paul tells Titus; Titus 2:7: “In all things you yourself set an example of good works; in doctrine uncorrupted, serious-minded, and sincere.”

1-Peter 1:22: “Having purified your lives by obedience to the Truth **unto unfeigned brotherly love** through *the* Spirit, love one another fervently with a pure heart.”

He wants us to know that He loves us and grow in that love for Him and for others. The doctrine of the laying of hands is a vehicle in which He teaches us that, if our eyes and ears are open. He does it through touch, the doctrine of the laying on of hands for us to:

- become perfect
- grow in grace and knowledge

John 13:34: “A new commandment I give to you: that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you, that *is how* you are to love one another. By this shall everyone know that you are My disciples—if you love one another” (vs 34-35).

Colossians 3:12: “Put on then, as *the* elect of God, Holy and beloved, deep inner affections, kindness, humility, meekness *and* long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so also you *should forgive*. And above all these things *put on* love, which is *the* bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you were called into one body, and be thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And *in* everything—whatever you do in word or in deed—*do* all in *the* name of *the* Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and *the* Father by Him” (vs 12-17).

The Church has certain needs, and there are special acts that we need to do. God has assigned that to be done through the ministry and one another:

- foot-washing
- the touch
- the hugs
- the shaking hands
- the acceptance showing that we belong

We’re all one body! That body is to be fitly joined together.

The doctrine of laying on of hands teaches us God’s love.

Jeremiah 31:3: “The LORD has appeared to me from afar, *saying*, ‘Yea, I have loved you with an

everlasting love; therefore, with loving kindness I have drawn you.”

He loved us first, didn't He? We are the children of God, and He wants us to grow in that. He gives us the laying on of hands doctrine to teach us how to do that.

I didn't have the time to go into it a lot, but I wanted to cover that one principle, the overall principle of laying on of hands. I hope you can see it and apply it, and learn to love God more deeply—'agape' love! ***That we grow together as a Church in love!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 6:1-2
- 2) Isaiah 41:10
- 3) Mark 1:40-42
- 4) Luke 4:40
- 5) John 10:27-30
- 6) Mark 10:13-16
- 7) Acts 8:14-17
- 8) John 13:14-16
- 9) James 5:13-14
- 10) Titus 2:7
- 11) 1 Peter 1:22
- 12) John 13: 34-35
- 13) Colossians 13:12-17
- 14) Jeremiah 31:3

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 7:3-4
- Matthew 19
- Acts 2:38
- Matthew 5:48

Also referenced:

Transcript Book with CDs: *The Love Series*

Appendix M: Beliefs and Doctrines of the New Testament Church
{afaithfulversion.org}

Articles:

- *Can Babies Die from a Lack of Touch?*
- *What Does Lack of Affection Do to You?*
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/affectionado/201308/what-lack-affection-can-do-you>

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