

Imparting God's Power And Calling



Foundations (Day 247)
by Derek Prince

Throughout this series of studies, we are examining the six foundation doctrines of Christ which are listed in Hebrews 6:1-2:

1. Repentance from dead works
2. Faith toward God
3. The doctrine of baptisms
4. Laying on of hands
5. Resurrection of the dead
6. Eternal judgement

In the preceding months we have systematically examined the first three doctrines in this list. Now we will move on to the fourth of these doctrines – that which is called "laying on of hands."

Had it been left to human understanding to determine the six basic doctrines of the Christian faith, it is quite probable that the laying on of hands would never have been included. However, in the last resort, the best commentary on Scripture is provided by Scripture itself. In this particular case we have the authority of Scripture itself for placing this doctrine among the great foundation doctrines of Christianity.

What are we to understand by this phrase, "laying on of hands"? "Laying on of hands" is an act in which one person places his hands upon another person with some definite spiritual purpose. Normally this act is accompanied by prayer or by prophetic utterance, or by both.

Outside the sphere of religion, this act of laying on of hands is not something strange or foreign to normal human behaviour. For example, in some parts of the world, when two men meet who are friends, it is normal for them to lay their hands upon each other's shoulders. This act constitutes an acknowledgement of their friendship and pleasure at meeting each other. Or again, when a child complains of headache or fever, it is quite natural – in fact, almost instinctive – for the mother to place her hand upon her child's brow to soothe or caress the child.

Within the sphere of religion, the practice of laying on of hands may thus be considered as an extension or an

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adaptation of what is basically a natural human action. As a religious act, the laying on of hands normally signifies one of three possible things.

1. The person laying on hands may thereby transmit spiritual blessing or authority to the one upon whom hands are laid.
2. The person laying on hands may thereby acknowledge publicly some spiritual blessing or authority already received from God by the one upon whom hands are laid.
3. The person laying on hands may thereby publicly commit to God for some special task or ministry the one upon whom hands are laid.

At times, all these three purposes may be combined in one and the same act of laying on hands.

Devotional

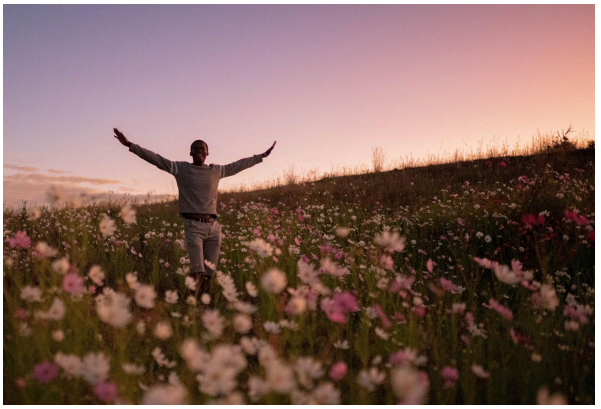
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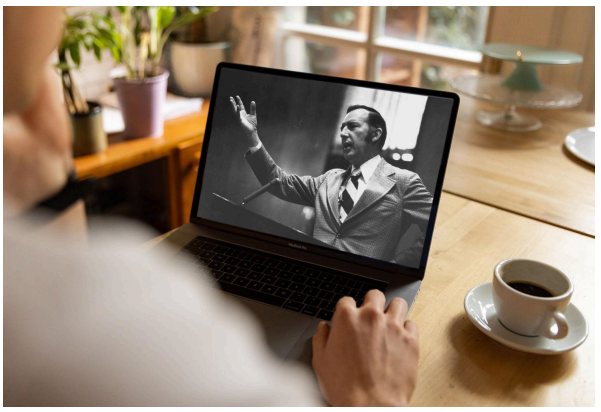
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