

Not Hastily, But Calm, Determined And Guided By The Spirit



Foundations (Day 255)
by Derek Prince

However, the Scripture also warns us that this ordinance of laying hands upon believers is not to be practised lightly or carelessly. For Paul tells Timothy:

> "Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure." (1 Tim. 5:22)

In this one verse Paul gives three distinct warnings to Timothy:

1. Do not lay hands on anyone hastily,
2. Nor share in other people's sins, and,
3. Keep yourself pure.

It is no accident that the two latter warnings follow immediately upon the first warning not to lay hands on anyone hastily. For if this act of laying hands upon another believer – particularly for the baptism in the Holy Spirit – is to be more than a mere religious ceremony, if it is to produce a real spiritual effect, then there must of necessity be a direct spiritual contact between the two believers.

In this contact between two spirits there is always the possibility of spiritual harm resulting to one or both of the believers. If the spirit of one believer is not altogether pure – if it is defiled in any way by unconfessed sin or by evil associations – then there is the possibility that the spirit of the other believer may be harmfully affected by this defiling contact. That this danger is real is made plain by the two warnings which Paul gives in this particular context: "nor share in other people's sins" and "keep yourself pure."

This naturally leads to the question: Since the ministry of laying on of hands is endorsed by Scripture, how can we guard against the spiritual dangers connected with it?

The answer is that there are four main safeguards for the believer who desires to exercise this ministry.

1. This ministry should never be exercised lightly or carelessly but always in a spirit of prayer and

humility.

2. The guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit should be sought at every stage: with whom to pray, when to pray, how to pray.
3. The believer who lays on hands must know how to claim on behalf of his own spirit the continual purifying and protecting power of the blood of Christ.
4. The believer who lays on hands must himself be so empowered by the Holy Spirit that he is able to overcome any kind of evil spiritual influence seeking to work in or through the one upon whom hands are laid.

Where these four safeguards are not carefully observed, there is a real danger that harmful spiritual results may follow the practice of laying on of hands – either in the one who lays on hands or in the one on whom hands are laid, or in both.

This danger exists in all cases of laying on of hands, but it is greatest where the purpose of laying on of hands is for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. In a figurative way, we may say that the Holy Spirit is heaven's electricity, and the same principle applies in the heavenly as in the earthly realm: The greater the power involved, the greater the need for adequate protection and safeguards.

Devotional

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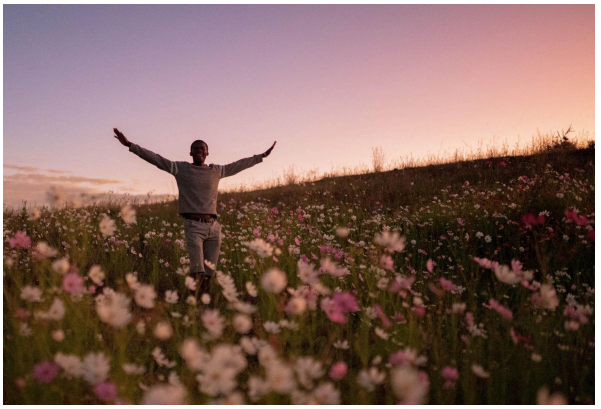

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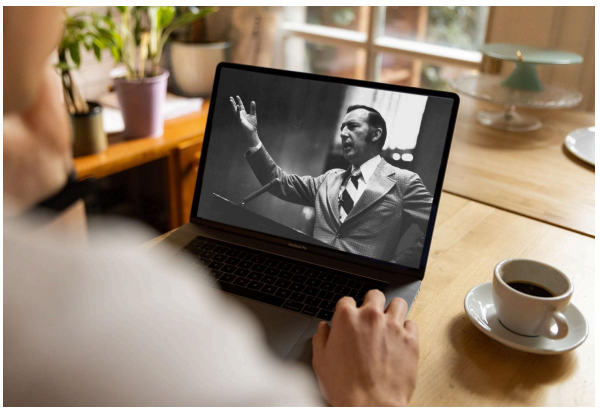

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