

Text: Various

Title: Hands for God

Truth: God wants us to use our hands for good in service to Him.

Date/Location: Sunday August 25, 2024 and September 1, 2024 at FBC

Introduction

Head: think no evil, think good things, think rightly.

Heart: love God with all of our heart, explore what that means, the important concept of affections, what are our inclinations, what sin does to our heart, what the gospel does to the heart, the feelings of our hearts toward others, and an emphasis on maintaining an “open” heart toward others, *especially* in times of difficulty and disagreement (2 Cor. 6:11-13).

Intersection of head and heart: knowing what Jesus did and who He is, knowing *about* Jesus in other words, is not the same as *knowing Jesus*. When we respond properly to the gospel of Christ, we give the response of our entire selves to the whole of the Messiah. In other words, we must know the Lord with our head and our heart, with true faith and repentance.

After spending some weeks working on our head and our heart—and I hope we are still working on those—we now consider the metaphor of the hands. The hands symbolize what we *do*, how we *act*, the *ministry* we perform, the good or bad we do, the purity of our work.

Scripture uses the word “hands” and its variants 1,849 times in the NKJV (1,741 in the ESV and 1,698 in the NASB). The word is used too many times to survey all the uses in a reasonable amount of time. Many of the occurrences have to do with physical hands and thus overlap with our subject matter. Others are more abstract or general and are most directly related to our topic.

I. The Work of God’s Hands

- A. Our hands can create things. For us, intermediate material must be available to do that. God did not need any prior matter to do so. The heavens are the work of God’s hands (Heb. 1:10, Psalm 143:5,

102:25). We are the work of God's hands in that He created us (Job 10:3).

- B. A difficult but interesting verse is Job 14:13 where Job wishes to be "hidden in the grave" until God's wrath is past, and then to be resurrected. It appears that in v. 15 where God "desires the work of His hands" that He wants to bring back His deceased person through resurrection—He will call, and the person will come back.
- C. In Job 34:19, Elihu explains that God does not have partiality toward rich or poor or princes because they are all the work of His hands.
- D. Similar metaphors speak of God's work by His *arm* and *fingers*.
 - 1. Arm: Isaiah 30:30, 40:10-11, 48:14, Luke 1:51.
 - 2. Fingers: Exodus 8:19, 31:18 // Deut. 9:10, Luke 11:20.

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II. The Work of the Levites Hands (God's Ministers)

- A. Deut. 33:8-11. Very interesting that Moses prays that God will accept the work of his hands. What happens or has happened to you when you pray that way?
- B. Lev. 4:6, 17, 25, 34; 8:15 – the blood offering is distributed by the priest's finger before the veil and on the horns of the altar.

III. The Work of the Hands of the Righteous and Sinners

- A. Baasha – 1 Kings 16:7
- B. Job 1:10
- C. Isaiah 17:7-8 – the work of his hands are the altars and idols that sinners erected in the days of the prophet. The work of their hands angered God because that work was to build idols (Jer. 25:6-7, Micah 5:13, Deut. 31:29).

IV. The Work of Our Hands

- A. Eccl. 9:10 – "Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with your might; for *there is* no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going." Along with the other places in

Ecclesiastes, I detect here a note about finding satisfaction in your work. But there are three more important points:

1. It exhorts the energetic pursuit of the things that God puts before you. What things you can do, the opportunities that you can take, the opportunities you can make—do it. You have one chance at life, so make the most of it. Do your work vigorously (as to the Lord, not to men, Eph. 6:7, Col. 3:23). Use all your strength. Put your whole heart into it and do not be lazy. Be enthusiastic, try hard, go the extra mile. That means at your job, home, family, church, etc.
2. There comes a termination point for that work. As you age you will become unable to do what you did before. This will become complete at the end of life when you will not do any more work here. Your “labors will be over” as the hymn says:

That Will be Glory

1 When all my labors and trials are o’er,
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore
Will through the ages be glory for me.

Refrain:

O that will be glory for me,
Glory for me, glory for me;
When by His grace I shall look at His face,
That will be glory, be glory for me.

2 When by the gift of His infinite grace,
I am accorded in heaven a place,
Just to be there and to look on His face
Will through the ages be glory for me. [Refrain]

3 Friends will be there I have loved long ago;
Joy like a river around me will flow;
Yet just a smile from my Savior, I know,
Will through the ages be glory for me. [Refrain]

3. Remember too that the end of Ecclesiastes reminds us that God will bring us into judgment and that we must therefore fear God

and keep His commandments. Our energetic pursuit of what we *can* do in this life therefore must be guided by what we *should* do and the priorities we *should* have.

- B. Eccl 11:6 work at more than one task to diversify your efforts and their results. Prov. 3:27 do good when your hand has the power to do it. Do not use your hands to sign up for debt (Prov. 22:26).
- C. Ecclesiastes 10:18 – idle hands show up in a decayed building or leaking roof.
- D. Our hands can also be used not only to do religious things and good things for God, but also for family, for ourselves, and for others. God promised the people of Israel to bless “all the work of your hands” and they would rejoice (Deut. 16:15, 24:19).
- E. Heb 6:2 – laying on of hands as a basic element of the faith, although interestingly it may not be clear to us because we do not have a ritual laying on of hands. We do that sometimes in ordination prayers and missionary commissioning services. Paul refers to it regarding Timothy’s spiritual gifts, delivered to him in connection with the laying on of the hands of the elders in the church (1 Tim. 4:14, 2 Tim. 1:6). In Acts 28:8, Paul laid hands on Publius’s dad and he was made well. In Acts 8:18 the apostles laid hands on some people and God simultaneously gave the gift of the Holy Spirit. These latter situations are not possible or necessary in this age.
- F. Clean hands are holy hands, hands of a life not filthy with sin. How do you get that way? You confess your iniquities and receive cleansing—Psalm 32:5.
 - 1. Job 17:9
 - 2. Ps 24:3-4
 - 3. 1 Tim. 2:8. Do you not pray because you have unholy hands?

Conclusion

Let us ask ourselves how we are using our “hands,” that is, our service. Are we serving God with our hands, or sinning with our hands, or serving ourselves with our hands? MAP