SUCH AS WE HAVE, WE GIVE

Catechism Two, Lesson 22

Reading: Acts 3:1–16

1. What Is This Principle: “Such As We Have, We Give”?

Impartation is a very real transaction. When we lay our hands upon someone, we must know that God has first given us something to pass on. Peter and John no doubt had passed this beggar many times. It was their habit to attend the temple prayer meetings. The beggar always sat by that gate. But this particular day God gave something to Peter and John to pass on to the needy man. The Holy Spirit caused them to know that He would work through them to impart strength and healing. They were to dispense God’s mercy to the man. This is why they spoke in such a way that the man would become both attentive and receptive to them. The gift God had for him was to come through their hands and through their words of faith. In passing on this blessing, these apostles were acting as stewards for God. They were acting under authority, giving what they had been given for this purpose.

Very often God gives us something to pass on to others through what we have learned in personal experience. If we have met God in certain experiences, we seem to be more able to believe Him to do only the same for others. But we must not limit ourselves in God. Paul had never been raised from the dead, but he raised others. God put within him the power to do this when it was needed.

2. Is Healing The Only Blessing Imparted Through The Laying On Of Hands?

No. We began with healing because it is perhaps the easiest example to see. Tangible virtue flows from one person to another. Real change results. This same principle operates in regard to the impartation of spiritual endowment in several areas:

A. Through the laying on of hands “spiritual gifts” are imparted.

Spiritual gifts are not always given directly by God; many times they are mediated through the laying on of hands by other believers. A real transaction takes place—just as real as physical healing. The person suddenly finds he has a whole new spiritual dimension added to his life. His creativity has become enlarged.

For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established (Rom. 1:11).

B. Through the laying on of hands authority is imparted.

A “charge” is more than a challenge; it is also a real stimulation of the inner man. Spiritual resources are imparted that stimulate into action previously untapped areas of ability. The one receiving such a charge finds he is no longer acting on his own, but God is “with him” in such a marked way that others respond to his leadership. Impartation has added weight and significance to his words and deeds.

And Joshua the Son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses (Deut. 34:9).

C. Through the laying on of hands people are set apart for specific ministry.

Functioning in the Body of Christ is not an optional, haphazard thing. God has designed us each to fill a specific place. Through the laying on of hands by ministers working with God, we are set into our God-ordained positions.

Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them (Acts 6:6).

3. How Is Impartation Illustrated In The Old Testament?

In addition to healing and the impartation of spiritual gifts we now enjoy in the New Covenant, the Old Testament contains a unique use of laying on of hands. In the principle of substitutionary and vicarious sacrifice, we find that guilt was actually transferred from the sinner to the sacrificial victim. For this reason, the animal could die and shed his blood in the offerer’s place. Similarly the scapegoat received all the sins of Israel through the laying on of hands and the prayer of confession. Transfer of guilt was not merely ceremonial—that is with symbolic meaning—but actual.

And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him (Lev. 1:4).

4. Why Is The Laying On Of Hands Many Times Accompanied With Prophecy?

Prophecy is the speaking forth of God’s mind. It is a creative utterance. Things are brought into being which before have only existed in the mind of God. Many times God will use this creative word along with laying on of hands to bring about His desired purposes at a specific point in space and time.

A. Prophecy opens the understanding that we may accept God’s callings.

God’s callings upon our lives were determined before we were born. But at some point in time, He communicates this to us. Faith comes through hearing. We might not receive all that God would impart to us by another’s hands without His word first creating receptivity within us. We might experience great blessing but later not know what it all meant. God’s Word provides substance for our faith. We can then lay hold of it and aim in a specific direction of fulfillment. It is God’s will for us to have specific anticipation to motivate our development. One of the many ways God gives us this direction is through prophecy and laying on of hands.

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints (Eph. 1:18).

B. Prophecy gives us a spiritual weapon for fighting the good fight of faith.

Doubts commonly assail us regarding our place of function in the Body of Christ. Prophecy usually comes as a confirmation to strengthen us in what we already know. After this we have an easier time combatting the suggestions that come against our minds. God’s living Word is always an effective sword in battle.

This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck (1 Tim. 1:18, 19).

C. Prophecy serves as a revelation not only to us, but to the local church.

We are dependent upon those ministers God has placed over us to share God’s purpose for us. They must approve our calling. They must also approve our readiness to serve in that capacity. These human leaders need direction from God before they can act with confidence and authority in His name.

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. (Acts 13:2, 3).

5. Who Is Qualified To Prophesy In The Realm Of Direction?

Personal direction is not the usual realm of the New Testament gift of prophecy. God only entrusts this to the overseers of the flock. These overseers are serving in union with Christ who is the Head of the Church; they are extensions of His ministry to His Body. He is the one to call and to equip; He is also the one to promote and to send forth.

In the New Testament, we find overseers gathering into groups for the purpose of laying on hands and prophesying in order to establish people in their ministries. No one pastor or elder attempted to take this upon himself without others to assist. This is for two important reasons: (1) all prophecy must be judged, and (2) since we each prophesy in part, the plurality of ministers insures us of a fuller picture.

We call this group of assembled elders—whether from one local church or several, as in a convention—the presbytery. This is because the Greek word for elder is presbuteros. In other words, the Bible does not give license to every believer to prophesy over others in the realm of direction. This is a restricted ministry, reserved for the hands of experienced and proven elders.

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (1 Tim. 4:14).

6. Does Laying On Of Hands With Prophecy Automatically Create A Ministry?

Nothing is automatic in the kingdom of God. We must learn how to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He works in us and in our circumstances to accomplish His purposes. Laying on of hands with prophecy may confirm God’s calling upon an individual—that is, it may make him sure of the direction he has already received from God. In this way it releases him to function with confidence. Laying on of hands with prophecy may stimulate faith by opening up new avenues of revelation. It may stir the resident gifts into

active operation. But it will never substitute for personal growth in discipline, submission, faith, and service.

A. We must totally invest ourselves in God’s purposes.

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all (1 Tim. 4:15).

B. We must study.

Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine (1 Tim. 4:13).

C. We must discipline ourselves.

Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee (1 Tim. 4:16).

D. We must allow God to rekindle our gift periodically.

Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:6, 7).

So, whether or not God has spoken to us prophetically, we must be diligent in these four matters of commitment, study, discipline and yieldedness in order to be ready for future ministry. God is not magic and is not limited to methods. It is not a sign of spiritual maturity to sit around “waiting” for laying on of hands before beginning to make positive contributions to the kingdom of God. One important principle in guidance is this: “I being in the way—already functioning to the best of my ability—God led me.” Often we discover our calling as we find out for what we are best suited.

Home Study: Lesson 22

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. How do we know spiritual gifts are imparted through the laying on of hands?

2. What are some of the gifts of the Spirit? (Look up Romans 12:3–8 and 1 Cor. 12:4–11).

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

g.

h.

i.

j.

k.

l.

3. Why could the scapegoat actually carry away the sins of Israel into the desert?

4. In what ways does laying on of hands and prophecy make our Christian walk easier?

a.

b.

c.

5. Who should make up the “presbytery”?