



Friendship and Remembrance - 2 Timothy 1:1-7

For the people of the Inversion Fellowship

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2 TIMOTHY 1:1-7 (ESV)

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, ²To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. ³I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. ⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, ⁷for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

REMINDERS FOR THE JOURNEY

FRIENDSHIP

The tenderness and affection with which Paul addresses Timothy is contagiously evident in this passage. It is ripe with mentoring, fatherly language and masculine heterosexual man love. Paul has mentored, trained, co-labored with this man and you can tell he loves him and believes in God's calling upon his life. Paul sees God's work continuing after he has departed through the men that God has raised up for this purpose. Today we need to be about mentoring and calling up one another as well as those we know who are coming after us to follow in *the Missio Dei*.

REMEMBRANCE

In this passage Paul looks back to the past as he writes to his good friend Timothy in the present. It is not a dwelling upon the past but a fond remembering of shared life, shared faith and shared mission. The repetition is evident. Paul tells Timothy that he remembers him constantly in his prayers. He remembers Timothy's tears which flowed when they last saw one another as Paul headed towards arrest in Jerusalem. Additionally, Paul was reminded of Timothy's sincere faith, a faith which was imparted to him by a faithful lineage of godly women. Finally, Paul reminds Timothy of the gift of God which was imparted to him and encourages him to move forward in that gifting to fulfill the call of his ministry.

CALLING FORWARD

Timothy was a man who struggled with passivity, fear and being sickly. Pastor and theologian John Stott described him as a man more likely to "lean than to lead." Yet what Paul saw in his friend was the call of God on his life. Paul saw that a Momma's boy could become a man. Paul strengthens his friend and calls him up towards God's future.

WALKING ON—CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

There are two passages in the first chapter of 2 Timothy which brings to question a theological issue which is of some debate in the church. First, Paul states that he thanks and serves God “as his ancestors did.” Second, Paul describes the faith of Timothy’s mother and grandmother being the same faith which he genuinely possessed. Paul’s ancestor’s were Jewish as were those in the matriarchal line which came before Timothy. These small clues indicate that perhaps there is great continuity between the faith of people under the Old Covenant and those under the New. Of course this is of much debate as discussions about the relationship between Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church continue until this day. In this essay I will lay out ever so briefly four theological views that relate the relationship of Old and New Covenants, Israel to the church and surrounding theological issues. In conclusion I will then give a few reasons why I favor a stronger continuity between Old and New Testaments and thereby make all my old guard dispensationalist friends shriek with pain. Just kidding—but they would be a bit pissed.

Dispensationalism (D) - This view holds that Israel refers to the ethnic/physical descendants of Jacob with the church beginning at Pentecost and the church is mentioned nowhere in the Old Testament. Israel and the church have different roles/destinies in the end times and all promises made to ethnic Israel in the OT will be fulfilled to ethnic Israel in the end times. Salvation of some people under the Old Covenant is by obedience to the law—some have said this amounts to two different ways of salvation—one by works, one by grace. This view sees a strong discontinuity between the OT and NT and sees two distinct “peoples of God.” It sees God working very differently during different time periods of history (dispensations) changing his way of dealing with humanity during seven different dispensations. The “Kingdom” in the New Testament refers to the literal, physical reign of Christ on the earth during a millennium at the end of time. It is a very Israel centric view and has the best end times charts and graphs. **Proponents**—The Old Scofield Bible, 20th century Dallas Seminary, John Walvoord, Dwight Pentecost, Norman Geisler and Charles Ryrie. **Recommended Book**—*Dispensationalism Today* by Charles Ryrie.

Progressive Dispensationalism (PD) - Similar to the old school dispensationalists, PD holds that Israel refers to the ethnic/physical people and that the church begins in the book of Acts. It maintains the church/Israel distinction but teaches that both OT and NT people are saved by grace through faith in God’s promise. It sees more continuity between Old and New Testaments but maintains that the promises to Israel in the OT are for the ethnic line to be fulfilled in the end. It leans more towards the covenantal view as it acknowledges the covenants as *progressive moves* forward towards God’s plan in Christ. It also breaks with the old D view in that it sees hints at the church in the Old Testament but it is unclear and as the church/Gentile inclusion was a mystery yet to be fully unveiled. **Proponents**—Darryl Bock, Craig Blaising, Robert Saucy, Contemporary Dallas Seminary. **Recommended Book**—*Progressive Dispensationalism* by Darryl Bock and Craig Blaising.

Covenant Theology (CT) - Covenant Theology is an understanding of God’s work in history that has much more continuity between Old and New Testaments. It sees Israel as both the physical and spiritual descendants of Abraham and considers God unfolding a large covenant of grace throughout history. An original covenant of works was made with and broken by Adam in the garden and the plan of God to redeem a people for himself set forth in the covenant of grace. The distinction between the church/Israel is not made as it sees God always having a people with whom he relates by covenant. Israel is called and defined by its covenant relationship to God not simply ethnicity. God’s elect people are “one people” and the universal church has always existed in both Old and New Testament. It sees many direct prophecies related to the church in the Old Testament and views the church as God’s Plan A throughout history and the final culmination of the covenant of grace. It views the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31 as the same as Luke 22:20, both are for spiritual Israel (the seed of Abraham by faith) according to Hebrews 8. It usually equates baptism and Old covenant circumcision and practices infant baptism. **Proponents**—John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, Reformed Seminaries, Presbyterians, Walter Kaiser, Michael Horton, JI Packer, RC Sproul and Bruce Waltke. **Recommended Book**—*God of Promise: Introducing Covenant Theology* by Michael Horton.

Modified (or New) Covenant Theology (NCT) - Is similar to CT in that it sees strong continuity in the covenants of God and sees the church as spiritual Israel and heirs to the promises of God. It is somewhat of a halfway point sharing much in common with Progressive Dispensationalism as well as Covenant Theology. It is not as succinct a system of theology as the above, but is a way of seeing and reading Scripture in a promise/fulfillment hermeneutic. It rejects the baptism/circumcision symmetry of Covenant Theology and holds that baptism is for believers only but sees the same united redemptive framework in the biblical covenants. As Progressive Dispensationalism it holds to a now/not yet view of the Kingdom of God known as inaugurated eschatology. Along with CT this view sees the Old Testament as containing typological references to the church in the OT that are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. In contrast NCT sees the OT law differently than CT. CT sees the OT laws divided into various categories—civil, ceremonial, moral...with the moral laws still binding. NCT sees the entire OT law as a tutor to bring us to Christ and completely done away with in the New Covenant. This is an area where CT and NCT knit picks tend to scrap. **Proponents**—Typically Reformed type who hold to believers baptism. Though DA Carson, Mark Dever, Tom Schreiner do not see themselves fitting neatly into any camp, they typically are mentioned along with this view. Though John Piper distinguishes himself from all views is closer to this position than any other. See *What does John Piper believe about dispensationalism, covenant theology, and new covenant theology?* At DesiringGod.org **Recommended Book** — *New Covenant Theology* by Tom Wells, Fred Zaspel.

This is but a very small flyover of some of the theological views on how the Old and New testaments “fit together” in theological unity. Personally I favor the approaches that see continuity between the covenants as one unfolding plan of God. Additionally, the book of Hebrews declares the Old Covenant as abolished and the covenant by which he relates to all people is that of the one made with the blood of Jesus Christ (see Hebrews 8-10). Furthermore, Ephesians and Galatians teach that Jew/Gentile are one in the gospel. I believe that God has always related to his people by his grace and that his plan of redemption unfolded through the various covenants in biblical/redemptive history. See our *Introduction to the Old Testament* for more on this at www.InversionFellowship.org. I find much to appreciate in all these systems but find the most affinity with the latter three. Old School Dispensationalism is a hard one for me to swallow but those who still hold to it are usually “all in.” Our Inversion staff team most appreciates the Progressive Dispensational and New Covenant views. For those who don’t want to buy books please check out these various systems at <http://www.theopedia.com>. For those who are completely dizzy in all of that jazz please lose no sleep over it. Smile.



A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF HANDS

One of the unique biblical images God uses to teach us about life, walking with him and serving others are attached to the end of our arms. The hands are used for various purposes in both the Old and New Testament to reflect and teach us biblical truth. Paul's letters to Timothy have one of these purposes, the laying on of hands by pastoral leadership, on full display. In this essay we will look briefly on how God uses "hands" throughout Scripture concluding with a treatment on how Paul uses laying of hands in the epistles to Timothy.

Handy Metaphors in the Old and New Testaments

There are many references to hands in the Old Testament but there is an overarching theme for each of them. Hands represent action, the state of one's heart that finds itself into the world. Hands represent what we do, the actions we take and how our intentions are reflecting by character and works. We see this in hands being described as clean or unclean. For instance, clean hands represents a righteous life (see Job 17:9, Job 22:30, Psalm 18:20-24, Psalm 24:1-6, Psalm 73:13). Clean hands represent holiness of life and unclean hands represents a heart that is vile and wicked. The book of proverbs talks about hands that shed blood as being the hands of the guilty and wicked man. Furthermore the New Testament also talks about lifting up holy hands indicating the same thing. This is all a matter of the heart, though it is expressed with metaphors of the hands. Jesus made it clear that washing one's hands do not cleanse the inside of a man's heart; but the work of our hands is indicative of the condition of our hearts. Additionally, the nature of our work is seen in our hands in such prayers as Psalm 90:17 which reads: *Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!* Here we find people asking God's favor upon the work of their lives. Jesus also uses a hand metaphor to talk about a manner of life in response to God's call on us. He tells us that *no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God* (Luke 9:62). So it is a clear metaphor in scripture that the condition and action of hands represent the condition of the heart before God.

Finally, though he has no physical hands, God's own favor and work is expressed with the language of "his hands." The work of deliverance and redemption wrought by God in the Exodus is repeatedly described as being through "his mighty hand and outstretched arm." God's favor is expressed by his hand "being upon us." After Nehemiah goes before the King to ask for assistance in his work to rebuild Jerusalem we read this wonderful verse: *And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.* When the hand of God is upon a people it is a sign of favor and his working on their behalf. This continues in the New Testament when Jesus is said to be raised from death and seated at the right hand of God. This is the place of power and authority beside a great King. To finish this essay we will further discuss how power and authority is symbolically and actively transferred to people through the laying on of hands.

Laying on Hands

Placing hands upon someone today to pray for them is becoming more and more common in evangelical churches. I find no problem whatsoever with the practice as it indicates belief, faith and standing with one another in prayer. However, the laying on of hands has specific meaning in Scripture of which I want us to be aware. In the brief space that remains we will examine how the laying on of human hands indicates conveyance of blessing, judgment, transferring of guilt for sin as well as for the ordination of people in the authority of God for gospel ministry.

In the Old Testament a father would convey the blessing and birthright to children and grandchildren through the laying on hands. It was a transaction that was symbolic of a fathers generosity and favor upon his descendents. Hands would also be placed by the priest onto an animal called the Scapegoat (Leviticus 16) which was being sent away from the people so as to take away their sins. Additionally, a person bringing their own peace offering would place his hands upon the animal symbolically putting his sins upon the sacrifice (Leviticus 3:1-5). Judgment upon a criminal was also demonstrated before the enactment of capital punishment by the placing of hands upon the offender. The manner in the Old Testament is clear. The authority to forgive sin, convey blessing, enact judgment was done in an official capacity in obedience to God's Word. The authority of God and the action of God is visibly seen through the laying on of human hands.

In the New Testament we see Jesus speak some powerful words to the disciples before he ascended back to the right hand of God. In articulating what has become known as the Great Commission, Jesus said the following in Matthew 28: *And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* Here is the line of authority—the Father has placed ALL authority to Jesus. Jesus then commissions his church to go in that authority and live the mission of God. We see very clearly that authority is vested upon Jesus' followers through the laying on of hands. This happens in several ways.

First, hands are laid upon the sick to pray for healing by both Jesus and his followers (Mark 6:5, Luke 4:40, Acts 28:8, James 5:13-15, perhaps Mark 16:18). Remember, it is the power of God that heals the body not the person's hands. The hands are a way of expressing faith and dependence and petition to God for healing. One more point. Even when the body naturally heals it is operating according to God's design not independent of it. So God is the source of all healing and he chooses whom he will heal and for what reasons. We can pray in faith and trust him to work if he so chooses. Ultimately, the final healing will come at the resurrection of the dead where we will receive immortal, incorruptible bodies and disease and death will be vanquished. Second, the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts were at times imparted to a person from the placing on of hands and prayer (Acts 8, 9, 19). Note again, it is not the hands which give gifts, but God who has the power and authority. Furthermore, though this was a means by which God gave gifts he also does so without any intermediary. If he wants to gift his people he can also do so directly. The Spirit is also given to people today at the point of spiritual conversion and no apostle is required to convey this as Holy Spirit is promised to all who believe (Ephesians 1). Finally, there is a clear laying on of hands to set people apart for church leadership. In Acts 13 Paul and Barnabas are set apart for missionary service. In the pastoral epistles we see that hands are laid upon people, specifically our boy Timothy, to set him apart and confirm his calling to pastoral ministry. In doing so the authority of Jesus is recognized and the calling of God confirmed by those who are current ministers. Some see a pure line of hands back to the apostles themselves in ordaining to gospel ministry. This is why Paul exhorts *so not be hasty in the laying on of hands, nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself pure...* for the appointing pastor/elders prematurely can damage the credibility of ministry by the work of the hands of sinful men.

MY NOTES — 2 TIMOTHY 1:1-7

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²To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

³I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.

⁴As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy.

Acts 20—Tears upon going and leaving...

⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

⁶For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands,

⁷for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.