

# Holding Up One Another's Hands

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Let's think back in time to when Israel came through the Red Sea after leaving Egypt. The Sabbath was re-identified to them, in part through the coming of the manna. Remember that? After the re-identification of the Sabbath and coming through the Red Sea, they journeyed to a place the Bible calls Rephidim. If you remember your geography, the Sinai Peninsula is an arrowhead-shaped piece of land. The Mediterranean Sea is to the north, then it comes down to a point on the south. On the western side you have where the Suez Canal is right now; it's the Gulf of Suez. And on the eastern side, you have the Gulf of Aqaba. It is desert; it's modern day Egypt. And they found themselves down toward the tip of the arrowhead in the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula about 60 miles from the southernmost tip. That is where Rephidim is.

When they arrived in Rephidim, Israel was ready to stone Moses. They were thirsty; they were crabby; they were grumpy; they were complaining. And they were ready to stone him and Moses appealed to God. He said, "What am I going to do? They're about ready to kill me?" God said, "Take Aaron's rod and whack the rock." As we know, out came water.

So with that context, let's turn to Exodus 17 and see an account that is very interesting. I think all of us are familiar with the account, but sometimes we don't look at it maybe in depth enough or we don't think about it enough as to why certain things happened. We'll begin in verse 8 of Exodus 17. After the water came out, the people stopped complaining; they had plenty to drink.

***Exodus 17:8.*** *Then came Amalek, and fought with Israel in Rephidim. (KJV)*

Now Amalek is the grandson of Esau. You can check that out in Genesis 36:12.

*9) And Moses [came to Joshua and he said], Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: ...*

Amalek started the fight and so Moses said, "Get some men."

*9b) ... tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in [my] hand.*

That was Aaron's rod—the one that turned into a serpent, the one that tapped the water and it turned into blood.

Now when this occurred, Moses was in his eighties (Exodus 7:7). We know according to Deuteronomy 34:7, he lived to be 120 years old. We know Israel wandered forty years in the wilderness and this was the beginning of that time. So he had to be in his eighties.

*10) So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moses, Aaron, and Hur ... (KJV)*

Now Hur is the son of Caleb. You can check 1 Chronicles 2:50. So Moses, Aaron, and Hur the son of Caleb:

*10b) ... went up to the top of the hill.*

*11) And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed [in the fighting]. (KJV)*

They were looking down on the battle. Now that's a head-scratcher because you have to ask yourself the question, "Why would God allow the outcome of a battle to depend on the position of Moses' hands?" That seems kind of odd. Why would God do that? What's the point?

*12) But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, [so he could sit on it]; and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. (KJV)*

In the King James it says, "*And Joshua discomfited Amalek.*"

The New King James says, "*Joshua defeated Amalek.*"

And the NIV says, "*Joshua overcame Amalek.*"

Anyway, Amalek lost the battle. Israel won.

*13b) And [he overcame, killed, defeated] Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.*

*14) And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. (KJV)*

So we see here:

*15) ... Moses built an altar, and called the name of [the altar] Jehovah-nissi: (KJV)*

In verse 16, Adam Clarke translates verse 16 this way, "*Because the hand of Amalek is against the throne of God, therefore I will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.*" And we know this is why God told Saul that He wanted Amalek utterly destroyed in 1 Samuel 15. And we know, obviously, that Saul did not do that.

We have to ask the questions, “Why is this example in the Bible? What is the point? What is God trying to teach us?”

In the Worldwide days, we were often encouraged to “hold up Mr. Armstrong’s hands” as Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ hands. And we did that. Many prayers were sent up on his behalf. We supported him with tithes and offerings over all of those years for those who were members of the Worldwide Church of God. But today there is no modern-day Moses. There just is not. So the question, then, becomes as we are in these end-days, “What does God want us to learn from this account?” Because we know all of this was written for our admonition as we’re told. Not for just a certain select group, but for all of God’s people down through the ages. It’s in there; God put it in there for a reason because God doesn’t do anything without a reason. So in these end-days, we’re going to see, hopefully before this sermon is over with, God’s Word tells us that this account is here for us today so we will learn to hold up each other’s hands. That’s the title.

### Holding Up Each Other’s Hands

There is no Moses. There is modern-day equivalent, but we’re going to see the Bible clearly says that our job in these end-days is to hold up each other’s hands.

The first point we’re going to make is fundamental to understanding this concept. We have to set this foundation.

#### **1) The first point is to understand that we are called into one family.**

Our calling is a calling into a family. Prior to God revealing to Peter in that vision, if you remember, in Acts 10 and Acts 11, Peter had a vision that told him in the end although he fought it for while that God was bringing the Gentiles into the church. Prior to that time, Jews and Gentiles had nothing to do with each other. They had no relationship at all on both sides. Let’s go to John 4 and see an account of Jesus Christ that proves this very thing. John 4, we’ll read verses 7 through 9. This is Christ at the well with a Samaritan woman. We’re familiar with the account, but notice what she says that gives us an understanding of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles of her day.

**John 4:7.** *There [came] a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus [said] unto her, Give me [some water] to drink.*

*8) (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy [food].) (KJV)*

He was by Himself and she was by herself.

*9) Then [said] the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that [you], being a Jew, [ask] drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. (KJV)*

They were unclean. If the sleeve of a Jew's coat touched a Samaritan, the Jew would have to go home and wash due to touching an "unclean thing." It was that bad.

Now let's jump to Acts 10. Remember Acts 10 and Acts 11 tell us the account of Christ teaching Peter and the disciples that the Gentiles were going to have salvation opened up to them. But let's just read the beginning of verse 28, Acts 10:28. We'll come back in just a minute, but this is to show the relationship between Jews and Gentiles.

**Acts 10:28.** *And he [Peter] said unto them [those ones assembled in Cornelius' house], [You] know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; ... (KJV)*

The Jews isolated themselves. They had no interaction, or as limited as possible interaction, with people that were non-Jews. That was the status quo until Peter had a vision. We won't take the time, but we read that in verses 9-15. So Peter had this vision; the sheet came down that was full of all unclean animals. Christ said, "Eat." Peter said, "I can't. I can't do that." He was just revolted at the idea. Finally, Peter understood that Christ was teaching him a lesson. Continuing on in verse 28, Peter said:

*28b) ... but God [has shown] me that I should not call any man common or unclean. (KJV)*

That was the purpose of the vision. Verse 34:

**Acts 10:34.** *Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: (KJV)*

Thank God for that! If He was, we wouldn't be here.

*35) But in every nation he that [fears] him, and [works] righteousness, is accepted [ by him]. (KJV)*

There are thousands and by some indications tens of thousands of Sabbath keepers, holy day keepers scattered all through the world—Russia and the Eastern Europeans, South America, Central America—that have never heard of the Worldwide Church of God. This tells us that.

*36) The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:) (KJV)*

The point he's making is He's preaching peace between groups of people—groups of people who didn't have anything to do with each other, who hated each other. So, we see here that God is starting to build a family composed of all people, all races, all colors, all backgrounds.

With that in mind, let's jump to Ephesians 2 and we'll begin in verse 11. Paul is talking to the Gentiles and I think most of us don't appreciate the earthquake that occurred in the church when Peter realized that the Gentiles were coming into the church and what effect that had on the Jews who wouldn't even let their coat sleeve touch a Gentile and what a radical concept this was. Ephesians 2 beginning in verse 11, Paul is talking to the Gentiles.

***Ephesians 2:11.*** *Wherefore remember, that [you] being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, ... (KJV)*

It's interesting he puts it "in the flesh."

*11b) ... who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; (KJV)*

The point he's making is that Jews can't be called "Circumcision" unless that procedure is done by human hands. It's a physical thing. Circumcision differentiated the Jews from the Gentiles. So, he's bringing that out, but the circumcision was something that occurred by the hands of somebody else, a human.

*12) That at that time [you] were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (KJV)*

That's in times past he says.

*13) But now in Christ Jesus [you] who sometimes were far off [He's referring to the Gentiles.] are made [near] by the blood of Christ.*

*14) For he is our peace, [Notice.] who [has] made both ... (KJV)*

He's referring to Jews and Gentiles.

*14b) ... He ... who has made both [Jews and Gentiles] one, (KJV)*

Both one—what a concept!

*14 continued) ... and [has] broken down the middle wall of partition between us; (KJV)*

Meaning: Jews and Gentiles. There are no more barriers. Christ has broken them down through His sacrifice.

*15) Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, ... (KJV)*

The Greek means "hatred."

*15) Having abolished in his flesh the [hatred] even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of [two] [meaning: the Jews and the Gentiles] one new man, so making peace; (KJV)*

You don't have to go to war with each another. You don't have to hate each other. We're all becoming part of the same family is what he's trying to get across.

*16) And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the [hatred] thereby:*

*17) And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were [near]. (KJV)*

Meaning: Jews and Gentiles.

*18) For through him we both [meaning: Jews and Gentiles] have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

*19) Now therefore [you] are no more strangers and foreigners, ... (KJV)*

Notice this last phrase.

*19b) ... but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; (KJV)*

"The household," that's a family term and if you look at the Greek, it's Strong's 3609. It's the Greek word *oikeios* (oy-ki'-os). It comes from a root word that's not too many numbers away (3624; we'll come back to that in a minute). But 3609 says "household" means *a relative, those of God's own house, or God's own household*. That sounds like a family. Now the root word 3624 is the Greek word *oikos* (oy'-kos), a little bit different. And it can mean *a dwelling place (either literally or figuratively)*; like a house, but notice this: *by implication a family*. "The household of God," the implication is he's talking about the family of God. We're being called into a family.

Verse 20, referring to the members of God's family, that family is:

*20) ... built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;*

*21) In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: (KJV)*

This family grows into a holy temple.

*22) In whom [you] also are [built] together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. (KJV)*

God not only resides in each one of us individually as a habitation.... And we're reminded of that in John 14:23 that we read on the Passover night where Christ said, "If a man loves Me, he will keep My words and My Father will love him; and We will come

and make our abode in him”—inside him. So, here in verse 22 where it says “You also are built together for a habitation of God,” that’s what he’s referring to.

Now, let’s jump to 1 Corinthians 12 and we’re going to read verses 12 through 18. Take this thought and then look at what Paul says to the church at Corinth. He’s talking about a group that is to become a family, a group that formerly were divided because the Jews and Gentiles wouldn’t have anything to do with each other. Paul is using an analogy of the human body to get them to understand some concepts here.

**1 Corinthians 12:12.** *For as the body is one, and [has] many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, [they’re still] one body: so also [it is with Jesus] Christ.*

*13) For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, ... (KJV)*

No corporations at all.

*13b) ... whether we be Jews or Gentiles, ... (KJV)*

Those were the two big divisions of the day, which he’s going to talk about—Jews and Gentiles.

*13 continued) ... [or] whether we be bond or free [slaves or masters]; ... (KJV)*

Those were the big divisions of the day.

*13 continued) ... Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, [we] have been all made to drink into one Spirit. (KJV)*

Now, what a concept! Masters looked down on slaves and treated them horribly. Jews looked down Gentiles. Gentiles looked down on Jews. And God says, “I’m going to bring you into of My family and I don’t want you to fight. I want you to get over yourselves.”

*14) For the body is not one member, but many. (KJV)*

And now he draws some analogies to get their attention.

*15) If the foot [says], Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? (KJV)*

That sounds ridiculous.

*16) And if the ear [says], Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body?*

*17) If the whole body were an eye, [how can you hear]? If the whole [body] were [the ear, [how can you smell]]? (KJV)*

He's trying to point out that each member has a distinct role. In verse 18, he tells us who decides those roles.

*18) But now God [has] set [placed] the members every one of them in the body, as it [has] pleased him. (KJV)*

The sovereignty of God is that God does what God does. And who are we to tell God what He's going to do? So, we're told here that God has put all the people He has called in the body as it suits Him. Not us. He's telling them, "I'm going to bring some slaves in. I'm going to bring some Gentiles in. I'm going to bring some people that you wouldn't have anything to do with and I want you to be one body." What a transformation that was. What he's getting across is that all the parts of the body or the family are necessary. Then it tells us that we are called into that body as Christians, regardless of when we were called—back then or in modern times.

Let's go to Ephesians 4 and look at verse 4. Our calling is into a family. We find this over and over in the New Testament because it was such a transformation in thinking that was required of the people coming into the church because of the culture that they were living in.

***Ephesians 4:4.** There is one body, and one Spirit, even as [you] are called ... (KJV)*

One body. One spirit. And that spirit unites the body, the family.

Then go over to Colossians 3:15. What was going on would be the equivalent of in the south after the Civil War if God had sent an apostle back then if those were the times where the church was going to be told, "I'm going to call black slaves and I'm going to call white masters in the church and you're one body. It suits Me to do that. Be at peace and get along." That's how it was back in those days.

***Colossians 3:15.** And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, ... (KJV)*

Because you had these different people coming into the church with different backgrounds.

*15b) ... to which also [meaning peace] [you] are called in one body; ... (KJV)*

You are called in one family into peace.

*15 continued) ... and be [you] thankful [for that]. (KJV)*

This is precisely what is happening in the church today in these end-times. This is what is happening: Coming into a body of like-minded people who can live in peace with each other.

Let me read from two e-mails I received right after the Feast. Both had attended the Feast in Kellogg. One was a member in the church for decades and just said this: “I felt for the first time that I was part of a big family.” The first time—been in the church for decades! Another one, this is from a scattered member who attended and then wrote after the Feast.

It was wonderful to see you again. And it was so good to be back. I feel sad that I am leaving and wished that I lived closer to all of you. I miss you so much already. It means so much to me.

Listen to this.

It means so much to me to come all the way and know that I am loved and part of the family.

Think about that realization—to travel long distances to come to feel loved and feel part of a family.

The brethren are the highlight of my year so it was a special blessing for me to come.

That is what is happening in the church today if we will just follow God’s laws, allow God’s holy spirit to work in us and shed the love of God to everybody around us. So this first point is that we have been called to One family.

Now leading to the second point, some of us have possibly overlooked an essential obligation that we have as a family member. All family members—whether children or parents—have obligations. And I think sometimes we overlook the obligation we have in being part of God’s family here on earth.

## **2. Since we are a family, we are called to hold up one another.**

Just as Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ hands, we are called to hold up one another’s hands.

Now, holding up our own hands is hard as Moses found out because his hands started sinking after a while and they had to sit him on a rock and have Aaron and Hur hold up his hands for him. It reminds me of an account that occurred to me in the seventh grade. This was in the 1950s in El Paso, Texas. My seventh grade homeroom teacher was the school librarian. Her name was Mrs. Byerly. She was all of probably 5’1”. If she weighed a hundred pounds, I would be very surprised. She had gray hair and she talked in this very little high voice—sweet, sweet lady. I just loved her very much. We had her homeroom in the library of the grade school. She had her desk up front and then all our desks were in a semicircle around her.

We had a few quasi-hoodlums in those days. Remember this is the 1950s and they wore greased down ducktails and their jeans were really low on their hips. There was a belt requirement so they'd get the thinnest possible belt. It was probably an eighth of an inch thick. They smoked out in the bathrooms or wherever they could and they fashioned themselves hoodlums. One of these guys was a young kid. I still remember his name—Eddie Cooney. And I remember this event just like it was yesterday. Eddie started smarting off in homeroom. She told him to be quiet and he wouldn't be quiet. Here this little lady says, "Eddie, get up here." So he slouched and drug himself up. She walked around to the front. Her desk was here and he was facing her. She turned him around and walked out in front of him between him and the rest of us. She had a sheet of paper in her hands. He was standing there rocking from one hip to the other looking totally bored and she tore off two pieces of paper each about the size of a postage stamp. She says, "Let's see how tough and strong you are." So she handed the two pieces of paper to him and said "Take each one of these in your hands." He did, smirking. She says, "Now let's see if you can lift these off the ground." So he lifted them off the ground and he stood there. Then she calmly just walked back and sat at her desk.

So he was smirking. "This is so easy" and all of that. After a couple of minutes, you could see a little bit of sweat break out on his brow and then his smirk started turning into grimace. We wore T-shirts then to school. You could see the muscles on both of his shoulders starting to quiver. Then his hands slowly started to sink down. This little voice from behind him at the desk, "Oh, are those pieces of paper really that heavy?" He would grunt them up like that. After about three or four or five minutes, I don't remember. He just had enough and his hands flopped to his sides. He just couldn't hold his arms up anymore. She walked around and made the comment that, "You're not as tough as you thought you were." Of course, all of us out there were smirking and giggling.

So, it's hard enough to hold up our own hands. Remember Proverbs 24:10 says:

**Proverbs 24:10.** *If [you] faint in the day of adversity, [your] strength is small. (KJV)*

It's hard enough to hold up our own hands, but holding up one another's hands is even harder. It is even harder.

Let's go back to 1 Corinthians 12. We were there just a little bit ago. We ended it in verse 18; let's begin in verse 20.

**1 Corinthians 12:20.** *But now are they many members, yet but one body [or one family].*

*21) And the eye [can't] say unto the hand, I have no need of [you]: nor again the head to the feet, I [don't] have [any] need [for] you [either].*

*22) [No], much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are [absolutely] necessary: (KJV)*

If you've ever stumped your big toe, you know exactly what I'm talking about. Verse 23, I'll read this out of the New Living Translation because the King James delicately tromps all over this.

*23) The parts we regard as less honorable, are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect from the eyes of others those parts which should not be seen. (NLT)*

*24) For our comely parts have no need: but God [has] tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: (KJV)*

The reason He's doing so gives more honor to those parts that are lacking. He tells us in verse 25 why He does that.

*25) That there should be no [division] in the body; but that [Here is the key:] members should have the same care one for another. (KJV)*

It doesn't make any difference what part of the body is hurting or needs care or needs help. All the members should come to the help of that one part and have the same care and concern no matter who it is that is suffering.

*26) And [when] one member [suffers], all the members suffer with it; or [when] one member [is] honored, [rather than being jealous or envious] all the members rejoice with it. (KJV)*

This tells us that to be part of the body, we have to be involved in each other's lives. We have to know each other well enough to know when somebody is hurting. We have to know each other well enough to know when somebody is honored in some way. That means we get to know each other as the body, obviously, is aware of every part. As I said, if you stump or hurt one part, it gets your attention very quickly. So you see God has provided for us a family, a body for individual support and individual help.

Let's go to Ecclesiastes 4 and see a principle that directly applies to holding one another up. Solomon hit the nail on the head. I will read this out of the NLT. It adds a little bit and it doesn't detract at all, but adds to the meaning of these verses. Ecclesiastes 4, we'll read verses 9 through 12.

***Ecclesiastes 4:9.*** *Two people can accomplish more than twice as much as one, (NLT)*

And you know that. If you see two skilled laborers working together, they are helping each other out and they can get more done than each individually.

*9b) ... they get a better return for their labor.*

10) *If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But people who are alone when they fall are in real trouble.*

11) *And on a cold night, two under the same blanket can gain warmth from each other. But how can one be warm alone?*

12) *A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated [meaning from behind], but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. (NLT)*

We have the common phrase, “I’ve got your back.” And that’s exactly what it means.

12b) *... Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken. (NLT)*

So we see how people in a family can cooperate and work together and get more done than they otherwise would have, but also protect each other in case somebody gets into trouble.

Now, let’s jump to John 15. We’re going to read verse 13. This is the night Christ was betrayed. We read this often at that time of the year. It’s a very familiar scripture, but we’re going to see that maybe there is more to it than sometimes we have been led to believe, certainly in the past—decades ago.

**John 15:13.** *Greater love [has] no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. (KJV)*

And traditionally, it was taught that this meant we should be willing to die for each other, which is absolutely true. When the church taught that Christ was going to return in the early ‘70s and there was going to be tribulation and persecution, we should be willing to die for one another and that is absolutely true, but if you look at the Greek word for “lay down,” it means much more than that.

This is Strong’s 5087, and it says, “in the widest application, literally and figuratively; (This is what it means:) *to place ... in a passive or horizontal posture; to bow; or to kneel down.*” Now when it says “lay down,” the literal meaning doesn’t mean “death.” It means to put yourself down as a slave would to his master, to kneel down, or to bow down. So, it’s not just willing to die for a brother or sister, but it’s to make yourself subservient to the brother or sister.

We know Paul said directly in Philippians 2:3—we quote that many, many times—“*Let nothing be done through strife or selfish ambition, [fighting each other and all of that] but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem the other better than ourselves.*” That’s what this is referring to. When Christ said, “I want you to lay down your life,” that means “I want you to take a servant’s role. I want you to esteem others better than you esteem yourselves. And I want you to have lowliness of mind. You need lowliness of mind in order to do that.

So, Christ says, “In this family I’m calling, in My body, we must dedicate ourselves to looking after each other, to taking care of each other, to putting other’s interests ahead of our own and looking after each other. In other words: Holding up one another’s hands. Let me give you an example because it isn’t always easy. I’m sure Aaron and Hur got tired. The sun was blazing down and it was hard for them, but holding up one another’s hands is not always easy. Let’s go to Galatians 6 and we’ll read the first two verses. This is just one example under this second point that that we are called to hold up one another. This is a way we can help hold our brother up.

***Galatians 6:1. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ... (KJV)***

Meaning: If you see your brother sin. Maybe they sin against you. Maybe you witness a sin that they commit.

*1b) ... [you] which are spiritual [meaning: those who are exercising God’s spirit], restore such a one ... (KJV)*

Notice the attitude.

*1 continued) ... in the spirit of meekness; (KJV)*

Just what we read in Philippians 2:3—esteeming others better than themselves, lowliness of mind.

*1 continued) ... in the spirit of meekness; considering [yourself, lest [you] also be tempted [or fall into a trial].*

*2) Bear [you] one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (KJV)*

It would be difficult to go to a brother or a sister and say, “Look, I saw you do this or I heard you say this. And that shocked me because I don’t see that in the Bible. I’m concerned. I don’t want you to get off on the wrong track and I hope I misunderstood or I hope maybe I didn’t get the context, but I thought I’d sit down and talk to you about it. That takes guts. It really does. And it takes fortitude powered by God’s holy spirit but sometimes it’s necessary to hold up a friend who is slipping and falling. That’s just one example.

So the second point is that we are, indeed, called to hold up one another. We have four points. That leads us to the third.

**3) Holding one another up is exactly the opposite of looking down on members of the family, judging members of the family, or condemning members of the family.**

And, yet, old attitudes die hard. I can remember when I first came into the church and I heard many times when someone got sick—maybe they had cancer or maybe they had an appendicitis or whatever it was—I heard many times people say, “I wonder what their sin was.” And that puts one in a position of looking down on your church brother and

making a judgment or condemning. “They must be sinning. I just know they’re sinning.” Those attitudes die hard.

Let me read a recent e-mail that I got a few weeks before the Feast about someone in the church who is not in this area and lives all the way across the country, but speaks to this old attitudes die hard.

Sometime in the future would you mind doing a sermon on people judging each other’s faith? Emotions like sadness, struggle, grief don’t mean that people are faithless.

when they go through a trial and have sadness or grief or tears or whatever. Going on:

There is a belief lingering from our former organization and carried on into many of the splits that one must be totally stoic and not show any emotion and this is considered strong faith. Some are strong people and I personally admire how they handle severe trials, but not everyone’s genetics or family upbringings produce the same effect. It is always a work in progress and prayer to God for the strength.

We all handle difficulties differently, but apparently in her experience—this is a woman; women are better at expressing their emotions—she expressed emotions when going through trials and was criticized for it. Going on:

Everyone has different backgrounds, and chemical and genetic makeup, and we are all fighting our own unique battles within ourselves as Christians. Some have more faith in some types of trials than others.

But notice what she says.

We all need uplifting and support [meaning: from our brothers and sisters] and not harsh verbal judgment by other brethren as to how weak our faith is.

These are similar kinds of judgments to wondering what “their sin is” if someone gets sick. Going on:

Only God can read our hearts. Only God knows our inner struggles. If someone sheds a tear, they are often met with a verbal tongue lashing about how little faith they have. [Notice this!] We all need comfort, compassion, and encouragement. That gives us the support we need as we petition God for more faith.

Holding up each other’s hands. Going on:

This has happened to me over the years—so far not in Pacific. And I have heard of a good number of others complaining about the same thing. Instead of comfort, they get criticized. One woman recently told me a person told her that

God took her husband away from her in death because she must have done something wrong or had a wrong attitude.

Can you imagine that? You lose your husband and somebody, who we're told here in the scriptures, very clearly somebody who should be there to help and lift up and support does exactly the opposite, saying "You've got a bad attitude. You're sinning. Something is wrong here. Otherwise God would not have let your husband die." That kind of attitude presupposes somebody judging God's motives and having more knowledge than God. Going on, this woman who was on the receiving end of this says,

She asked me 'Where is the love in God's church?'

Then she goes on to say,

She is not in Pacific, by the way.

But the point is those old attitudes die hard. Rather than judging and condemning, this is what our attitude should be. Let's go to Luke 18. Take this parable—we know it by heart—but take it from the standpoint of members in a family. Here we're talking about a publican, a tax collector (someone who is hated; generally, they were Jews but they were hated by the rest of the Jews) and somebody who elevated himself as being the "chief of the Jews" so to speak. Luke 18:9.

**Luke 18:9.** *And [Christ] spoke this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and [they] despised others: (KJV)*

Like this attitude we just read.

*10) Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. (KJV)*

The Greek word for "publican" means *collector of public revenue*—tax collector. IRS, we would say.

*11) The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself, ... (KJV)*

Obviously his prayers didn't go higher than the ceiling of the room he was in.

*11b) ... God, I thank [You], that I am not [like these] other [people; I'm better than they] are, [they're] extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this [tax collector].*

*12) I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of [everything] that I possess.*

*13) And [this tax collector], standing afar off [probably over in the corner where it was dark], would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but [he beat] upon his [chest], saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. (KJV)*

He saw himself. The other man did not.

14) *I tell you, this man went down to his house justified ... (KJV)*

Justification means *being in a right standing with God, having your sins forgiven.*

14b) *... rather than the other: for every one that [exalts] himself shall be abased; and he that [humbles] himself shall be exalted. (KJV)*

And so, as we read in Philippians, we should esteem others better than ourselves. And, as we read in Galatians 6:1, we are to go to our brother and sister in a spirit of meekness, in a spirit of humility like this tax collector had. Now, talking about what our attitude should be, with this in mind, let's go to Luke chapter 6 where Christ hits the nail on the head. Luke 6, we'll begin in verse 31. Christ asks a question that we need to ask ourselves every day of our lives if we're married, in relation to our mate, to our children; if we're not married, to our friends, to those we work with, those we come in contact with.

**Luke 6:31.** *And as [you] would that men should do to you, do [you] also to them likewise. (KJV)*

It's very simple. There is a simplicity in Jesus Christ. It is so simple. Whatever you would like people to do unto you, then we should do that very same thing to other people. And people say, "Well, I don't know what to do?" What would you like to be done to you?

32) *For if [you] love [those who] love you, what [thankfulness is that; what goodness is that]? For sinners also love those that love them. (KJV)*

Crooks love each other too. Verse 36:

36) *Be [you] therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful [full of mercy].*  
37) *Judge not, and [you] shall not be judged: ... (KJV)*

The Greek word for "judge" is Strong's 2919. It's the Greek word *krino* (*kree'-no*), spelled k-r-i-n-o. It means *to decide mentally or judicially* [to make a decision mentally, meaning to render judgment, or to do it in a judicial sense as a judge would]; *by implication, to try* [put on trial or], *to condemn.*

Christ says, "Don't condemn. Don't put somebody on trial." He says, "If you condemn, you put somebody on trial, you're going to be judged the same way. If you don't, then you won't."

37b) *... condemn not, and [you] shall not be condemned: ... (KJV)*

This Greek word is a different word. It's Strong's 2613. It means *to be pronounced guilty.*

He says, “Don’t pronounce people guilty. You don’t know their heart. You may not know all the circumstances. You might be dealing with second-hand information.”

*37 continued) ... forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: (KJV)*

Verse 38, this is out of the NLT.

*38) If you give, you will receive.... (NLT)*

What a promise!

*38b) Your gift will return to you in full measure—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over. Whatever measure you use in giving, large or small, it will be used to measure what is given back to you." (NLT)*

What a principle! If we give, if we serve, if we devote ourselves to taking care of members of the family and lifting up each other’s arms, then that will come back to us in greater measure than we gave it. That’s the promise!

Now, Miriam, Moses’ sister, made a huge mistake. She allowed herself to become Moses’ judge and she allowed herself to get in an attitude of condemnation of her brother. Now we know who is behind it. Satan was behind it and Satan can be behind us having the same attitude. So, let’s look at this example over in Numbers 12. Put it into the context of us today having a decision to make as to whether or not we judge or condemn our brothers or sisters in the church. Numbers 12:1. I’m not talking “You shall know them by their fruits.” I’m not talking about that. I’m talking about passing judgment, condemning in that regard.

**Numbers 12.1.** *And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. (KJV)*

If you look up the Hebrew for the word “Ethiopian,” it’s Strong’s 3571 and it literally means *a Cushite woman*. Now Cush was the son of Ham, the father of Nimrod (Genesis 10:7-8). And so this woman was of dark skin, far darker skin than Moses. They saw that he married this Cushite woman and they started making judgments and started condemning.

*2) And they said [Miriam and Aaron], [Has] the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? [Hasn’t] he spoken also by us? And the Lord heard it. (KJV)*

Verse 3, this is noteworthy.

*3) (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all ... men which were upon the face of the earth.) (KJV)*

They were accusing somebody who was not trying to exalt himself, just the opposite.

*4) And the Lord spoke suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out [you] three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out.*

*5) And the Lord came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and [He] called Aaron and Miriam: and they [stepped forth, they] came forth. (KJV)*

My suspicion is at this moment in time, they were both thinking “Ah, we’ve arrived. It’s now our time to be exalted. We’re going to be elevated right up there beside Moses. Maybe even ahead of Moses.”

*6) And [Christ, the God of the Old Testament] said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and [I] will speak unto him in a dream. (KJV)*

There are many examples in the Bible of that.

*7) My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all [my] house.*

*8) With him ... I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently [very clearly], and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold: wherefore then were [you] not afraid to speak against my servant Moses? (KJV)*

What He was saying is “Have you had me talk to you directly? Have you heard my voice directly? Face to face, “mano a mano,” so to speak.” And remember when Moses went into the cleft of the rock and he asked to see God? And Christ told him, “You can’t do that and live, but I’m going to put you in the cleft of the rock. And I’m going to pass by and you can see my back parts.” And Miriam and Aaron knew that. So what Christ was saying to them was “Have I done that with you?” Obviously not.

*9) And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them; and he departed.*

*10) And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous. (KJV)*

The indication is she was that way from head to foot. It wasn’t that she had a few spots on her hand or a spot on her forehead. She was leprous head to toe.

We have to stop here and ask the questions, “Since they were together, why wasn’t Aaron made leprous? Why pick on Miriam?” I think the answer, when we look at the history, is fairly obvious. Aaron was easily led. Remember the incident of the golden calf? Moses was up on the mountain and all of a sudden the people started on a rampage and they asked “Where is this man Moses? We need a god. You need to make us a god.” And Aaron, guess what? He just did. He manufactured a golden calf.

He crafted it and presented it to them and he said, "Here's the god that led you out of Egypt." He was easily led and easily pressured. So, by what we see in the Bible, I think it's fairly obvious that Miriam was the instigator. She was the one that pushed it and pushed it and that's why God didn't strike Aaron. He struck her.

*11) And Aaron said unto Moses, ... (KJV)*

Notice how he calls Moses.

*11b) ... Alas, my lord, ... (KJV)*

He was accusing him a few minutes ago. Now he's "my lord." He says:

*11 continued) ... I beseech [you], lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned. (KJV)*

Aaron came and he just confessed. Good for him. Verse 12, I'll read it out of the NLT.

*12) Don't let her be like a stillborn baby, already decayed at birth." (NLT)*

So she obviously was so filled with leprosy that her whole body looked decayed. He says, "Don't let her be like a stillborn baby who comes out of the womb already decaying." Verse 13, back to the King James.

*13) And Moses cried unto the [Eternal and said], Heal her now, O God, I beseech [you]. (KJV)*

Moses could have said, "Give her what she deserves. Let her suffer." No, he didn't do that.

*14) And the Lord said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? ... (KJV)*

"This is an example," He says. Therefore:

*14b) ... Let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in again.*

*15) And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: ... (KJV)*

The principle of that you find in Numbers 5:2-3.

*15b) ... and the people [did not leave] journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again. (KJV)*

And she was clean and she was healed. And they both learned their lesson.

The lesson for us today is we must be very careful about judging and condemning others. It was all too common in the church in the past and, in some circles in the greater church, it is all too common today. So let's take a lesson from that. And, as we read in the introduction, let's understand that in holding up Moses' hands Aaron and Hur were his servants—not his judges. They were serving him by holding up his hands. And the lesson is for us as we serve one another in God's family, we're not judges either; we're servants to help hold up one another's hands. We should do the same to each other as Aaron and Hur did to Moses.

Let's go to Galatians 5:13 under this third point. This is talking about our calling.

**Galatians 5:13.** *For, brethren, [you] have been called unto liberty [or freedom]; [but don't use this] liberty [or freedom as] an occasion to the flesh [to satisfy the flesh], but [use this liberty to] serve one another [out of love, motivated by love]. (KJV)*

Use the freedom we have in the church. Use the freedom we have under God's law. Use the freedom we have in exercising God's spirit. Not for selfish reasons, but to serve one another out of love.

#### **4. The fourth and the last point: God tests us daily to see if we will serve and take care of and hold up one another's hands in the family.**

God's going to test us daily to see if we do that. Let's go to Romans 15 and we'll read the first two verses. This basically says it all. It says, "I don't want you to be selfish. I want you to be unselfish." Notice what it says.

**Romans 15:1.** *We then that are strong ... (KJV)*

Not that we're better than other people. This "When we are strong" might mean in good health compared to somebody who is weak from ill health.

1) *[Then we] that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, ... (KJV)*

If we have the ability—the physical strength, the financial strength, whatever it takes—the strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak:

1b) *... and not to please ourselves. (KJV)*

Again: Esteeming others better than ourselves.

2) *Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification. (KJV)*

Basic unselfishness. And then look what Christ said in Matthew 7. We'll begin in verse 20 and we'll go through verse 28. We often quote Matthew 7 because it says twice in

there that “You shall know them by their fruits.” And we’re starting in verse 20 which is the second time Christ said that.

**Matthew 7:20.** *Wherefore by their fruits [you] shall know them. (KJV)*

And He says—this is important.

*21) Not everyone that [says] unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; ... (KJV)*

But He’s telling us who is going to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

*21b) ... but he that [does] the will of my Father which is in heaven. (KJV)*

That’s the key. Then He goes on to say

*22) Many [are going to come] in that day [when Christ returns and say], Lord, Lord, [haven’t we] prophesied in [Your] name? [Haven’t we] cast out [demons] in Your name? [Haven’t we done all of these wonderful things in Your name]? (paraphrased)*

*23) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, [you] that work iniquity. (KJV)*

Meaning: You that do lawlessness; you don’t keep the commandments. He just said at the end of verse 21, “You have to do the will of My Father.”

*24) Therefore whosoever [hears] these sayings of mine, and [does] them, ... (KJV)*

Then He goes on to talk about building a house on a rock, putting the foundation right to bedrock. And winds come, storms come, and the house remains standing. He said in verse 26:

*26) [Anybody] that [hears] these sayings of mine, and [doesn’t do] them, [is like] a ... man, [who builds a] house upon the sand: (KJV)*

We saw that hurricane that came up the east coast, hit New Jersey and New York and Atlantic City. All those beachfront properties that were built on piles just sunk into the sand, they were gone—gone in a matter of hours. He said, “That’s the way it’s going to be if you do not do my will and you build your house on sand.”

What we’re being told here is every day we have a choice. Do we look selfishly for our own interests, what concerns us, what interests us, what our minds are on at that point? Or do we take our mind and put it on other people and become concerned about what they’re suffering and what they’re going through?

Look at Luke 17 here. We're going to begin in verse 7. I'll start the beginning of it out of the NLT and then, when we get toward the end of it, we'll switch back to the King James. Christ is drawing an analogy about slaves and He wants us to get an idea of our role in the situation. The NLT says "servant" but the Greek means "slave."

**Luke 17:7.** *When a [slave] comes in from plowing or taking care of sheep, he doesn't just sit down and eat.*

*8) He must first prepare his master's meal and serve him his supper before eating his own.*

*9) And the servant is not even thanked ... (NLT)*

Why?

*9b) because he is merely doing what he is supposed to do? (NLT)*

What's required of him.

*10) In the same way, when you obey me you should say, ... (NLT)*

Now I'll read the rest out of the King James.

*10b) ... We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. (KJV)*

And there is a principle here that if we only do the minimum, Christ is saying we're unprofitable. "If we only do the basics that are just required, we are unprofitable," He says. So the message is we have to go above and beyond. We have to do more than is required.

As an example, there was a mother with seven children at the Feast by herself. Before the Feast, she had a car wreck, totaled the car. She borrowed a vehicle to get to the Feast, but she's going home. She will need to go grocery shopping. She needs to try to find a job. She needs to do all this and she has no transportation. Guess what? Some people got together and they decided to do something about her plight, to do something about it. Now, you can't read in the Bible that you have to get a car for her, but the principle is there. One of the members was hurting. One of the members was in need. So, a number of people said, "Let's do something about it." In other words, it was a highly visible example of people holding up each other's hands.

That was a visible example, but there are so many under the radar invisible examples where people quietly serve, quietly help, quietly hold each other's hands up and they get no credit whatsoever except in heaven; that's the key. We don't do it to be seen. We shouldn't do it to be seen, but we should do it because we want to go above and beyond and not be an unprofitable servant. In 1 Peter 4:18 what does Peter say there?

**1 Peter 4:18.** *And if the righteous scarcely be saved, ... (KJV)*

What's going to happen to the sinner? What's going to happen to the person that barely does enough just to skate by? But if the righteous are scarcely saved, we want to be part of that group. And in doing so, we need to hold up each other's hands and go above and beyond.

Look at the update. Look at the trials there. I've been asked in the past by people who are going through horrible trials, "Why isn't God healing me? I've had this for years," or "It's terminal," or "There's nothing I can do anymore. Why isn't God healing me?" And this goes on for year after year after year sometimes. My answer is to them that only God knows. God is sovereign. God does what God is going to do, but could it be—think about this, you who are sick—could it be that God is using your sickness, your illness, your suffering, and your pain to see whether all the rest of us are going to think about you?

How many times do we think about that person during the day? Or are we so consumed with what we're doing we never even think about them? How many times are we going to pray during a day for somebody that suffers every minute of every day? And God is watching us. How much concern do we have for those who suffer? Do we think of them during the day? Is our mind on them? I wonder how they're doing. I hope they're not in pain and then send up a short prayer. Do we take the time to send cards and phone calls, e-mails?

As we read earlier in 1 Corinthians 12:25, we should have the same care one for another. So could God allow some of these horrible trials for the express purpose of looking at us and seeing how we handle it? Then, if we all of a sudden start having the love of God in our hearts every minute of every day and our mind is off of ourselves and on others, then God might step in and say, "They don't need to be sick anymore. Mission accomplished." So, we need to think about it on a personal level. I do. Is God waiting for me to do something to lift the burden from somebody else? Is God waiting for me to have a different attitude or a different approach to lift a burden from somebody, to lift a sickness from somebody?

God is watching to see where our mind is. Is it exclusively on our concerns and our mind is just wrapped up with us? Or are we continually thinking about the needs of our brothers and sisters in the family? God watches us daily to see if we are holding up each other's hands.

Let's go to Philippians 2:4 and see a final scripture in this regard. This is, you could say, a suggestion, but if the righteous are scarcely saved, we would do well to make this a commandment. Not just a suggestion. This is out of the New King James.

***Philippians 2:4.*** *Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. (NKJV)*

Let's remember that scripture and let's realize that God watches us every day to see where our minds are, to see where we are placing our thoughts and our prayers and our energy. Is it all about me? Or is it about the family that God has called us into?

Now in conclusion, the example of holding up Moses' hand, as we said in the beginning, it's there's for a reason. It's not just a bedtime story. It's there for a reason. And, as I asked in the introduction, "Why would God allow the outcome of a battle to be dependent upon where Moses' hands were at that moment in time?" The reason He allowed that to happen back then is to show God's people down through the millennia, down through the centuries that if we serve and help one another, if we hold up one another's hands, then we are obeying the essence of the second great commandment, loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Now the first great commandment is loving God with all our heart. We wouldn't obey the Second if we didn't understand and obey the first. So, we have to love God with all our heart and all our being and if we do love God with all of that and He says, "The second is like unto it. Here's what I want you to do. I want you to esteem others better than yourselves. I want you to look on the interests of others and not be selfish about it. Then, this is a test for all of us to see how well we keep those two basic commandments. So, let's learn the lesson from the holding up of Moses' hands.