

Why Do We Lift Our Hands in Worship?

All through the Bible you see scriptures of people bowing down or lying prostrate, yet some of us have had experiences where we were hesitant to lift our hands in worship. When we feel that gentle tug inside; it is the Holy Spirit within us.

We feel like we want to do something such as raise our hands, but then we see our friends and family nearby and we are concerned about what it looks like and if they are doing it. We want to worship the Lord in a new way, but we are scared. We are concerned by fear of the unknown and fear of man.

When you are praying or worshiping in any situation you can lift your hands in praise and adoration to God. When you lift your hands to God in prayer or song you are releasing the Holy Spirit, showing Him you adore Him and you are saying, "God, I am open to you and a touch of Your presence." You are worshiping and exalting Him for who He is, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

"Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms" (Psa. 95:2). The word thanksgiving (todah), according to Strong's No. 8426, is derived from the verb yadah (Strong's H3034). It means to hold out the hand, an extension of the hand, especially to revere or worship with extended hands. It is to thank and praise God with one's hands extended.

Throughout the Bible it shows us scriptures of the strength and power that comes through our fingers, hands and arms.

Fingers: Our fingers are a symbol of strength and power in our prayer, praise and worship. Look at what God did with His fingers. "Then the Lord delivered to me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words

which the Lord had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly” (Deut. 9:10). God wrote on a stone tablet with His fingers.

“This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear.” Here, in John 8:6, Jesus used His finger to convict people of their sin and set a woman free from her sin.

“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained” (Psalm 8:3).

“Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart” (Prov. 7:3).

When you are raising your hands you are also stretching out your fingers. God gave us commandments through His fingers. What are you releasing into the spiritual atmosphere by raising your hands and extending your fingers?

Hands: Hands are a very important tool in our Christian walk. We fold them or open them up while we pray. We lay hands on others to heal the sick and we extend them for a handshake or hug as a Christian greeting. God also used His hands. “Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, measured heaven with a span and calculated the dust of the earth in a measure? Weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?” (Is. 40:12).

We know that God used His hands to create. “Blessed be the Lord my Rock, Who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle” (Ps. 144:1). Right here God is training our hands for war and our fingers for battle. Raising our hands is warfare worship.

What if by raising our hands in praise to the Lord we are binding the enemy and releasing the praise to combat the attacks? What if by raising your hand you could lift those

burdens and heaviness and enter into the presence of God Almighty? Well you can! That is what raising our hands does; it lifts burdens, releases His glory into the atmosphere to combat demonic attacks and helps us enter into His presence.

In Isaiah 19:16, it also shows us the strength of His hand. "In that day Egypt will be like women, and will be afraid and fear because of the waving of the hand of the Lord of hosts, which He waves over it." The enemy cowers in fear because of an upraised hand of the Lord. So, if the enemy cowers in fear beneath the upraised hand of the Lord, then he has to cower in fear beneath our upraised hand because Jesus Christ lives in me and He lives in YOU!

Moses' hands were used to win a war in Exodus 17:11. "And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun." I love this verse. Moses' hands were used to combat physical war and spiritual war. We can be victorious by lifting our hands and arms in worship!

Arms: As we raise our fingers and hands we are also lifting our arms. God designed everything to work together, and even our arms have significance when we raise them in praise to the Lord. Regarding Samson, Judges 15:14 says, "When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him; and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds broke loose from his hands." Here the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him.

Isaiah 11:2 states that, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon you." I want the Spirit of the Lord to rest upon me and rest upon you!

Jesus took the children up in His arms and blessed them. "And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them" (Mark 10:16). Jesus used every part of Himself to bless the children, His physical body to hold Him, and His Spirit and Soul, His emotions and the authority of His words to bless them.

Clapping: Clapping is applauding and pleasing to God and biblical. It is praising our God for who He is and what He has done. If we can clap, jump, shout and cheer at a football stadium, concert, or performance, then we should do it for the Lord above, the Creator of the universe.

Psalms 47:1 tell us to clap. "Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph!" Clap! Shout! Get excited! Strong's No. 8628 defines clap (taqa') as; to clatter, clang, sound, blow, clap or strike. Here it appears, when they define clap, that heaven is going to be noisy! If you think heaven is going to be boring and somber you are wrong. The angels are singing all day long: Holy Holy Holy! That doesn't sound boring or somber! They are doing it in praise and adoration to our Father. Hallelujah!

We continue to have clapping and joy in Isaiah 55:12. "For you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." The Bible is instructing us here how to worship. We shall go out with joy. Raising our hands, clapping and singing praise to our Lord gives us joy. How can you stay sad or depressed when you are singing, dancing, clapping and exalting the King of Kings and Lord of Lords?

I am not suggesting you go and do all these hand movements and gestures and remember this list. I am encouraging you to step out of your comfort zone and enjoy your worship time with the Lord. Don't be afraid to open your hands and let the Holy Spirit move through them. Let it happen naturally.

I remember the first time the Holy Spirit called me to raise my hands. I was in a charismatic church where everyone was doing it. I kind of felt this tugging inside me like I should, but I was afraid. Did I do it? Yes, and I have never turned back. The feeling of love, honor and respect, and intimate feeling I have with the Lord is indescribable.

Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and try something different in worship, after all we are created to worship Him. Everyone enters into worship differently, but why not be open to the Spirit's leading in case He calls you to do something different.

*This article excerpted from **Kathy DeGraw's** book **A Worship Woven Life: Learning to Live a Life of Praise**.*

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