

Lifelines

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Topic: God's Open Hand

When God Opens His Hand...

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The Bible is full of word pictures which paint visual portraits of the characteristics of the one true, living, invisible God. These word pictures and thoughtful images enable us to envision, and to come to know God. Children often pose questions to parents about God. Who is God? What does God look like? Where is God? Why does God do this or that? Somehow a thorough explanation of God, filled with theological terms, just makes their heads swim. Such abstract terms also boggle the minds of adults. What is God like? What does God do in the world, or in my life?

Perhaps this is one reason that the Book of Psalms in the Bible is so very popular, especially when we encounter something that we don't understand; something that causes us grief, or confusion, or hurt. Very few of us are good at expressing our emotions measuredly, and healthily.

In Psalm 145:14–16 (NASB95) we read: “The LORD sustains all who fall; and raises up all who are bowed down. The eyes of all look to You, and You give them their food in due time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.” This passage describes many byproducts which come to us from God, when God “opens His hand.” We serve the God of the open hand! What an amazing picture.

Sometimes our interactions with other humans are met with a closed hand. In a life filled with difficulties and busyness, our hands are closed. If we are in pain, our hands are closed. If we are angry, our hands are closed, sometimes even ready to strike someone else. When we write, our hand is closed around the pen. If we are playing sports, using a tool, a fishing rod, or doing many other things, our hand is closed. When a child aggressively rips an item out of another's hand, they grip the object firmly in their hand and turn away so that the other child cannot get it back.

Often our hands reveal the current attitude of one's heart. We spend much of our lives trying to grasp and hold something we desire. Angry people are closed to resolution, until they begin to open their heart. Humans are geared to always trying to grab something and then keep our hands closed so no one else can get it.

So what is God like? Is He always forcibly trying to rip something we have out of our hands? No. Does God strut around with closed fists so He's always ready to knock you down? No. Read verse 14-16 above, and notice God's attitudes and activities toward humans and the rest of creation.

The Lord sustains all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down, down and out. God approaches us with open hands. When we trip and are about to fall, He grasps our hand and pulls us back up. His hands are open in all of those interactions. All eyes look to God to provide food and strength to live. At our house, we feed a feral cat that consistently turns her back to us as we put out the food, and eats the food after we walk away. People do that to God, but God does not turn His back to our needs.

God is at heart exceedingly loving and generous. After someone burns us after multiple times of sacrificing to help them, we are reluctant to help again. Yet God, regardless of how obnoxious and belligerent we are, continues to keep His hand open to us, to give us what we need. As a hungry soul reaches out towards God, seeking a change in their life, God reaches down to raise them up, and will

come to live within them to empower them to live a new life. God opens His hand, and thereby satisfies the desire of every living thing (145:16). Is your heart open, or closed, towards God?

Are your hands open as you approach God, ready to receive the desires of your heart? Or are you angry and resentful, with clenched fists, cursing and turning your back to God? He approaches us with an open heart and open hands. He can meet all the desires and longings of your heart. Why not turn towards God, open your heart to receive His Spirit and His love and generosity?

Have you fallen down? God can raise you up. Are your hands closed, refusing to receive His blessings? Or are you willing to open your heart, and place your life and heart in the hands of God, whose hands remain open to you?

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