

1 Timothy 5:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.

Analysis

Lay hands suddenly on no man (Χεῖρας ταχέως μηδενὶ ἐπιτίθει, Cheiras tacheōs mēdeni epititheī)—'do not lay hands on anyone hastily.' Tacheōs means quickly, hastily, rashly. This refers to ordination—the laying on of hands in commissioning elders (4:14, Acts 6:6, 13:3). Don't ordain leaders prematurely without thorough vetting.

Neither be partaker of other men's sins (μηδὲ κοινωνεῖ ἁμαρτίαις ἄλλοτρίαις, mēde koinōnei hamartiais allotriais)—'and do not share in the sins of others.' Koinōneō means to share in, participate in, have fellowship with. Hasty ordination makes you complicit in the unqualified leader's subsequent failures. **Keep thyself pure** (σεαυτὸν ἁγνὸν τήρει, seauton hagnon tērei)—'keep yourself pure.'

Premature ordination has serious consequences. If you appoint unqualified or unproven men to leadership and they fall into sin or heresy, you share responsibility for their failures and the damage they cause. Take time to test character (3:10) before officially recognizing leaders. Maintain purity by ensuring only qualified men are ordained.

Historical Context

The early church laid hands on leaders to publicly commission them for ministry (Acts 6:6, 13:1-3). This solemn act conveyed church recognition and approval. Paul warns against hasty ordination—thoroughly vet candidates first. The Ephesian

church faced false teachers; Timothy must not inadvertently ordain unfit men who would perpetuate error or moral failure.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How long should a candidate be observed before ordination to ministry leadership?
2. In what sense does ordaining an unqualified person make you 'partaker of their sins'?
3. What vetting process helps churches identify qualified leaders and avoid premature ordination?

Interlinear Text

Χεῖρας	ταχέως	μηδενὶ	ἐπιτίθει	μηδὲ	κοινωνεῖ	ἁμαρτίαις
hands	suddenly	no man	Lay	neither	be partaker	men's sins
G5495	G5030	G3367	G2007	G3366	G2841	G266
ἀλλοτριαῖς·	σεαυτὸν	ἄγνόν	τήρει			
of other	thyself	pure	keep			
G245	G4572	G53	G5083			

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 5:11 (Parallel theme): And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

1 Timothy 3:10 (Parallel theme): And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless.

1 Timothy 3:6 (Parallel theme): Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.

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

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

2 Timothy 1:6 (Parallel theme): 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.

2 John 1:11 (Parallel theme): For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

Hebrews 6:2 (Parallel theme): Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

Acts 13:3 (Parallel theme): And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

1 Timothy 4:12 (Parallel theme): Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.