The Work of Your Hands

Leviticus 23:9–22
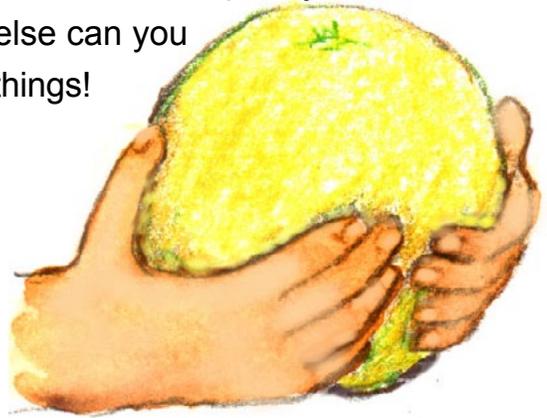
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Illustrated by Marguerite Acton

Look at your hands and think about all you can do with all those in-gers and thumbs. You can draw a picture. You can pick up toys, build a play fort, and throw a ball. You can pick up your food with your hands. Maybe squish dough into the shape of a worm, and pour juice into your cup, and put on your clothes. What else can you do with your hands? You can do lots and lots of things!

Who gave you your hands? The Lord gave you your hands!

The Lord does things for us all the time. He gives us our families. He makes the flowers and trees. He watches over us and tries to make us happy. Your mom or dad have probably told you to say thank you when someone does something nice for you.

You can say thank you to the Lord for all the things you can do with your hands. In the Lord's Word, the Lord asks us to say thank you to Him for all the things that He gives us.

The ancient Israelites heard the Lord ask them to thank Him. They lived long, long ago. They were farmers. They planted seeds and grew food to eat. They cared for fruit trees and grapevines. They worked with their hands because they didn't have big tractors to help them as farmers do today. They would dig up dirt, put seeds in the ground, and pack the dirt over the seeds. They would water the plants until the plants grew and produced crops. Then they would pick the cucumbers, tomatoes, apples, grapes, and all of the other things they grew.

In the Word, the Lord called the work that the farmers did to grow crops, "the work of [their] hands" (Deuteronomy 16:15). And just like ours, their hands were very useful tools. They could do lots of important things with them, and so can we.

The Lord told the ancient Israelites to thank Him. He wanted them to remember that He helped them grow their crops. He sent the sunshine and the rain, and also gave the people their hands to do all the work of caring for their crops. The Lord wants us to say thank you to Him for all the nice things He does for us too.

The Lord commanded the Israelites to hold a feast at the time when they picked their crops, to say thank you to Him. They called it the Feast of Ingathering. The Lord said: "Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the Lord your God in the place which the Lord chooses, because the Lord your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice" (Deuteronomy 16:15).

Each year the Feast of Ingathering was a celebration with lots of food for everyone.

The Lord gave you your hands. Just as He promised to bless the Israelites in all the work of their hands, so He promises to help you do lots of things with your hands. Right now it may be that you're learning to tie your shoes or cut your food with a knife. Later you may learn to write, or type, or paint a beautiful picture. Remember to say thank you to the Lord for helping you do all these things.

And How You Can Say Thank You to the Lord?

Every day you can thank the Lord for helping you by folding your hands and saying the Lord's Prayer. When you fold your hands or hold hands with people in your family, it is a simple way of stopping everything else. You're not playing with toys, or tickling your brother or drawing a picture. You're using your hands to pray to the Lord. It is a way of remembering that He gave you your hands, and that the Lord promises to help you do many good things with them today, and tomorrow, and always.

At meal times, you can thank the Lord by saying a blessing or grace. Many people say, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good! For His mercy is forever. Amen" (Psalm 107:1). But there are other blessings you can say. Just like saying the Lord's Prayer, you fold your hands or hold hands with the people in your family. When you say the blessing, you are thanking the Lord for everything that He gives you every day including your useful hands. That way you are having a Thanksgiving each day.