



The Holy Priesthood—for the Blessing of God’s Children

*The priesthood is the authority of God.
Those who hold the priesthood must be worthy
and use it to bless others.*

From the Life of George Albert Smith

During the priesthood session of general conference on October 2, 1948, President George Albert Smith said:

“I wonder sometimes if as fathers we take pains to explain to our boys the seriousness of the obligation assumed when a boy becomes a deacon. I wonder if when the boy is ordained a deacon the father lets him feel that he has something now that is eternally important. . . .

“I remember, as if it were yesterday, when John Tingey placed his hands on my head and ordained me a deacon. I had the matter so presented to me and the importance of it, that I felt it was a great honor. The result was, it was a blessing to me, and then after awhile other ordinations came to me. But in each case the foundation was laid in my mind that here was an opportunity for another blessing.”¹

In the same talk, President Smith taught that one of the blessings that come from ordination to the priesthood is the opportunity to bless the lives of others. As an example, he told about an influential priesthood holder—a home teacher—from his youth:

“Rodney Badger was a teacher in my father’s home for years, and a great man. Whenever he came the family met and he sat and asked us questions and told us the things that he thought we ought



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to understand. And I want to tell you that when he came into our home he brought the spirit of the Lord with him. And when he went out we felt we had had a visit from a servant of the Lord.”²

President Smith concluded by expressing his desire that priesthood holders serve the members of their wards and stakes and “not lose an opportunity to help uplift and develop and bring them to be what our Father would have them be.”³ [See suggestion 1 on page 54.]

Teachings of George Albert Smith

Jesus Christ restored divine authority to the earth during His mortal ministry.

When the Savior came in the meridian of time, He found that great city of Jerusalem teeming with evil. The inhabitants were living in such a way that they had lost divine authority, so [God] sent His Son into the world and began again a Church possessing divine power. . . . There were those in His line who were good people, . . . and there were others who were still officiating in the Priesthood, but it was necessary for the Savior to come to restore divine authority. . . .

. . . When He began His ministry, He did not call to His aid the kings and rulers and priests and those who were high in authority, but He called the humble fishermen, and the result was that He gathered around Him men who could be taught, and not men who would not believe Him. He organized a Church under the direction of our Heavenly Father. He conferred divine authority upon His associates and directed them as to what they should do. . . . He had divine authority, and the righteous ones recognized Him to be the Son of God. Some think Him only to be a good man. We believe He came upon the earth not alone to teach the people what to do, but to confer on His associates divine authority to administer the ordinances of His Church. . . .

In the days of the Savior, He was the presiding authority. Next to Him came a quorum of twelve men, chosen by Him. When He

passed away, the Quorum of Twelve, not a number of ordinary men who called themselves disciples, but a quorum of twelve men who possessed divine authority and had received it from Jesus Christ, became the leadership of the Church.⁴ [See suggestion 2 on page 54.]

**The priesthood was restored in our day
by men who held it anciently.**

It is recorded and recognized in heaven and on earth that creeds and denominations multiplied after [Jesus Christ] left the earth, and the churches increased in number upon the earth, until in the days of Joseph Smith, our beloved prophet, there were many denominations. There were many men who pretended to possess divine authority, and I think some of them thought they had received it. . . .

When the time came and the world had lost the authority or Priesthood, the Lord called a humble boy and gave him a heavenly manifestation and talked to him, told him what he should do, and sent other messengers and heavenly beings from time to time, the result of which was the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and in that Church was deposited divine authority. . . .

When Joseph Smith was a young man the Lord directed him to translate the Book of Mormon. On one occasion when Joseph and Oliver Cowdery were translating, the Lord sent a holy being to answer their questions about baptism. Who was he that came? John the Baptist, who held the Aaronic Priesthood. Where did he come from? He came from heaven. . . . He appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery as a glorious resurrected being. He came directed by our Heavenly Father to confer the Aaronic Priesthood upon Joseph and Oliver, for it was not to be found any place in all the world. It was necessary that the heavens open and a man who had held the Priesthood, and still held it, should come and confer it.

Following that, Peter, James and John, who held the Melchizedek Priesthood, conferred that Priesthood upon Joseph and Oliver, and the Lord directed the organization of the Church, with a Presidency, consisting of a president and two counselors; also a Quorum of



“Men who held the Priesthood formerly came and conferred that Priesthood upon humble men.”

Twelve Apostles, a Patriarch, High Priests, Seventies, Elders, Priests, Teachers and Deacons; the same kind of an organization that existed in the primitive church, as far as authority was concerned.⁵

The same authority that [Joseph Smith] had has been conferred upon your sons, and they will be required by our Father in heaven to minister in the ordinances of the Gospel. The responsibility that came to Joseph Smith has not been lost by his departure, it has fallen upon other shoulders. Our Father in heaven has raised up from time to time those who have had the authority to speak in His name, to administer in the ordinances of the Gospel, and to bless the children of men. They have shared that honor with you and with your children.⁶

I am grateful that in this day and age the Lord has revealed the Gospel again. The Father and the Son appeared; men who held the Priesthood formerly came and conferred that Priesthood

upon humble men and they in turn were commanded to confer it upon others. So the Gospel and the Priesthood have been made available to all who will qualify to receive the same, and that is the Lord's way.⁷

Your mission is a very remarkable one, you men who bear the Priesthood. Upon you has been conferred divine authority. You did not obtain your right to preach and teach the gospel and officiate in its ordinances as a result of training in a college or university. You received your authority from men divinely commissioned to act as servants of the Lord, and it was conferred upon you by those who received it direct from Jesus Christ our Lord.⁸ [See suggestion 3 on page 54.]

**The power and authority of God can
be found only in His true Church.**

I have had men ask me: "Of what benefit is your church more than some other church?" I have tried, in a tactful way, to explain to them the difference. Any organization may band together for worship, but that does not give them divine authority. Any group of churches may mass together and organize community churches. That does not confer divine authority. Men may unite for good purposes, but authority from our Heavenly Father is only obtained in his way, and his way in former days was by calling and ordaining men and setting them apart for the work. The same thing is true in our day. . . .

People should be made to understand that just to bow before the Lord in prayer does not give them divine authority. To live up to the requirements that are made of honesty, virtue, truth, etc., does not give them divine authority. . . . It is not sufficient that we pray, that we attend church. It is necessary that we possess divine authority, and it is the claim that we possess that authority that has brought upon this Church much of the persecution that has followed it from the beginning. But it is the truth and many of our Father's children are beginning to observe the effect of divine authority in this Church. They see the development that is made in the lives of men and women.⁹ [See suggestion 4 on page 54.]

I personally do not desire to be understood to be finding fault and criticizing the people who belong to the various denominations of the world. I am thankful that there are in so many of them good men and good women who believe in him and with the light that they have serve God; but the fact remains that our Father has established in this world, his Church. He has conferred upon men in this day his authority, and there is no other authority in the world that he will recognize but that which he himself has instituted.¹⁰ [See suggestion 5 on page 54.]

**Priesthood ordinances are essential for
us to enter the celestial kingdom.**

If we were like all other denominations, we might seek the Lord and receive his blessings, because every man that does good in this world receives a blessing; we might have all the cardinal virtues and make them our own, but without the power of God and the authority of the holy Priesthood it is not possible for men to attain to the celestial kingdom.¹¹

The only plan that will prepare men for the Celestial kingdom is the plan that has been given by Jesus Christ, our Lord; and the only authority that will qualify men to teach and to officiate in the ordinances of the Gospel properly is the authority of Jesus Christ, our Lord.¹²

Joseph Smith, Jr. was called by God to be His prophet and through him was restored to the earth the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood which is the power of God delegated to man to act in His name. Through this Priesthood every ordinance of the Gospel of our Lord, Jesus Christ, necessary for the salvation of the children of man, is authoritatively administered.¹³

How would it affect us if we had to part with the authority that God has conferred upon us? It would mean that there had been closed to us the doors of the celestial kingdom. It would mean that the crowning blessing toward which I have been taught to look since I was a child would not be realized. . . . The companionship of my loved ones, . . . who are dear to me almost as life itself, could not be enjoyed in the celestial kingdom.¹⁴

The priesthood . . . is a blessing that, if we are faithful, will open the doors of the celestial kingdom and give us a place there to live throughout the ages of eternity. Do not trifle with this priceless blessing.¹⁵ [See suggestion 6 on page 54.]

Priesthood holders have a responsibility to live exemplary lives and use the priesthood to bless others.

How beautiful it is to realize that men who are worthy may receive [the] priesthood, and in the authority that is given them, do so many things that are a blessing to our Father's other children.¹⁶

You cannot go out into the world in any other Church or in all other Churches and find . . . men holding divine authority. Do not forget that. You belong to a choice body of men, . . . having had hands laid upon them, and receiving divine authority, making you partners with the Master of Heaven and Earth. I do not mean that you can't laugh, smile, and enjoy life, but I do mean that there should be deep in every soul a consciousness that "I am my brother's keeper. I hold authority from the Lord Jesus Christ—I am a bearer of the Holy Priesthood." If we will do this we will not be found trifling with sacred things as some have done in the past.¹⁷

The fact that they hold the Priesthood will be to many men a condemnation, because of the manner in which they have treated it, regarding it as though it were something very ordinary.¹⁸

Some men think that because they hold the Priesthood that that gives them a special way in which they may conduct themselves in their homes. I want to tell you that you men who hold the Priesthood will never get into the Celestial Kingdom, unless you honor your wives and your families and train them and give them the blessings that you want for yourselves.¹⁹

The authority of our Heavenly Father is upon the earth for the blessing of mankind, not to make those who receive that authority arrogant, but to make them humble; not to make those who have received special privileges feel that they are greater than others, but

to make us humble in our souls, prayerful in our hearts, and considerate of all men in all that we do, and thus exemplify by upright lives that which our Heavenly Father desires us to teach.²⁰

Being a member of the Church and holding the Priesthood will not get us anywhere unless we are worthy. The Lord has said that every blessing that we desire is predicated upon obedience to His commandments. We may deceive our neighbors, and we may deceive ourselves with the idea that we are going through all right, but unless we keep the commandments of our Heavenly Father, unless we bear worthily this holy Priesthood that is so precious, we will not find our place in the celestial kingdom.²¹

You brethren . . . have had conferred upon you a sacred opportunity, a sacred trust. You have received the blessings of the holy Priesthood. Divine authority has been conferred upon you, and with that authority there has come the responsibility of raising your voice and living your life so that the people of the world may know the difference between the Gospel of Jesus Christ and other organizations of the world.²²

Wherever you go, keep in mind the fact that you represent him who is the author of our being. The priesthood that you hold is not the priesthood of Joseph Smith, or Brigham Young, or any other men who have been called to leadership of the Church at home or abroad. The priesthood that you hold is the power of God, conferred upon you from on high. Holy beings had to be sent to earth . . . in order to restore that glorious blessing that had been lost to the earth for hundreds of years. Surely we ought to be grateful for our blessings.²³

I pray that the Lord will bless us all, that we will be worthy to bear the priesthood that He has offered to us and conferred upon us, that wherever we go people will be able to say, "That man is a servant of the Lord."²⁴ [See suggestion 7 on page 54.]

Suggestions for Study and Teaching

Consider these ideas as you study the chapter or as you prepare to teach. For additional help, see pages v–vii.

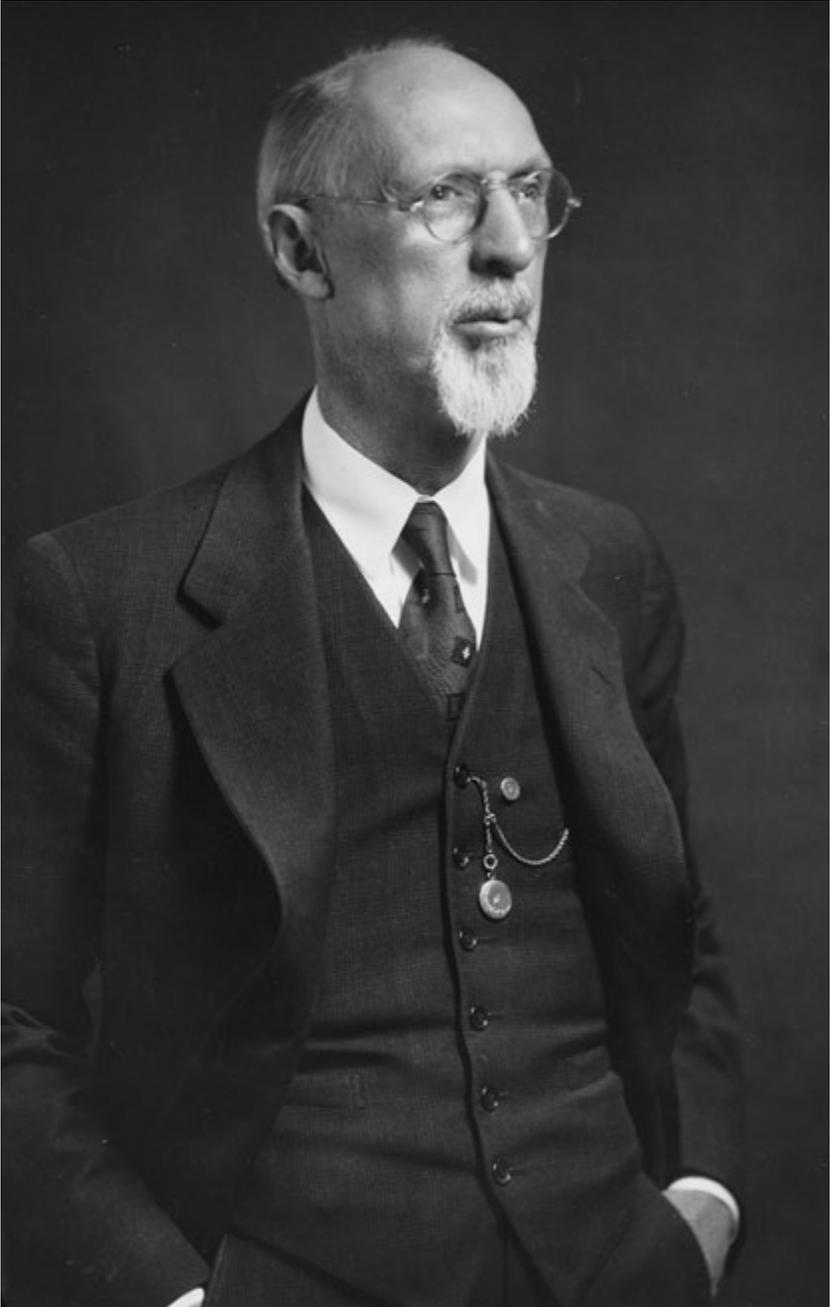
1. Think about the experiences President Smith describes on pages 45–47. What can we do to help young men prepare to be ordained to priesthood offices? What can we do to help young women understand the importance of priesthood power in their lives? Why is it important for men and women to learn about the priesthood?
2. Why was it “necessary for the Savior to . . . restore divine authority” (page 47) during His earthly ministry, in addition to teaching the gospel?
3. Read page 49 and the first paragraph on page 50. Why do you think the Lord makes His authority available to all worthy men instead of restricting it to a few men with formal training?
4. President Smith spoke of the “development that is made in the lives of men and women” because of the priesthood (page 50). What does this statement mean to you? What can you do to nurture the power and influence of the priesthood in your life?
5. As you review the section that begins on page 50, think about how you would respond if someone asked you the question posed to President Smith: “Of what benefit is your church more than some other church?”
6. Study the section that begins on page 51. What are some of the “priceless blessings” you have received because of the priesthood?
7. As you study the last section of teachings (pages 52–53), look for the responsibilities that President Smith says come with the priesthood. What can priesthood quorum members do to support each other in their responsibilities? How can women help priesthood holders stay true to these responsibilities? What can priesthood holders do to support women in their divine roles?

Related Scriptures: John 15:16; Alma 13:1–3, 6–10; Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–22; Joseph Smith—History 1:68–72; Articles of Faith 1:5

Teaching help: “Testify whenever the Spirit prompts you to do so, not just at the end of each lesson. Provide opportunities for those you teach to bear their testimonies” (*Teaching, No Greater Call*, 45).

Notes

1. In Conference Report, Oct. 1948, 180–81.
2. In Conference Report, Oct. 1948, 186.
3. In Conference Report, Oct. 1948, 190.
4. “The Church with Divine Authority,” *Deseret News*, Sept. 28, 1946, Church section, 6.
5. “The Church with Divine Authority,” 6.
6. In Conference Report, Apr. 1904, 64.
7. In Conference Report, Apr. 1934, 28–29.
8. In Conference Report, Apr. 1927, 83.
9. In Conference Report, Apr. 1934, 28–29.
10. In Conference Report, Apr. 1917, 37–38.
11. In Conference Report, Oct. 1926, 106.
12. In Conference Report, Apr. 1934, 30.
13. “Message to Sunday School Teachers,” *Instructor*, Nov. 1946, 501.
14. In Conference Report, Apr. 1925, 65.
15. In Conference Report, Apr. 1949, 191–92.
16. In Conference Report, Oct. 1950, 6.
17. Seventies and stake missionary conference, Oct. 4, 1941, 7.
18. In Conference Report, Apr. 1948, 184.
19. In Conference Report, Apr. 1948, 184.
20. In Conference Report, Oct. 1928, 94.
21. In Conference Report, Apr. 1943, 91–92.
22. In Conference Report, Oct. 1933, 25.
23. In Conference Report, Oct. 1945, 118.
24. In Conference Report, Oct. 1950, 182.



"I am only a man, one of the humblest among you, but I have been called to this service . . . by the authority of our Heavenly Father."