

# The Priesthood

## Chapter 13

---

### **What Is the Priesthood?**

The priesthood is the eternal power and authority of God. Through the priesthood He created and governs the heavens and the earth. By this power the universe is kept in perfect order. Through this power He accomplishes His work and glory, which is “to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39).

Our Heavenly Father delegates His priesthood power to worthy male members of the Church. The priesthood enables them to act in God’s name for the salvation of the human family. Through it they can be authorized to preach the gospel, administer the ordinances of salvation, and govern God’s kingdom on earth.

- Think about the significance of God allowing worthy men and boys to hold His priesthood.

### **Why Do We Need the Priesthood on the Earth?**

We must have priesthood authority to act in the name of God when performing the sacred ordinances of the gospel, such as baptism, confirmation, administration of the sacrament, and temple marriage. If a man does not have the priesthood, even though he may be sincere, the Lord will not recognize ordinances he performs (see Matthew 7:21–23; Articles of Faith 1:5). These important ordinances must be performed on the earth by men holding the priesthood.

---

**For teachers:** This chapter is organized under five headings. Each heading is a question about the priesthood. You could use these questions as a guide for your lesson. If the classroom setup allows for small group discussion, consider dividing class members into groups of two to four. Assign each group one of the sections of the chapter (in large classes, some sections may be assigned to more than one group). Have each group do the following: (1) Read and discuss their assigned section. (2) Find scriptures that help answer the question in the section heading. (3) Share personal experiences that relate to the section. Then ask class members to share some of these experiences with the entire class.



Men need the priesthood to preside in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and to direct the work of the Church in all parts of the world. When Christ lived on the earth, He chose His Apostles and ordained them so that they could lead His Church. He gave them the power and authority of the priesthood to act in His name. (See Mark 3:13–15; John 15:16.)

Another reason the priesthood is needed on the earth is so we can understand the will of the Lord and carry out His purposes. God reveals His will to His authorized priesthood representative on the earth, the prophet. The prophet, who is President of the Church, serves as the spokesman for God to all members of the Church and all people on the earth.

- Why is it essential for a man to have proper authority when he performs an ordinance?

### **How Do Men Receive the Priesthood?**

The Lord has prepared an orderly way for His priesthood to be given to His sons on the earth. A worthy male member of the Church receives the priesthood “by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof” (Articles of Faith 1:5).

This is the same way men received the priesthood long ago, even in the days of Moses: “And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron” (Hebrews 5:4). Aaron received the priesthood from Moses, his priesthood leader (see Exodus 28:1). Only those who hold the priesthood can ordain others, and they can do so only when authorized by those who hold the keys for that ordination (see chapter 14 in this book).

Men cannot buy and sell the power and authority of the priesthood. Nor can they take this authority upon themselves. In the New Testament we read of a man named Simon who lived when Christ’s Apostles presided over the Church. Simon became converted and was baptized into the Church. Because he was a skillful magician, the people believed he had the power of God. But Simon did not have the priesthood, and he knew it.

---

Simon knew that the Apostles and the other priesthood leaders of the Church had the true power of God. He saw them use their priesthood to do the Lord's work, and he wanted this power for himself. He offered to buy the priesthood. (See Acts 8:9–19.) But Peter, the chief Apostle, said, "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money" (Acts 8:20).

- Why is it significant that "no man taketh this honour [of the priesthood] unto himself"?

### **How Do Men Properly Use the Priesthood?**

The priesthood should be used to bless the lives of our Heavenly Father's children here on earth. Priesthood holders should preside in love and kindness. They should not force their families and others to obey them. The Lord has told us that the power of the priesthood cannot be controlled except in righteousness (see D&C 121:36).

When we try to use the priesthood to gain wealth or fame or for any other selfish purpose, "behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or the authority of that man" (D&C 121:37).

When a man uses the priesthood "by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned" (D&C 121:41), he can do many wonderful things for his family and others. He can baptize, confirm, and administer the sacrament when authorized by those who hold the keys for those ordinances. He can bless the sick. He can give priesthood blessings to his family members to encourage and protect them when they have special needs. He can also help other families with these ordinances and blessings when asked to do so.

Men use priesthood authority to preside in the Church in such callings as branch president, bishop, quorum president, stake president, and mission president. Men and women who hold positions in the Church as officers and teachers work under the direction of priesthood leaders and under the guidance of the Holy Ghost.

## **What Blessings Come When We Use the Priesthood Properly?**

The Lord has promised great blessings to righteous priesthood holders who use the priesthood to bless others:

“Then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

“The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever” (D&C 121:45–46).

President David O. McKay promised every man who uses the priesthood in righteousness that he “will find his life sweetened, his discernment sharpened to decide quickly between right and wrong, his feelings tender and compassionate, yet his spirit strong and valiant in defense of right; he will find the priesthood a never failing source of happiness—a well of living water springing up unto eternal life” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: David O. McKay* [2003], 116).

- What are some of the blessings you have received through the priesthood?

### **Additional Scriptures**

- D&C 84; 107 (revelations on priesthood, including the oath and covenant of the priesthood in D&C 84:33–40)
- D&C 20:38–67 (duties of the priesthood explained)