

By President Russell M. Nelson

priesthood authority is most important in the family. President Harold B. Lee gave this promise just after he became President of the Church: “Never is the power of the priesthood, which you hold, more wonderful than when there is a crisis in your home, a serious illness, or some great decision that has to be made. . . . Vested in the power of the priesthood, which is the power of Almighty God, is the power to perform miracles if the Lord wills it so, but in order for us to use that priesthood, we must be worthy to exercise it. A failure to understand this principle is a failure to receive the blessings of holding that great priesthood.”<sup>10</sup>

My beloved brethren, the magnifying of the holy priesthood you hold is vital to the work of the Lord in your families and in your Church callings.

I testify of Him whose priesthood it is. Through His atoning suffering and sacrifice and resurrection, all men and women have the assurance of immortality and the opportunity for eternal life. Each of us should be faithful and diligent in doing our part in this great work of God our Eternal Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

#### NOTES

1. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph F. Smith* (1998), 343.
2. *Teachings: Joseph F. Smith*, 340, 343.
3. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. (1939), 182.
4. Bruce R. McConkie, “Only an Elder,” *Ensign*, June 1975, 66; emphasis in original not preserved.
5. Bruce R. McConkie, “Only an Elder,” 66; emphasis in original not preserved.
6. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee* (2000), 93.
7. *The Teachings of Harold B. Lee*, ed. Clyde J. Williams (1996), 499.
8. See Dallin H. Oaks, “Priesthood Authority in the Family and the Church,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2005, 24–27.
9. See “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2017, 145.
10. *Teachings: Harold B. Lee*, 97.

# Ministering with the Power and Authority of God

*We will minister in His name, with His power and authority, and with His loving-kindness.*

My beloved brethren, thank you for your devotion to the Lord and His holy work. It is truly a joy to be with you. As a new First Presidency, we thank you for your prayers and for your sustaining efforts. We are grateful for your lives and for your service to the Lord. Your devotion to duty and your selfless service are just as important in your callings as ours are in our callings. Through a lifetime of service in this Church, I have learned that it really doesn’t matter *where* one serves. What the Lord cares about is *how* one serves.

I express deep gratitude for President Thomas S. Monson, who was an example to me for more than 50 years. And for his counselors, President Henry B. Eyring and President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, I express profound admiration. I commend them for their service to the Lord and His prophets. Both of these devoted servants have received new assignments. They continue to serve with vigor and commitment. I honor and love them both.

It is a remarkable blessing to serve in the Lord’s true and living Church with His authority and power. The restoration of the priesthood of God, including the keys of the priesthood, opens to worthy Latter-day Saints the greatest of all spiritual blessings. We see those blessings flowing to women, men, and children throughout the world.

We see faithful women who understand the power inherent in their callings and in their endowment and other temple ordinances. These women know how to call upon the powers of heaven to protect and strengthen their husbands, their children, and others they love. These are spiritually strong women who lead, teach, and minister fearlessly in their callings with the power and authority of God!<sup>1</sup> How thankful I am for them!

Likewise, we see faithful men who live up to their privileges as bearers of the priesthood. They lead and serve by sacrifice in the Lord’s way with love, kindness, and patience. They bless,



guide, protect, and strengthen others by the power of the priesthood they hold. They bring miracles to those they serve while they keep their own marriages and families safe. They shun evil and are mighty elders in Israel.<sup>2</sup> I am most thankful for them!

Now, may I voice a concern? It is this: Too many of our brothers and sisters do not fully understand the concept of priesthood power and authority. They act as though they would rather satisfy their own selfish desires and appetites than use the power of God to bless His children.

I fear that too many of our brothers and sisters do not grasp the privileges that could be theirs.<sup>3</sup> Some of our brethren, for example, act like they do not understand what the priesthood is and what it enables them to do. Let me give you some specific examples.

Not long ago, I attended a sacrament meeting in which a new baby was to be given a name and a father's blessing. The young father held his precious infant in his arms, gave her a name, and then offered a beautiful *prayer*. But he did *not* give that child a blessing. That sweet baby girl got a name but no blessing! That dear elder

did not know the difference between a prayer and a priesthood blessing. With his priesthood authority and power, he could have blessed his infant, but he did not. I thought, "What a missed opportunity!"

Let me cite some other examples. We know of brethren who set sisters apart as Primary, Young Women, or Relief Society leaders and teachers but fail to bless them—to bless them with the power to fulfill their callings. They give only admonitions and instructions. We see a worthy father who fails to give his wife and his children priesthood blessings when that is exactly what they need. Priesthood power has been restored to this earth, and yet far too many brothers and sisters go through terrible trials in life without ever receiving a true priesthood blessing. What a tragedy! That's a tragedy that we can eliminate.

Brethren, we hold the holy priesthood of God! We have His authority to bless His people. Just think of the remarkable assurance the Lord gave us when He said, "Whomsoever you bless I will bless."<sup>4</sup> It is our privilege to act in the name of Jesus Christ to bless God's children according to His will

for them. Stake presidents and bishops, please ensure that every member of the quorums within your stewardship understands how to give a priesthood blessing—including the personal worthiness and spiritual preparation required to call fully upon the power of God.<sup>5</sup>

To all brethren holding the priesthood, I invite you to inspire members to keep their covenants, fast and pray, study the scriptures, worship in the temple, and serve with faith as men and women of God. We can help all to see with the eye of faith that obedience and righteousness will draw them closer to Jesus Christ, allow them to enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost, and experience joy in life!

A hallmark of the Lord's true and living Church will always be an organized, directed effort to minister to individual children of God and their families.<sup>6</sup> Because it is His Church, we as His servants will minister to the one, just as He did.<sup>7</sup> We will minister in His name, with His power and authority, and with His loving-kindness.

An experience I had more than 60 years ago in Boston taught me just how powerful the privilege of ministering



one-on-one can be. I was then a resident surgeon at the Massachusetts General Hospital—on duty every day, every other night, and every other weekend. I had limited time for my wife, our four children, and Church activity. Nonetheless, our branch president assigned me to visit the home of Wilbur and Leonora Cox with the hope that Brother Cox might come back into activity in the Church. He and Leonora had been sealed in the temple.<sup>8</sup> Yet Wilbur had not participated for many years.

My companion and I went to their home. As we entered, Sister Cox welcomed us warmly,<sup>9</sup> but Brother Cox abruptly walked into another room and closed the door.

I went to the closed door and knocked. After a moment, I heard a muffled “Come in.” I opened the door to find Brother Cox sitting beside an array of amateur radio equipment. In that small room, he lit up a cigar. Clearly, my visit was not all that welcome.

I gazed about the room with wonderment and said, “Brother Cox, I have always wanted to learn more about amateur radio work. Would you be willing to teach me about it? I’m sorry I can’t stay any longer tonight, but could I come back another time?”

He hesitated for a moment and then said yes. That was the beginning of what became a wonderful friendship. I returned and he taught me. I began to love and respect him. Through our subsequent visits, the greatness of this man emerged. We became very good friends, as did our dear eternal companions. Then, with the passage of time, our family moved away. Local leaders continued to nurture the Cox family.<sup>10</sup>

About eight years after that first visit, the Boston Stake was created.<sup>11</sup> Can you guess who its first stake president was? Yes! Brother Cox! During subsequent years, he also served as a mission president and a temple president.

Years later, I, as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, was assigned to

create a new stake in Sanpete County, Utah. During the usual interviews, I was pleasantly surprised to encounter again my dear friend Brother Cox! I felt impressed to call him as the new stake patriarch. After I ordained him, we embraced each other and wept. People in the room were wondering why these two grown men were crying. But we knew. And Sister Cox knew. Ours were tears of joy! We silently remembered the incredible journey of love and repentance that began more than 30 years ago, one night in their home.

The account doesn’t end there. Brother and Sister Cox’s family grew to include 3 children, 20 grandchildren, and 54 great-grandchildren. Add to that their impact on hundreds of missionaries, on thousands more in the temple, and on hundreds more who received patriarchal blessings at the hands of Wilbur Cox. His and Leonora’s influence will continue to ripple through many generations throughout the world.

Experiences such as this with Wilbur and Leonora Cox occur every week—hopefully, every day—within this Church. Dedicated servants of the Lord Jesus Christ carry out His work, with His power and authority.

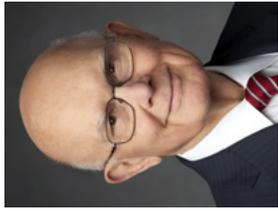
Brethren, there are doors we can open, priesthood blessings we can give, hearts we can heal, burdens we can lift, testimonies we can strengthen, lives we can save, and joy we can bring into the homes of the Latter-day Saints—all because we hold the priesthood of God. We are the men who have been “called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of [our] exceeding faith,” to do this work.<sup>12</sup>

Tonight I invite you literally to rise up with me in our great eternal



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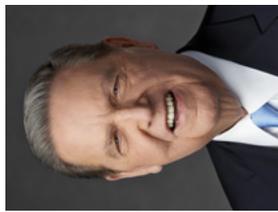


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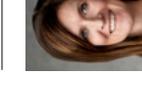
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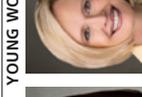
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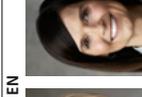
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### SUNDAY SCHOOL

### YOUNG WOMEN

### RELIEF SOCIETY

### PRIMARY

### YOUNG MEN





By Elder Larry Y. Wilson  
Of the Seventy

brotherhood. When I name your priesthood office, please stand and remain standing. Deacons, please arise! Teachers, arise! Priests! Bishops! Elders! High priests! Patriarchs! Seventies! Apostles!

Now, brethren, will you please remain standing and join with our chorus in singing all three verses of “Rise Up, O Men of God.”<sup>13</sup> While you sing, think of your duty as God’s mighty army to help prepare the world for the Second Coming of the Lord. This is our charge. This is our privilege. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

NOTES

1. See Russell M. Nelson, “A Plea to My Sisters,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 96.
2. See Russell M. Nelson, “The Price of Priesthood Power,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2016, 66–69; see also Alma 13:7–8; Doctrine and Covenants 84:17–20, 35–38.
3. See Doctrine and Covenants 84:19–22; 107:18–19; Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 14:30–31 (in the Bible appendix).
4. Doctrine and Covenants 132:47.
5. The connection between the power of the priesthood and personal righteousness is developed more fully in Russell M. Nelson, “The Price of Priesthood Power,” 66–69; see also Doctrine and Covenants 121:34–37, 41–44.
6. The essential role of an organized, directed effort to minister to individuals and families is evident wherever and whenever the Church of Jesus Christ has been established. See, for example, Luke 10:1–20; Acts 6:1–6; Ephesians 4:11–14; Mosiah 18:9, 18–19, 27–29; Doctrine and Covenants 20:42, 51, 57.
7. See 3 Nephi 17:9–10, 20–21.
8. Manti Utah Temple, June 15, 1937.
9. Leonora’s fasting and praying every Monday for years surely had a powerful influence for good.
10. In 1954, branch president Ira Terry called Wilbur to be the branch Sunday School superintendent. Wilbur accepted the calling and dropped forever all habits contrary to the Word of Wisdom. He devoted the rest of his life in service to the Savior’s work.
11. In 1962.
12. Alma 13:3.
13. “Rise Up, O Men of God,” *Hymns*, no. 324.

# Take the Holy Spirit as Your Guide

*What an incomparable gift comes to those who put their faith in Jesus Christ. That gift is the Holy Spirit.*

On this Easter Sunday, our thoughts turn to the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and to the empty tomb that gives every believer hope in Christ’s triumph over otherwise certain defeat. I believe, with the Apostle Paul, that just as God “raised up Christ from the dead [so] shall [He] also quicken [our] mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in [us].”<sup>1</sup>

To *quicken* means to make alive. Just as Christ brings our bodies back to life after physical death through the power of His Resurrection, so can He also quicken us, or make us alive, from spiritual death.<sup>2</sup> In the book of Moses, we read of Adam undergoing this kind of quickening: “[Adam] was baptized, and the Spirit of God descended upon him, and thus he was born of the Spirit, and became quickened in the inner man.”<sup>3</sup>

What an incomparable gift comes to those who put their faith in Jesus Christ. That gift is the Holy Spirit giving us what the New Testament calls “life in Christ.”<sup>4</sup> But do we sometimes take for granted such a gift?

Brothers and sisters, it is an extraordinary privilege to “have . . . the Holy

Spirit for [our] guide,”<sup>5</sup> as demonstrated by the following experience.

During the Korean War, Ensign Frank Blair served on a troop transport ship stationed in Japan.<sup>6</sup> The ship wasn’t large enough to have a formal chaplain, so the captain asked Brother Blair to be the ship’s informal chaplain, having observed that the young man was a person of faith and principle, highly respected by the whole crew.

Ensign Blair wrote: “Our ship was caught in a huge typhoon. The waves were about 45 feet [14 m] high. I was on watch . . . during which time one of our three engines stopped working and a crack in the centerline of the ship was reported. We had two remaining engines, one of which was only functioning at half power. We were in serious trouble.”

Ensign Blair finished his watch and was getting into bed when the captain knocked on his door. He asked, “Would you please pray for this ship?” Of course, Ensign Blair agreed to do so.

At that point, Ensign Blair could have simply prayed, “Heavenly Father, please bless our ship and keep us safe,” and then gone to bed. Instead, he prayed to