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(1922–2015)

Of the Quorum  
of the Twelve  
Apostles

## THE PRIESTHOOD: A SURE ANCHOR

*This article was prepared by Elder L. Tom Perry on May 28, 2015, two days before his passing, to be shared with young priesthood holders.*

The greatest strength in my life has been the priesthood of God. I believe it will also be a sure anchor for you young men. But for it to have power in your life, you need to understand and use it.

### Early Experiences with the Priesthood

I grew up in a comfortable environment in Logan, Utah. I had no childhood worries about food or shelter or education. But perhaps because life was easy, I needed something to hold on to that would anchor me.

For me that anchor was the priesthood of God. I was in an unusual situation when I was growing up. My dad was called to be the bishop when I was a year old, and he was my bishop for 19 years. His fatherly and spiritual guidance was a tremendous help to me.

I think that is mostly why I looked forward to receiving the Aaronic Priesthood on my 12th birthday. I remember the special day I felt my father’s hands on my head as he

ordained me. After that, I advanced through the offices of the Aaronic Priesthood and received callings I enjoyed very much.

Passing the sacrament was very special to me. You could see people commit themselves to obey the Lord and keep His commandments as they partook of the emblems of His body and blood.

### Growing in Priesthood Understanding

As time progressed, I graduated from high school, and then after a year in college, I was called on a mission. I enjoyed every minute of it and loved my companions. One in particular was a strength to me. I learned much from him as we fulfilled our responsibilities.

Because the country was at war, when I returned from my mission I joined the United States Marine Corps. When the war was over, I returned to college, married, and started a family. Successive professional moves took me to many places across the United States, where I learned much as I served in many priesthood callings. I finally landed in Boston, Massachusetts, where I served as a

stake president. It was from there that I was called to be an assistant to the Twelve and then, after 17 months, to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

### Lessons Learned as an Apostle

What have I learned as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve?

I’ve learned that there is a guide, an anchor, and a protection in the priesthood.

The priesthood has always existed. Before Adam came to earth, he had the priesthood. As Adam’s posterity scattered with the priesthood, it became necessary to organize how the priesthood was administered. The





Lord did that by calling Abraham to preside over his family of priesthood holders. This organization continued under Isaac and Jacob, whose name was later changed to Israel.

Centuries later, the children of Israel found themselves in captivity. The Lord sent Moses to deliver them, but when he did, they proved themselves not ready as a people for the Melchizedek Priesthood. So they were left with the Aaronic Priesthood until the time of the Savior.

I find it very interesting what the Savior did first as He began His ministry. He organized the Melchizedek Priesthood. He called twelve Apostles and taught them the laws and order of the priesthood. He called Peter to be

the chief Apostle, establishing a line of authority in His Church. In that day and this, it is Jesus Christ who selects His chief Apostle to preside over the Church, and it is the Savior who directs him in his priesthood duties.

So the priesthood has a direct line from our Lord and Savior through the chief Apostle to the other Apostles and on to the other priesthood holders in the Church. Keys of authority are given to the Apostles, and as long as those keys are on the earth, we will be guided by the Lord Himself. This divine direction protects us and assures us that the Church will not vary from the truth. It will remain consistent because it is not directed by any earthly being. It is directed by the Lord.

### **Learn the Doctrines of the Priesthood**

The greatest advice I have for you young men is to study the doctrines of the priesthood, understand the power you have in exercising your priesthood, and learn how it can bless your lives and the lives of others.

I promise if you'll learn the doctrines of the priesthood and fulfill your priesthood duties, the priesthood will be a sure anchor that will keep you spiritually safe and bring you great joy. Be a true priesthood quorum. Reach out to your friends and bring them into your quorum. Create a brotherhood in your quorum that will be a permanent foundation for your lives. ■