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GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS FOR INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

The Priesthood



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The Priesthood

What Is the Priesthood?

The priesthood is the eternal power and authority of God. Heavenly Father created the universe through the priesthood and governs it by the same power. He uses this power to accomplish His work, which is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of His children (see Moses 1:39, page 4).

Our Heavenly Father shares His priesthood power with worthy male members of the Church. This power enables righteous men to act in God's name for the salvation of the human family. Through it they can preach the gospel, administer the ordinances of salvation, and govern God's kingdom on earth. All members of the Church—men, women, and children—can receive the blessings available through the priesthood.

Why Do We Need the Priesthood?

The sacred ordinances of the gospel—such as baptism, confirmation, administration of the sacrament, and temple marriage—can only be performed by priesthood authority. These ordinances help God's children receive the blessings of the Savior's Atonement. If someone performs these ordinances without the proper priesthood authority, the ordinances are not valid (see Matthew 7:21–23, page 1198).

When Christ lived on the earth, He chose Apostles and conferred the priesthood power upon them so that they could lead His Church after He was gone. He gave them the power and authority of the priesthood to act in His name (see Mark 3:13–15, page 1245). That same power was restored to the modern prophets and apostles and is shared with the righteous men of the Church.

The priesthood gives all members of the Church access to great blessings. For instance, because of the priesthood, families can be sealed together in this life and the next. Because of the priesthood, we can receive the cleansing power of the Atonement whenever we take the sacrament. We can receive patriarchal blessings that tell us of our life mission and lineage. During times of stress or illness, we can receive blessings of comfort and healing. And because of the priesthood, we can have the Holy Ghost as our constant companion to purify our desires and help us continue to make righteous choices.





How Should the Priesthood Be Used?

A worthy male member of the Church may receive the priesthood “by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority” (Articles of Faith 1:5, page 60). In other words, men who already have the priesthood place their hands on his head and ordain him. This is the same way men received the priesthood long ago, even in the days of Moses.

The priesthood should only be used to bless Heavenly Father’s children. Priesthood leaders should never try to force others to obey them. When a man tries to use the priesthood to gain power or status, “the heavens withdraw themselves; [and] the Spirit of the Lord is grieved,” and his priesthood power is removed (D&C 121:37, page 242).

However, when a man uses the priesthood with love and gentleness, he can do many wonderful things for his family and others (see D&C 121:41, page 242). He can baptize and confirm others and administer the sacrament. He can bless the sick and give priesthood blessings to his family members to encourage and protect them. He can also help others receive these ordinances and blessings.



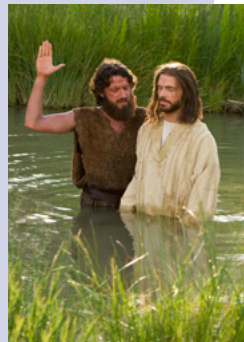
“There were many who were ordained and became high priests of God; and it was on account of their exceeding faith and repentance, and their righteousness before God, they choosing to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish;”

“Therefore they were called after this holy order.”

LOOK
THEM
UP

Additional Scriptures

- **D&C 20:38–67, pages 37–38**
(duties of the priesthood explained)
- **D&C 84, pages 153–61;**
D&C 107, pages 215–21
(revelations on priesthood, including the oath and covenant of the priesthood in D&C 84:33–40, page 156)
- **D&C 121:34–46, pages 242–43** (the priesthood should be used only in righteousness)



Personal Experience

When I went to prison, one of the inmates explained that I could be anyone I wanted to be while I served my sentence. Some inmates decide to become tougher and harder, thinking that protects them during incarceration. But as a dedicated husband and father, I had already made my choice through covenant.

My cellmate was one of the meanest and toughest guys in the yard. Many had warned me to be careful of him. But one day he told me that he had just learned that he needed surgery. He wanted a priesthood blessing, but he wanted to keep it private. Since he was not a member of the Church, he did not know exactly how the priesthood worked. But he had seen it work for others. He felt he had sufficient faith for it to work for him after I explained to him what the priesthood was, how it was used, and who had authority to use it.

After a local elder put his hands on my friend's head and began the blessing, I could hear my friend sobbing until the blessing finished. He stood and faced me, with tears running down his cheeks. I hugged him and told him that his Heavenly Father loved him. He survived his operation and later saved my life.

It is my testimony that we are not forgotten by our Heavenly Father and that He will send someone directed by the Spirit to help us.

“It is my testimony that we are not forgotten by our Heavenly Father and that He will send someone directed by the Spirit to help us.”



What are the ordinances of the gospel? Why are these ordinances essential for our salvation?

What blessings have you received from the priesthood? How can you prepare for additional blessings from the priesthood?

How would you explain the significance of the priesthood to a fellow inmate?

Is there anything else that you have learned from this lesson that you would like to share?

Name _____ Offender # _____

Please answer the questions on this response form, detach, and return to the address below:

Correctional Services
 50 East North Temple Street
 Salt Lake City, UT 84150
 1-801-240-2644

Please request the next lesson you would like to study: _____