

role in the early days of the Restoration. They were witnesses to the gold plates, and their signed testimonies are included at the front of every copy of the Book of Mormon. They were among the first band of missionaries called by a prophet of God in 1829 to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the preface to section 14 of the Doctrine and Covenants, it states, “Three of the Whitmer sons, each having received a testimony as to the genuineness of the work, became deeply concerned over the matter of their individual duty.”

To John and Peter Whitmer Jr. the Lord said this: “For many times you have desired of me to know that which would be of the most worth unto you.”⁵

I suppose many of you young men have asked yourselves that same question. Here is the Lord’s answer: “And now, behold, I say unto you, that the thing which will be of the most worth unto you will be to declare repentance unto this people, that you may bring souls unto me, that you

may rest with them in the kingdom of my Father.”⁶

At this time in your life, a mission call from the Lord, my young friends, is the most important work that you can do. Prepare now, live righteously, learn from your family and Church leaders, and come join with us in building the kingdom of God on earth—accept your divine appointment in “so great a cause.”⁷ This is my humble prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. Luke 10:1.
2. Matthew 4:19.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 327.
4. Thomas S. Monson, in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 67; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 49.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 15:4; 16:4.
6. Doctrine and Covenants 15:6; 16:6.
7. Doctrine and Covenants 128:22.

David L. Beck

Magnificence of the Aaronic Priesthood

I am honored tonight to speak to the amazing young men of the Church. I have been blessed to meet many of you throughout the world. Your enthusiasm is contagious.

You face your challenges with extraordinary strength and courage. I express my love to you and the confidence I have in you.

You inspire the people around you more than you can imagine. Listen to the words of a young man who is not of our faith, trying to describe his friend who holds the Aaronic Priesthood: “I do notice something different about Luis. . . . This guy is nothing like . . . other people. It’s just something you see in him. . . . I don’t even know what it is, but he’s different

than all of them. It’s just something you feel; it’s not [something] . . . you see visually. You just feel it.”

There is something very important that sets Luis and you apart from other young men. You have received the Aaronic Priesthood. It is a sacred gift, and many do not fully appreciate it. Tonight I will help you see how you can discover for yourselves the magnificence of the Aaronic Priesthood.

God trusts you

When God entrusts you with His sacred priesthood, He shows great confidence in you. He knows He can trust you to use the priesthood to serve others, just as He has trusted other young men to do some of His most important work.

For example, the world would not have the Book of Mormon's powerful witness of Jesus Christ if it had not been for two young men whom God trusted. Mormon, the prophet who compiled this sacred record, was just 10 years old when he was assigned to observe and later record the history of his people. At age 15, he was "visited of the Lord, and tasted and knew of the goodness of Jesus" (Mormon 1:15).

The Book of Mormon was translated and published by Joseph Smith, who was called to his great work at age 14, when he was visited by Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ.

President Thomas S. Monson has said: "Great things are expected of you. . . . Like a clarion call comes the word of the Lord to you, to me, and to priesthood holders everywhere: 'Wherefore, now let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence' [D&C 107:99]" (in Conference Report, Apr. 2004, 57, 61; or *Ensign*, May 2004, 54, 57).

The new Duty to God program

To help you respond to that urgent call, the Church is introducing a new Duty to God program, as President Henry B. Eyring announced earlier today. I am excited about this program. Materials will be sent to your bishops and branch presidents beginning in June. You should begin using them as soon as you receive them.

As a deacon, teacher, and priest, you will participate in activities that will help you build spiritual strength and learn and fulfill your priesthood duties. Each activity follows this simple pattern:

First you *learn* about a gospel principle or a priesthood duty. You discover what Heavenly Father wants you to do, and you strive to gain a spiritual witness about why it is important.

Next you make plans to *act* on what you have learned. You are encouraged

to base your plans on your own needs, circumstances, and opportunities to serve others. This is a wonderful chance to take responsibility for your own growth and develop spiritual self-reliance.

Then you *share* what you learn and experience with others. As you do so, you will strengthen your testimony and build faith in those around you. You will increase your ability to talk about the gospel with others.

I am grateful to a young man who shared with me the following experience. He and another Aaronic Priesthood holder were assigned to administer the sacrament to a man who was homebound and very sick. They arrived at his home not realizing that recent medical treatments prevented him from eating any food—even a piece of the sacrament bread. After blessing the bread, the young man presented the sacrament to the frail man. He took a piece of the blessed bread, waited a moment, and then held it against his lips. The young man said when he saw this faithful brother express his reverence for the sacrament, he felt as though he were watching him kiss the feet of the Savior. He could tell that he loved Him.

The significance of the sacrament was impressed upon that young man in an unforgettable way that day. You will have sacred experiences, just as this young man did.

Your parents, leaders, and quorum members play an important role in the Duty to God program. Your Sunday quorum meetings will provide regular opportunities to learn, act, and share. The new Duty to God program will guide you on your journey to fulfill your duty to God and discover the magnificence of the Aaronic Priesthood.

Fulfill your duty to God

During the past year I have been on a journey that has forever changed the way I view you and the Aaronic Priesthood. I

am excited for you to discover for yourself what I have discovered. You will learn why the Aaronic Priesthood is so important in your life and how vital it is to the Church. You will appreciate why it is referred to as one of the “grand heads” of the priesthood (see D&C 107:6). You will understand better the meaning of priesthood keys, the ministering of angels, and the preparatory gospel (see D&C 13; 84:26).

Satan would have you think that you are too young or that there are too few of you to do significant things with the Aaronic Priesthood. None of that is true.

God’s words to Moses are for you today: “Behold, thou art my son; . . . and I have a work for [you]” (Moses 1:4, 6).

He has given you His power to do great things. As you fulfill your duty to God, you will strengthen and bless your family. This is your greatest priesthood duty. Listen to a mother describe the impact her son has on his family: “Leo has the priesthood in our home, and it’s a huge blessing. He’s a good example to his siblings; . . . he makes sure they always pray. He passes the sacrament on Sundays. His little brother sees him. He helps . . . with family prayer. I know that he will continue to be a blessing as he gets older. He will be able to baptize his younger brother. It’s a comfort and a gift to us.”

As you fulfill your duty to God, you will reach out to your friends who are not of our faith and help prepare them to join the Church. Like a true brother, you will watch over and strengthen them. You will lead out in the rescue of other young men who have lost their way.

As you fulfill your duty to God, you will be a force for good at all times and in every circumstance. Your righteous example and your faithful priesthood service will be a powerful way to invite all who know you to come unto Christ.

In their most critical time, the Nephites looked to a young man, Mormon, for leadership and inspiration (see Mormon 2:1–2). Today, we look to you to be a great strength

to the Church and a force for good on the earth. This is what the Lord expects.

Become a faithful priesthood man

I testify that you will feel your heart changing as you become a faithful priesthood man. You will seek to be completely clean and administer the sacrament worthily. You will treat every young woman with kindness and respect. You will honor your parents. You will avoid offending the Spirit in what you think, say, or do. You will come to know the Lord, whom you serve, and you will ever strive to be like Him.

I testify that your faithful service in the Aaronic Priesthood will change the lives of those you serve. There are people who need your priesthood service. Your family needs you. Your quorum needs you. The Church needs you. The world needs you.

There is an urgency for you to fulfill your duty to God. I am confident that you will.

On a cold morning a few weeks ago, I jogged along the Tagus River in Lisbon, Portugal. I came to a monument dedicated to the Portuguese explorers from centuries past. I stopped as the sun rose and splashed its warm light on the imposing monument and on me. I was inspired as I looked at the determined faces of the explorers gazing out over the water. These were men who were willing to do things that very few had done. They left a familiar and comfortable world and courageously went out into the unknown ocean and discovered new lands. They changed the world.

I see you when I think of that monument of courageous explorers. I see you on a personal journey that few in the world today choose to pursue. I see you fulfilling your duty to God.

I pray that we may all understand the magnificent Aaronic Priesthood and trust, as God does, those who bear it. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Eyring

The choir and congregation will now sing “Glory to God on High.” After the singing, we will be pleased to hear from President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency.

Following his remarks, it will be my pleasure to address you.

The choir and congregation sang “Glory to God on High.”

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf

The marshmallow experiment

In the 1960s, a professor at Stanford University began a modest experiment testing the willpower of four-year-old children. He placed before them a large marshmallow and then told them they could eat it right away or, if they waited for 15 minutes, they could have two marshmallows.

He then left the children alone and watched what happened behind a two-way mirror. Some of the children ate the marshmallow immediately; some could wait only a few minutes before giving in to temptation. Only 30 percent were able to wait.

It was a mildly interesting experiment, and the professor moved on to other areas of research, for, in his own words, “there are only so many things you can do with kids trying not to eat marshmallows.” But as time went on, he kept track of the children and began to notice an interesting correlation: the children who could not wait struggled later in life and had more behavioral problems, while those who waited tended to be more positive and better motivated, have higher grades and incomes, and have healthier relationships.

What started as a simple experiment with children and marshmallows became a landmark study suggesting that the ability to wait—to be patient—was a key character trait that might predict later success in life.¹

Waiting can be hard

Waiting can be hard. Children know it, and so do adults. We live in a world offering fast food, instant messaging, on-demand movies, and immediate answers to the most trivial or profound questions. We don’t like to wait. Some even feel their blood pressure rise when their line at the grocery store moves slower than those around them.

Patience—the ability to put our desires on hold for a time—is a precious and rare virtue. We want what we want, and we want it now. Therefore, the very idea of patience may seem unpleasant and, at times, bitter.

Nevertheless, without patience, we cannot please God; we cannot become perfect. Indeed, patience is a purifying process that refines understanding, deepens happiness, focuses action, and offers hope for peace.

As parents, we know how unwise it would be to indulge our children’s every desire. But children are not the only ones who spoil when showered with immediate gratification. Our Heavenly Father knows what good parents come to understand over time: if children are ever going to mature and reach their potential, they must learn to wait.

Patience isn’t merely waiting

When I was 10 years old, my family became refugees in a new land. I had always been a good student in school—that is,