

Do We Know What We Have?

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Priesthood ordinances and covenants provide access to the fulness of the blessings promised to us by God, which are made possible by the Savior's Atonement.

In "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles state: "All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a beloved spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny."¹ To achieve this divine destiny, each son and daughter of God needs priesthood ordinances and covenants.

We need baptism. When we are immersed in the waters of baptism, we covenant to take Christ's name upon us, always remember Him, keep His commandments, and serve Him to the end, that we may always have His Spirit to be with us.²

We need the gift of the Holy Ghost. Through that ordinance, we can have access to the constant companionship of the Spirit. President Wilford Woodruff taught: "Every man or woman that has ever entered into the church of God and been baptized for the remission of sins has a right to revelation, a right to the Spirit of God, to assist them in their labors, in their administrations to their children, in counseling their children and those over whom they are called upon to preside. The Holy Ghost is not restricted to men, nor to apostles or prophets; it belongs to every faithful man and woman, and to every child who is old enough to receive the gospel of Christ."³

We need to receive the temple endowment. Elder M. Russell Ballard said: "When men and women go to the temple, they are both endowed with the same power, which by definition is priesthood power. ... The endowment is literally a gift of power."⁴

We need the sealing ordinance, which leads to eternal life, "the greatest of all the gifts of God."⁵ This priesthood ordinance is received only by a man and a woman together. Elder Russell M. Nelson taught, "Priesthood authority has been restored so that families can be sealed eternally."⁶

We need the opportunity to renew our covenants each week as we partake of the sacrament. Latter-day prophets and apostles have taught that when we worthily partake of the sacrament, we can renew not only our baptismal covenant but "all covenants entered into with the Lord."⁷

These priesthood ordinances and covenants provide access to the fulness of the blessings promised to us by God, which are made possible by the Savior's Atonement. They arm sons and daughters of God with power, God's power,⁸ and provide us with the opportunity to receive eternal life—to return to God's presence and live with Him in His eternal family.

I recently went with priesthood leaders to visit the homes of four women in Honduras. These sisters and their families were in need of priesthood keys and authority, priesthood ordinances and covenants, and priesthood power and blessings.

We visited a dear sister who is married and has two beautiful children. She is faithful and active in the Church, and she is teaching her children to choose the right. Her husband supports her Church activity, but he is not a member. Their family is strong, but to enjoy greater strength, they need additional priesthood blessings. They need the father to receive the ordinances of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost and to have the priesthood conferred upon him. They need the priesthood power that can come through the endowment and sealing.

Our next visit was at the home of two single sisters, women of great faith. One sister has a son preparing for a mission. The other sister is receiving treatment for cancer. In times of discouragement and despair, they remember the Savior's Atonement and are filled with faith and hope. They both need the additional blessings and power available through temple ordinances. We encouraged them to join the future missionary in their home in preparing to receive those ordinances.

Our last visit was at the home of a sister whose husband recently died in a tragic accident. A recent convert to the Church, she had not understood that she could receive her own endowment and be sealed to her husband. When we taught her that these blessings could be available to her and her deceased husband, she was filled with hope. Knowing that through temple ordinances and covenants her family can be sealed together, she has faith and determination to face the trials ahead.

This widow's son is preparing to receive the Aaronic Priesthood. His ordination will be a great blessing to her and her family. They will have a priesthood holder in their home.

When I met these faithful women in Honduras, I could see that they were striving to keep their families active in the gospel. They expressed gratitude for covenant-keeping ward members who tenderly watch over them and help support their temporal and spiritual needs. However, each of these sisters had needs that had not been fully met.

In each of the three homes we visited, a wise priesthood leader asked each sister if she had received a priesthood blessing. Each time the answer was no. Each sister asked for and received a priesthood blessing that day. Each wept as she expressed gratitude for the comfort, direction, encouragement, and inspiration that came from her Heavenly Father through a worthy priesthood holder.

These sisters inspired me. They showed reverence for God and His power and authority. I was also grateful for the priesthood leaders who visited these homes with me. When we left each home, we counseled together about how to help these families receive the ordinances they needed to progress on the covenant path and strengthen their homes.

There exists today a great need for men and women to cultivate respect for each other as sons and daughters of God and reverence for our Father in Heaven and His priesthood—His power and authority.

He has a plan for us, and when we exercise our faith and trust in His plan, our reverence for Him and for His priesthood power and authority will be strengthened.

In the worldwide leadership training *Strengthening the Family and the Church through the Priesthood*, we were

taught that sisters who don't have priesthood holders in their homes need never feel alone. They are blessed and strengthened through the ordinances they have received and the covenants they keep. They should not hesitate to reach out when help is needed. Elder M. Russell Ballard taught that every woman in the Church needs to know that she has a bishop, an elders quorum president, a home teacher, and other worthy priesthood holders whom she can rely on to come into her home and assist her and, as Sister Rosemary M. Wixom added, to "give a blessing."⁹

Elder Ballard also taught: "Our Father in Heaven is generous with His power. All men and all women have access to this power for help in our own lives. All who have made sacred covenants with the Lord and who honor those covenants are eligible to receive personal revelation, to be blessed by the ministering of angels, [and] to commune with God."¹⁰

We all need each other. Sons of God need daughters of God, and daughters of God need sons of God.

We have different gifts and different strengths. First Corinthians chapter 12 emphasizes the need for sons and daughters of God, each one of us, to fulfill our individual roles and responsibilities according to the Lord's plan, that all may benefit.¹¹

Sons of God, do you know who you are? Do you know what you have? Are you worthy to exercise the priesthood and receive the power and blessings of the priesthood? Do you embrace your roles and responsibilities to strengthen homes as fathers, grandfathers, sons, brothers, and uncles? Do you show respect for women, womanhood, and motherhood?

Daughters of God, do we know who we are? Do we know what we have? Are we worthy to receive the power and blessings of the priesthood? Do we receive the gifts given to us with gratitude, grace, and dignity? Do we embrace our roles and responsibilities to strengthen homes as mothers, grandmothers, daughters, sisters, and aunts? Do we show respect for men, manhood, and fatherhood?

As covenant sons and daughters, do we have faith in our Heavenly Father and His eternal plan for us? Do we have faith in Jesus Christ and His Atonement? Do we believe that we have a divine nature and destiny? And in our efforts to achieve this destiny and receive all that the Father has,¹² do we understand the importance of receiving priesthood ordinances and making, keeping, and renewing our covenants with the Lord?

We are beloved spirit sons and daughters of heavenly parents, with a divine nature and destiny. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, loved us enough to give His life for us. His Atonement provides the way for us to progress on the path to our heavenly home, through sacred priesthood ordinances and covenants.

These priesthood ordinances and covenants were restored to the earth through the Prophet Joseph Smith, and today President Thomas S. Monson holds all the keys of the priesthood on the earth.

Elder D. Todd Christofferson taught: "In The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is found the priesthood authority to administer the ordinances by which we can enter into binding covenants with our Heavenly Father in the name of His Holy Son. ... God will keep His promises to you as you honor your covenants with Him."¹³

Of these things I testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. “The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2010, 129.
2. See Moroni 4:3; 6:3.
3. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (2004), 49.
4. M. Russell Ballard, “Let Us Think Straight” (Brigham Young University Education Week devotional, Aug. 20, 2013); speeches.byu.edu.
5. Doctrine and Covenants 14:7; see also Doctrine and Covenants 131:1–4.
6. Russell M. Nelson, “Nurturing Marriage,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2006, 37; or in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 134.
7. Delbert L. Stapley, in Conference Report, Oct. 1965, 14; quoted in L. Tom Perry, “As Now We Take the Sacrament,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2006, 41; see also *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley* (1997), 561; *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (1982), 220.
8. See Doctrine and Covenants 109:22.
9. See M. Russell Ballard and Rosemary M. Wixom, “Blessings of the Priesthood in Every Home,” in *Strengthening the Family and the Church through the Priesthood* (worldwide leadership training, 2013); lds.org/broadcasts.
10. M. Russell Ballard, “Let Us Think Straight”; speeches.byu.edu.
11. See also Doctrine and Covenants 46:9, 12.

12. See Doctrine and Covenants 84:38.

13. D. Todd Christofferson, “The Power of Covenants,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2009, 22.

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