



SPECIAL WITNESS

What does it mean to hold the PRIESTHOOD?

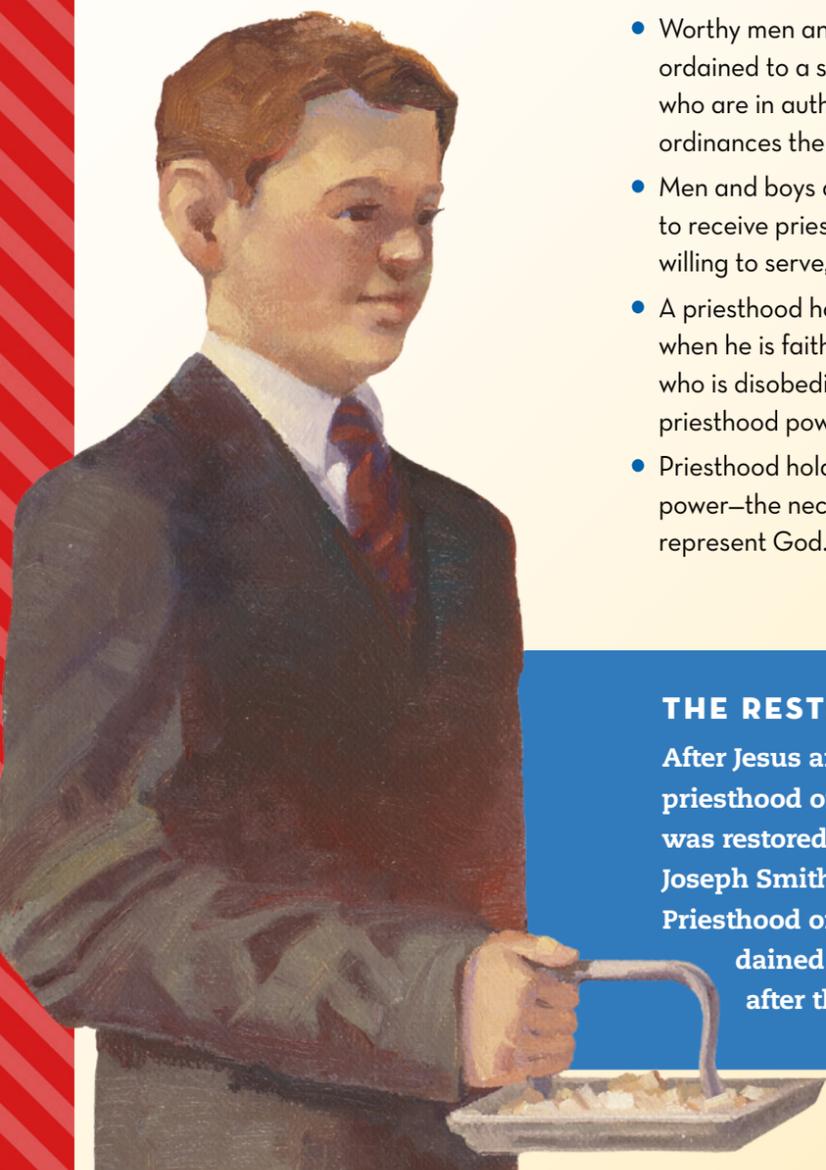
By Elder David A. Bednar
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
The members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles are special witnesses of Jesus Christ.

The priesthood is the authority of God delegated to men on earth to act in His name.

- Worthy men and boys receive priesthood authority and are ordained to a specific office “by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof” (Articles of Faith 1:5).
- Men and boys do not need any special experience or education to receive priesthood authority. They *do* need to be worthy and willing to serve, bless, and strengthen others.
- A priesthood holder can be blessed with priesthood power when he is faithful, obedient, diligent, and righteous. Someone who is disobedient, unworthy, or unwilling to serve will have no priesthood power.
- Priesthood holders young and old need both authority and power—the necessary permission and the spiritual capacity to represent God.

THE RESTORATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD

After Jesus and His Apostles died, no one else held the priesthood on earth. Many years later the priesthood was restored in May 1829. John the Baptist ordained Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to the Aaronic Priesthood on May 15, 1829. Peter, James, and John ordained them to the Melchizedek Priesthood soon after that.



A story from Elder Bednar's life.

A Lesson from My Father

I learned a great lesson from my father about priesthood authority and power.

I grew up in a home with a faithful mother and a wonderful father. My dad was not a member of our church but still came to Church meetings with our family. He coached our ward softball team and helped with Scout activities.

As a boy I asked my dad many times each week when he was going to be baptized. My father replied each time, “David, I will join the Church when I know it’s the right thing to do.”

One Sunday I asked my dad when he was going to be baptized. He just smiled and asked me a question. “David, your church teaches that the priesthood was taken from the earth anciently and has been restored by heavenly messengers. Why are so many of the men in your church no different about doing their priesthood duty than the men in my church?”

My mind went blank. I had no answer for my dad.

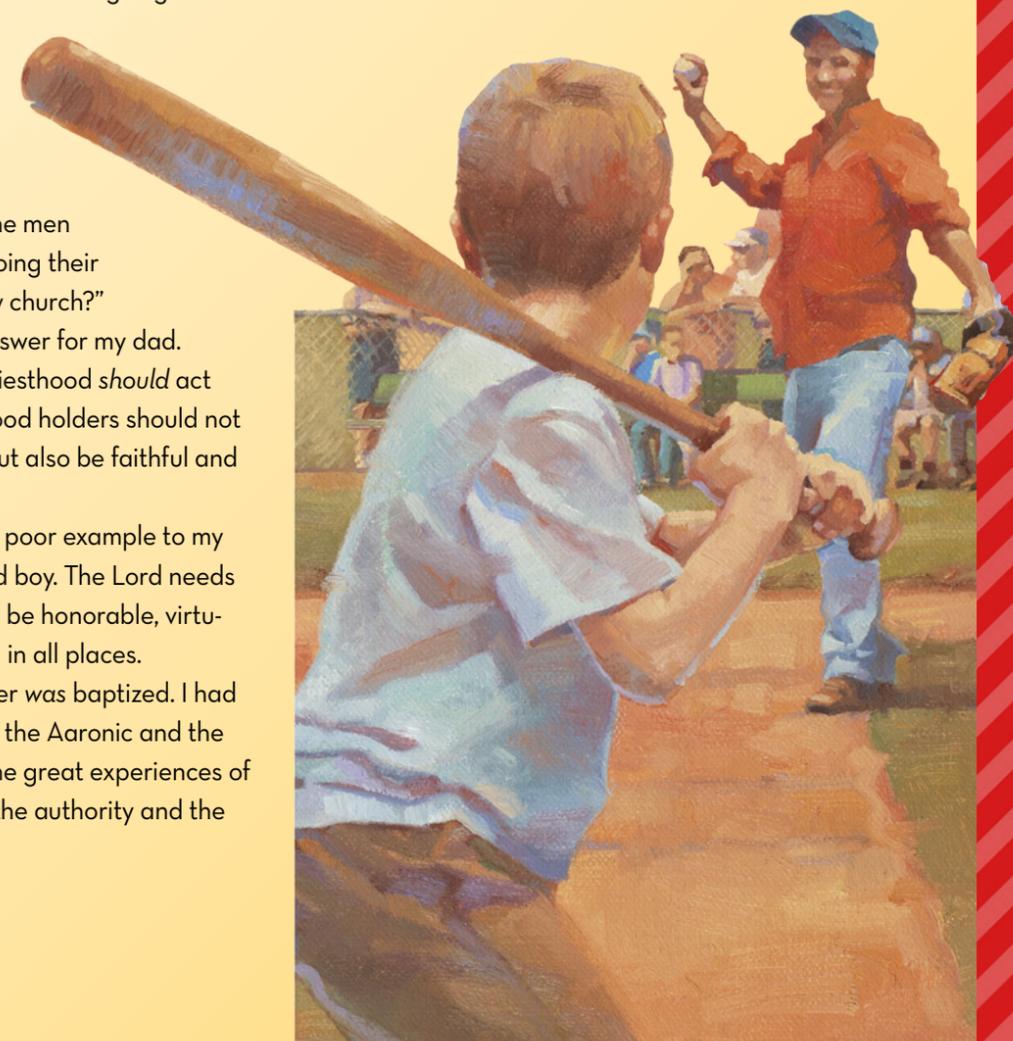
I knew that men who hold the priesthood *should* act differently than other men. Priesthood holders should not only receive priesthood authority but also be faithful and worthy to exercise God’s power.

I decided I never wanted to be a poor example to my father. I simply wanted to be a good boy. The Lord needs all of us who hold the priesthood to be honorable, virtuous, and good boys at all times and in all places.

A number of years later, my father was baptized. I had the opportunity to confer upon him the Aaronic and the Melchizedek priesthoods. One of the great experiences of my life was seeing my dad receive the authority and the power of the priesthood. ♦

5 FACTS ABOUT ELDER BEDNAR

- Born on June 15, 1952, in Oakland, California
- Played quarterback on his high school football team
- Served a mission in Germany
- Was president of Brigham Young University–Idaho
- Ordained an Apostle in October 2004



ILLUSTRATIONS BY DILLEEN MARSH