

“Verily, condemnation resteth upon you, who are appointed to lead my Church, . . . and also upon the Church; and there must needs be a repentance and a reformation among you, in all things, in your examples before the Church and before the world, in all your manners, habits and customs, and salutations one toward another; rendering unto every man the respect due the office, calling, and priesthood whereunto I, the Lord, have appointed and ordained you.”¹⁰

If any among us are also guilty of treating as trivial such things that are sacred, we may repent and resolve to honor the priesthood and those to whom the Lord has entrusted its keys.

Brethren, to all mankind we proclaim these everlasting truths: “The Melchizedek Priesthood holds the right of presidency, and has power and authority over all the offices in the church in all ages of the world” (D&C 107:8). This power holds “the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church” (D&C 107:18). May we fully honor that priesthood, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

NOTES

1. The reader may wish to consult James E. Talmage, “The Honor and Dignity of Priesthood,” in James R. Clark, comp., *Messages of the First Presidency of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 4:305–9.
2. President George Q. Cannon said: “[Honoring the President of the Church] will cause us to draw nearer unto the

Father and live so that we shall receive revelation from him for ourselves, that the knowledge of the Spirit shall be in our hearts, that the voice of the true Shepherd will be known to our ears, that when we hear it we will know it. . . . This is the privilege of the Latter-day Saints, and the man and woman in this Church who does not live so as to enjoy this privilege comes short of being what he should be” (in *Journal of Discourses*, 19:110).

3. “The Unique Commission of a General Authority” (address delivered at a General Authority training meeting, 2 Oct. 1985), p. 5.
4. “Commission,” p. 1.
5. In Conference Report, Oct. 1992, p. 77; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, p. 54.
6. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1938), p. 21.
7. *Messages of the First Presidency*, 4:306.
8. James E. Faust, “A Seventy Is a General Authority” (address delivered at a special training session for the Seventy, 29 Sept. 1987), p. 4.
9. “Commission,” p. 9.
10. *History of the Church*, 2:177.

President Monson

We have heard from Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder John K. Carmack of the Seventy will now speak to us, and he will be followed by Elder F. David Stanley, who was called since last April conference as one of the Seventy.

Elder John K. Carmack

Using full priesthood power

Beloved brethren, in this very room there’s quite enough power to do anything we’re called to do. We are the priesthood of God.

Recently Elder Tai and I stayed in the Everest Hotel in Kathmandu, Nepal. One evening the electric power failed. Fortunately two small candles and matches were provided. But instead of about four hundred watts of electric

power to light our rooms, our candles yielded only two candlepower, not enough light to allow us to continue our work.

The priesthood of God is potentially a greater source of power than electricity. Collectively priesthood brethren perform well, but we fall far short of our potential. Why? Could our problem be that we fail to tap our greatest source of power in exercising our priesthood? Do we trade electricity for candles?

Faith is the priesthood's power source

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the priesthood's dynamic power source. By failing to put faith first in our callings, we reduce the priesthood's light and power. Other obstacles also block its beneficial rays.

Oliver Cowdery thought he could translate under the flickering light of a candle. The Lord instructed him, "Remember that without faith you can do nothing; therefore ask in faith" (D&C 8:10).

Past priesthood leaders such as Peter, Paul, Joseph, and Brigham accomplished amazing results in their callings. How? They all did it with faith. They had no computers or fax machines. Their power depended on faith. Jesus often answered pleas for his miraculous intervention by saying, "According to your faith be it unto you" (see Matthew 9:29; 15:28).

Temptation to rely on tangible tools

Rather than relying on faith, we are tempted to stay with the comfortable and tangible tools of our temporal lives to accomplish priesthood callings. The Church has also provided some tools. These tools are useful. They have helped us achieve success, power, and control over our time. They include our natural intelligence; education and training; and preparation with manuals, handbooks, agendas, and budgets.

We operate with diligent, purposeful effort using management concepts and systems we have learned. I wouldn't say a word against these tools. They serve us well. Often they have come themselves through a process of faith and inspiration, trial and error, and intelligent effort. After all, the Lord said, "Organize yourselves; prepare every needful thing" (D&C 88:119).

Add faith, however, and priesthood service becomes magnificent. Two candles suddenly burst into four hundred watts of light. More to the point, we tap into the Lord's power source, and our actions move in rhythm with His. The Lord compensates for our deficiencies. Vast, unseen reservoirs of dynamic power supply our needs.

Nephi relied on faith

The Lord commanded His Apostles to believe in Him, saying, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do" (John 14:12; see also 14:11). Clearly the power to do great works comes from faith in Christ.

Let's look at a well-known example. Nephi and his brethren received an assignment from the Lord. The assignment was to go and obtain the brass plates from Laban. They tried wisdom, charm, and persuasion—tools they were comfortable using. They even offered to trade precious things from their family treasure in exchange for the plates. Nothing worked. In fact, they fled for their lives, accused of robbery.

Only then did Nephi turn to pure faith. Here's how it worked. He convinced himself that the Lord had assigned him to get the plates. Next he conceived the mental energy and trust to try again, saying, "I will go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded" (1 Nephi 3:7). Without knowing what he would do, Nephi began moving forward while his brothers skulked outside the city walls. "I was led by the Spirit, not knowing

beforehand the things which I should do” (4:6). Now he was moving by faith—confidence in the unknown, hope in things unseen. You know the rest.

Notice that faith and trust in the Lord came first. Then came action. Nephi had no plan except confidence in the Lord. It was really a “ready, fire, aim” approach, the opposite of conventional wisdom. Laman and Lemuel thought it foolhardy. Then the Lord’s plan unfolded with Nephi being guided by unseen hands.

Walking by faith in Vietnam

Often this is the way faith works. I was assigned, for example, to escort Elder and Sister Bateman and Elder and Sister Steadman to their missionary assignments as English teachers in Hanoi, Vietnam. We planned and organized, but we had more questions than answers. After completing our planned agenda, we still had one full day unplanned. More remained to be done, but what and where?

That morning we decided to act by faith by walking out our doors. Events swept us through an amazing day of welcoming ceremonies at the Hanoi Children’s Palace, dinner in our honor with Operation Smile Vietnam, and other activities planned by our hosts. Our hosts had been too busy to communicate their plans to us, but the Lord knew them and moved us into place like pawns on a chessboard.

The power of faith

In the *Lectures on Faith*, prepared by brethren under the direction of Joseph Smith in Kirtland, Ohio, the authors asked: “What are we to understand by a man’s working by faith? We answer—we understand that when a man works by faith he works by mental exertion instead of physical force. It is by words, instead of exerting his physical powers, with which every being works when he works by faith” (7:3).

A brief but profound phrase in the book of Abraham describes the complete power of God’s faith: “There is nothing that the Lord thy God shall take in his heart to do but what he will do it” (Abraham 3:17). With faith we can get the right things to do into our hearts and the words and mental exertion to do them. It may require leaving unstructured time in our planning and on our agenda. Then faith would have some air to breathe.

Although faith often includes positive thinking, it is much, much more than that. Faith taps into divine sources and is a manifestation of unity and partnership with the Lord. Even the ideas and words formulated by faith come by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and the power to accomplish the words formed by faith comes from God.

Even more important, faith leads directly to eternal life because in exercising faith we come to know God and His power, and we become like Him.

The brethren explained in their *Lectures on Faith* that “the plan of salvation . . . was a system of faith—it begins with faith, and continues by faith; and every blessing which is obtained in relation to it is the effect of faith” (7:17).

Overcoming obstacles to faith

Priesthood leaders need balance, wisdom, and tools that help them organize, but why can’t we add the power of faith that is available? I know that many of you already do that.

It sounds easy, doesn’t it? Maybe to some of you it sounds too general and simplistic. Well, in a way it is easy, but there are serious obstacles to overcome before we can add the power source of faith in our service. The hardest step may be to decide that faith comes first. Then we must overcome the obstacles. Our greatest obstacle is often unworthiness. To really have faith, we must cleanse the instruments of faith—our minds, our bodies, and our spirits.

Ironically, if we are unworthy it seems that the order of using gospel principles is, for that period of time, reversed. First repentance, then faith. Arguably, repentance was first sparked by a particle of faith, but gaining the power of faith sometimes requires repentance first.

Pride and arrogance block out faith.

Self-sufficiency, often through financial success, high educational attainment, fame, and honor among men, can keep us from having faith.

Religious fanaticism can damn our faith. In religion, as in other things, sometimes more is less.

Alcohol, drugs, salacious entertainment, pornography, and accumulation of material things clog the arteries of faith; and fear, guilt, bitterness, and resentment can choke faith. Yes, Satan throws up many obstacles. He doesn't want us to have faith.

Now go back over the list of obstacles. Do you notice any of these in children? No wonder the Lord suggested that we seek faith like that of little children.

Faith not exclusive to priesthood

Brethren, faith is not an exclusive tool of the priesthood. The Roman centurion held no priesthood, but through faith he asked the Lord to heal his servant. He added that he was not worthy to have Jesus come to his home, although he was a man whose authority others obeyed. He said, "But speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed" (Matthew 8:8). Jesus marveled at his faith. "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (8:10).

The gentile woman of Canaan also tapped into the source of power. Evil spirits had vexed her daughter, and she sought in faith to have Jesus cast the evil spirits out. Jesus, probably testing her faith, explained that He was sent to minister only to those of Israel. She simply would not be denied. "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Jesus exclaimed, "O

woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt" (Matthew 15:27-28).

Brethren, we can learn much about faith from such sisters as the woman of Canaan, from our friends of other faiths such as the Roman centurion, and especially from our children. No matter how we learn to use the power of faith, we need to have it to accomplish the awesome tasks assigned to us.

Use gifts of the Spirit more fully

Also, we need to use more fully the gifts of the Spirit, all of which operate through faith. These gifts are available to us today. Even the ultimate power—to raise the dead—is occasionally exercised by those of great faith. The sick are healed, the blind see, the lame walk, and evil spirits are cast out—all through faith and priesthood power in combination. I feel we do not enjoy enough spiritual gifts in our priesthood callings.

We can start by adding the ingredients of faith identified in the *Lectures on Faith*:

1. To know and accept that God exists.
2. To know His correct character, attributes, and perfections.
3. To know that the course of life we are now pursuing is according to God's will. (See 3:2-5.)

Let's add these three elements to our priesthood power tools. We can't do it unless we sanctify our lives and add more spiritual depth to our knowledge.

Two candlepower or 400 watts?

Now, what shall we do to put faith foremost? If we listen carefully, we will discover the key to Simon Peter's faith in the challenge given to him by the Savior prior to His resurrection:

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

"But I have prayed for thee, *that thy faith fail not*: and when thou art con-

verted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31-32; italics added).

Perhaps it is time that we humble ourselves and overcome the obstacles to faith, and then become converted as Peter did. Why go through life with two candle-power when more than four hundred watts are available? The tasks are so great! How can we possibly take the gospel to all the world and redeem the

dead at the same time? I don't know, but the power and energy to do so must and will come by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, brethren, let's plead fervently with the Lord as the Apostles of old did: "Lord, Increase our faith" (Luke 17:5). Then let's use our increased faith as the primary power source in all of our callings. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Elder F. David Stanley

The principle of work

More than 6,000 years ago, father Adam received the commandment, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Genesis 3:19).

Some 2,700 years ago a Greek poet observed that "in front of excellence the immortal gods have put sweat, and long and steep is the way to it" (Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 1.287, in John Bartlett, comp., *Familiar Quotations*, 14th ed. [Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1968], p. 67).

My young friends of the Aaronic Priesthood and you trainers of this great army of Christ, the principle of work has been taught from the foundation of the world. It is the bottom line of any forward motion of success. The frightening disappearance of work as a part of our basic ethic is alarming. We constantly hear statements such as "It's too hard," "Give me something easier," "I want it now," and "I can't wait that long" coming from our young people. The ugly disease of "nothing to do" is growing in epidemic proportions among us. It undermines the basic fabric of our nations. The prophet Ezekiel clearly defined iniquity as an "abundance of idleness" (Ezekiel 16:49).

We are what we are as a people because our ancestors were not afraid of honest, hard work. Our forefathers understood the necessity of it; sheer survival demanded it. A common ingredient

among all successful people is an understanding of what constitutes paying the price of success. Basic in that formula of paying the price is an inner determination that "I'll do whatever it takes." That means, "I'll work hard, with integrity, to achieve my goal."

Work comes before blessings

Hard work is a blessing of God. It involves going after it "with all your heart, might, mind and strength" (D&C 4:2). That alone is the difference between the average and the excellent.

Great athletes are hard workers. Points, rebounds, assists, tackles, goals, and home runs are all the result of long hours of painstaking practice and hard work. The bulk of that practice will always be on your own, away from the coach. Victory is brought to pass by one's personal diligence and commitment to hard work. The view of a champion, and the glory that surrounds him, must never be overshadowed by the long process of becoming one. There is a time of preparation and a time of victory. The second mile of hard work is what makes the difference between the exhilaration of achievement and the acceptance of mediocrity.

While I served as a mission president, many times missionaries would say to me, "But, President, I want baptisms now."