

Lesson: Spiritual Authority and Power are Conditional

1. **The authority and power of priesthood are directly associated with our righteousness, and the just exercise of our callings.**
 - ✎ "The powers of priesthood ... **Are confirmed for no other purpose than the salvation of man, and are continued only in the just exercise of them in the pursuit of this object:** hence any act of any man called to this calling, performed with any other intent, or attended with a different result is not authorized of God, and hence does not bind the powers of heaven." *J. Smith, III, The Saints' Herald, vol. 24, pg.168.*
 - ✎ "... priesthood is **delegated authority** from God, and is given for a specific purpose, and while men are in the exercise of it within the province of this purpose they are agents for him who has bestowed it; and whenever they transcend the province of that authority they cease to act for God. Nor is it that which is inherent in the man by which everything that he does is qualifiedly of the Lord; and it is only when and so long as men speak with the direct recognition of him who has sent them and within the province of the delegated authority, that they speak as agents for God." *Supplement to The Saints' Herald, July 22, 1893, J. Smith III.*
2. **Priesthood Authority can be lost**
 - ✎ "Saul was lawfully anointed as Israel's first king and given authority of God to rule over her. Because Saul also sought to act in a sacred office [reserved for God's prophet, Samuel] to which he had never been called, God took the kingdom away from Saul and bestowed it upon David. Because of his disobedience, Saul also forfeited his life. *1 Samuel 13*" *Presidency and Priesthood, Kelly*
3. **Priesthood Authority is limited/defined—DC 104:44a...**let every man learn his duty, and to act in the office in which he is appointed, in all diligence.—**DC 17:12a** Every elder, priest, teacher, or deacon, is to be ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto him;
4. **Priesthood Hypocrisy & Priestcraft – Accepting a Call:** DC 50:2-2; 2 Nephi 11:106
 - but doing nothing with it, or
 - doing something which appears to be good but isn't, or
 - doing something with it that is not of God, or
 - doing something for personal gain or promotion
5. **Priesthood Authority Not to Be Taken Lightly**

D&C 60:1b ...for they will not open their mouths, but hide the talent which I have given unto them, because of the fear of man.
6. **Authority Not Properly Maintained—Can Be Suspended or Lost**

DC 43:3c Inasmuch as ye do it not, it shall be taken; even that which ye have received. *DC 34:4f; DC 60:2a*

 - ✎ "If the army of elders composing the priesthood have ever forgotten that they are men chosen for the accomplishment of a specific ensign had in view by Him who called them, that this calling gave no authority, and conferred no dignity not found in direct accord with the design, then has that army become deficient in the principal aid to their success; and every portion of it that persists in thus forgetting what they should certainly remember, disgraces this calling, and should be discharged from service."
7. **Use and Abuse of Authority & Power**
 - ✎ "... The rights of the priesthood are inseparably *Joseph Smith, III, The Priesthood Journal, Vol. 9, October 1943, No. 4, page 13* connected with the powers of heaven: and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled, only upon the principles of righteousness, that they may be conferred upon us it is true, but when we undertake to cover our sins, to gratify our pride, vain ambition, or to exercise dominion or compulsion over the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, **behold the heavens withdraw themselves, the Spirit of the Lord is grieved, then amen to the priesthood, or to the authority of that man.**" — *Joseph Smith Jr. - Times & Seasons, Vol. 1, pages 131-131 as quoted in The Priesthood Journal, July, 1934, page 24 under Standards of Priesthood.*
8. **Consequences of Breaking Our Priesthood Covenant**

D&C 83:6f-h all those who receive the priesthood receive this oath and covenant of my Father, which **he cannot break**, neither can it be moved; but whoso breaketh this covenant, after he hath received it, and altogether turneth therefrom, shall not have forgiveness of sins in this world nor in the world to come. Also: *D&C 58:6i*
9. **"Priesthood Accountability"**
 - ✎ *D&C 118:4c* [...Let no one deceive himself that he shall not account for his stewardship unto Me.] is often misinterpreted as being applicable to temporal stewardship, but Joseph Smith, III in The Saints Herald of July 24, 1937 makes it plain that this is not the case. Speaking concerning this paragraph of Section 118, President Smith said: **"When priesthood is conferred upon anyone who is called, the ordination places a responsibility upon him for which he must answer directly to God."** *The Nature and Stewardship of Priesthood by Elder Robert Giertz – Updated March 4, 2004*