

The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood (D&C 84:33-48)

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The two parties to the priesthood covenant are man and God. Man covenants to do certain things or meet certain conditions; God cites promises that he will give in return.

Man's Covenant

1. **Receive the Melchizedek Priesthood in Good Faith v 33.** When a man has the Melchizedek Priesthood conferred upon him, he is expected to *receive* it in good faith. The word *receive* is used generously in the Doctrine and Covenants verses that describe the oath and covenant of the priesthood:

“All they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord; ... “And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father; “And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father’s kingdom.” ([D&C 84:35, 37–38.](#))

2. **Magnify Callings v 33.** President Kimball defines *priesthood*, in part, as “the means whereby the Lord acts through men to save souls.” (*Ensign*, June 1975, p. 3.) This definition suggests action, not inaction. It implies that priesthood power is to be exercised in behalf of other people; it is not something to sit upon or to simply glory in. It suggests that priesthood callings are to be *magnified*.

The transcendent blessings of the priesthood do not come by ordination alone.

What does it mean to magnify one's calling? According to *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, “to magnify” is “to increase the importance of: cause to be held in greater esteem or respect ... to make greater.” One magnifies a calling—

- By learning one's duty and executing it fully. ([D&C 107:99–100.](#))
- By giving one's best effort in assigned fields of labor.
- By consecrating one's time, talents, and means to the Lord's work as called upon by our leaders and the whisperings of the Spirit. (See Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, Mar. 1985, p. 5.)
- By teaching and exemplifying truth.

Jacob, the Book of Mormon prophet, testified, “We did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility, ... [teaching] them the word of God with all diligence; ... [and] laboring with our might.” ([Jacob 1:19.](#))

3. **Obey the Commandments v 43.** In the revelation on priesthood, we read, “And I now give unto you a commandment ... to give diligent heed to the words of eternal life.” ([D&C 84:43.](#)) “To give diligent heed,” I believe, includes to *obey* the commandments.

Let us remember that with every commandment, God has promised a blessing. If we expect to claim the blessing, we must keep the commandment. Otherwise, if we ignore or break the commandment, we are cursed by losing the blessing. ([Deut. 11:26–28.](#)) It is a very simple but serious arrangement.

- 4. *Live by Every Word of God v 44.*** Addressing priesthood bearers, the Lord says, “For you shall *live* by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.” ([D&C 84:44](#)) This statement reinforces the need for obedience. It also suggests the need to know the word of the Lord.

Words of eternal life come from one source: God. They are made available to us through the fountain of the holy scriptures and the fountain of living prophets and reconfirmed by personal revelation through the power of the Holy Ghost.

“What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; ... my word ... shall all be fulfilled, whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same.” ([D&C 1:38](#); see also [D&C 1:11–14.](#))

God’s Promises and Oath

Promise 1. We Will Be Sanctified by the Spirit v 33. Note these words:

“For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken [Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood], and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies.” ([D&C 84:33.](#))

Promise 2: We Will Be Numbered with the Elect of God v 34. It is said of those who receive the holy priesthood and remain true to their covenants, “They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.” ([D&C 84:34.](#))

Elder Bruce R. McConkie explains:

“These are the portion of church members who are striving with all their hearts to keep the fulness of the gospel law in this life so that they can become inheritors of the fulness of gospel rewards in the life to come.” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed., Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, p. 217.)

We do not become saints automatically by entering the waters of baptism. We become saints, in the true sense of the word, as we live saintly lives and cultivate Christlike attributes. Similarly, we do not become the elect of God instantaneously by receiving the priesthood. Such honor will come only so fast as we remember and perform according to the priesthood covenant.

Promise 3: We Will Be Given All That God Has v 38. This all-encompassing promise is stated by Christ in these words: “All that my Father hath shall be given unto him.” ([D&C 84:38.](#))

Few of us, I suppose, can comprehend all that this promise means. Even though we know that it includes eternal life, or the inheritance of exaltation, still it is so great and so wonderful that it defies proper explanation. It is sufficient for me to know that God in heaven is my Father and that he will bless me with all he has to offer, if I prove myself to be a faithful son.

What is that inheritance? It is all that he has, even eternal life. This blessed and promised gift will be ours only if we keep the covenants, particularly the covenant of the priesthood, and remain faithful to the end.

“There is an oath and covenant of the priesthood. The covenant rests with man; the oath with God.”
Elder Boyd K. Packer, Ensign February 1993