

**Apprentices to Our Heavenly Mother:
Queens and Priestesses (In-Training)**

“You, my sisters, if you are faithful will become Queens of Queens, and Priestesses unto the Most High God. These are your callings.”

Eliza R. Snow

(Written by Anna Hargadon Peterson. Credit to Valerie Hudson for the phrase/idea of being “Apprentices to our Heavenly Mother.” Credit to Amber Richardson for the phrase/idea of being “Queens in-training.” My two Mormon feminist scholar heroines.)



“My Body, My Temple.” The incredible art featured in this essay is by Autumn Skye.

I. Anointed to Become

A Queen and a Priestess. In the temples of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, this is what women are anointed to someday become. We make covenants with God with this objective on our path of progression. A while ago, I realized that I wasn't quite sure what this meant. So, I began an exploration. Since then I have sought to listen to what God wants me to personally learn, and, ultimately, share. (Disclaimer: All that I share is just where I've come to at this point in my learning, and I'm sure it may shift and change and expand as I do.)

Many women I know who are members of my faith--including myself--are seeking a "model" of womanhood through our Heavenly Mother, but a transparent understanding of her is almost entirely lacking.

A fundamental teaching of the Church of Jesus Christ is that as children of God, we are created in the image of our Heavenly *Parents*. There is, in this idea, an important distinction that is not often made, but I've learned is incredibly important for me: Because I am a *woman*, I am made more in the image of my Heavenly *Mother* than my Heavenly *Father*. While I'm sure (and hope!) that I have some of His characteristics, I am not a man who has the potential to become a Father. I am a woman who has the potential to become a Mother. And candidly, because of my belief in gender distinction, it is important for me to be aware of and believe that I am made in the image of my Heavenly Mother, because then all the parts of me that make me distinctly woman - my menstruation, my womb, my breasts, my desire to create and nurture (and this isn't only in women's nature, but seems to be a general propensity), etc. - are validated and holy and an essential part of my eternal progression. Strangely enough (it seems strange to me), this distinction is rarely made in church settings when this belief is being taught - I almost always hear "You are made in the image of your Heavenly Father" - even if it's to a group of only women! Being constantly told (even in a church that supports gender distinction) that I am in the image of my Heavenly Father disregards a huge part of my eternal nature and destiny and, candidly, has become a pain point for me in religious settings.

A thought hit my heart a while back - if it is true that we (as women) are made in the image of our Heavenly Mother and destined to become like her, then it makes sense to me that what we are anointed in the temple to become, she probably has already become. What if Heavenly Mother is a Queen and a Priestess? (*The Queen and The Priestess?*) This has given me a little more of a line to follow, in my quest for understanding more about her as my model and how I can become like her.

But what is a Queen, and what is a Priestess? Often, the idea of a “Queen” can conjure up associations with a distant, cruel, or fragile woman who lives in an opulent palace and makes oppressive demands of her people. And the idea of a “Priestess” can conjure associations with witchcraft, cults, and abuse of power and sexuality. I think this is a possible reason why we (in the Church culture) are hesitant to talk about these roles more openly.

In the temple we are anointed to *someday become* a Queen and a Priestess, and this is dependent upon our righteousness and faithfulness. I wonder if an assumption that “someday” is after this life adds the lack of discussion or clarity? Valerie Hudson said in a [recent interview](#): “We often think that our priestesshood is for some future time period. That’s ridiculous. We do the work of our Heavenly Mother, the high priestess right here on this earth.” I agree with this perspective - we aren’t told that it will be after this life. Valerie talks [here](#) about an opportunity she calls “apprenticeships”: “Priesthood is a man’s apprenticeship to become a heavenly father, and it is clear from LDS doctrine that women have their own apprenticeship to become like their heavenly mother.” I submit that this apprenticeship began long ago, as we made choices to progress to become like our Heavenly Parents, and that it can continue in each of our lives if we so choose.

But as women, it can sometimes feel difficult to understand what it means to be an apprentice to our Heavenly Mother. For the most part, men seem to have the path more clearly laid out for them, and steps and celebratory rituals along that path are much more in the lime-light. The current prophet, Russel M. Nelson, [recently said this](#) about drawing the Savior’s power into your life (which we will explore more later), and I feel like it’s the same for women seeking to understand their Heavenly Matriarchal lineage: “You won’t find this process spelled out in any manual. The Holy Ghost will be your personal tutor as you seek to understand what the Lord would have you know and do. This process is neither quick nor easy, but it *is* spiritually invigorating.” Acknowledging this process with gratitude and respect, I also think and feel that it’s time for women to help each other a little more openly along this journey of seeking - which is why I am sharing this personal essay.

II. QUEEN

I remember being often told, growing up in the Young Women’s program of the Church, some version of “You’re the daughter of a King” - which thusly means, “you are a

princess and should honor yourself as one and act like one.” Candidly, this sentiment became cliché and lost its meaning after a while. Even looking back on talks that contain those words bring up a dismissive feeling in me, sadly enough. Here’s an example:

Sister Elaine S. Dalton said in a General Conference address to young women: “Like the king’s son, each of you has inherited a royal birthright. Each of you has a divine heritage. ‘You are literally the royal daughters of our Father in Heaven.’ Each of you was born to be a queen. ”

Almost there. I think what was missing for me was the more complete context of who I am becoming - I’m the daughter of a *Queen* as well, and as such am destined to become like *Her*. To me, this gives the “princess” idea greater possible meaning, clarity, and depth. What are the qualities of the *Heavenly Queen*? And as an enspirited, embodied being on the path of progression with the potential to become a queen (and not a king), what does this mean and how can I cultivate those qualities?

As far as I’m aware, there aren’t any scriptures or general conference talks laying out specific answers to this specific question. For the most part, it’s a mystery that, right now, we have to seek out for ourselves. (And I’ve come to appreciate this seeking as an important part of my spiritual journey.)

Speaking of her own journey of seeking the Heavenly Queen, Amber Richardson writes in her essay, “Crowned in Charity and Power”:

To my still-lasting surprise, I began seeing her in the scriptures. I saw Her in charity, in metaphors, in Her son, and particularly in Her daughters. God is Love, and so is She I’ve learned. I began to believe that She was inside of me, and inside of all of Her daughters; we were created in Her image after all! In this sense we are all queens, or at least queens-in-training.

As I’ve continued my search I recently began wondering about queens. There are so many in the scriptures. Was there something I could learn from scriptural she-monarchs about the Queen of Heaven?

She continues to go through a number of examples of women in the scriptures. I highly encourage you to read her essay, and look for more from her on the subject.

One of the first things we might think of, when we think of a Queen, is her crown. In Doctrine and Covenants 25:15, Emma Smith is told: “Keep my commandments continually, and a crown of righteousness thou shalt receive. And except thou do this,

where I am you cannot come.” This crown of “righteousness” or “eternal life” or “glory” is mentioned numerous times in the scriptures. It seems that the “crowning” is a higher level of consciousness that we can experience as we progress. Through understanding more about what it means to be a Queen - some level of higher consciousness that we can progress to - we can obviously understand more about our apprenticeship to our Heavenly Mother and what it means to be a Queen-in-training.

Thankfully, in the scriptures we have a few examples of righteous Queens that help shed light on this role that we can become. I invite you to study those scriptures, as well as Amber’s insightful essay mentioned before.

In my own seeking, there are a couple of words that have helped me move this idea of becoming a Queen out of the realm of negative meanings and cliches, and endow it with holy power: *steward* and *sovereign*.

Rocket Cordray’s (a blogger I found) thoughts can start off our exploration:

The first concept to understand is that all queens are sovereigns. A sovereign is a master who rules with power. In the world, sovereignty has often been a matter of blood inheritance. But the Kingdom of God only honors inheritance within the context of the law of the harvest, wherein individuals are first stewards who prove themselves before being made rulers. Examine Matt 25:

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Did you see what happened there? Good stewardship over a few things translated into sovereignty over many things. There is vast power to be gained by submitting to the terms laid out by God in scripture and in ordinances, and it simply cannot be had in the ways power is traditionally gained in the world (by blood relation, or by the sword).

So, maybe in the Kingdom of God, a woman becomes a queen when she is a good steward of the resources she has been given and this leads to sovereignty - ruling with power. Amber Richardson defines sovereignty as “The quality or state of embodying complete self-power and authority to act.” Maybe this power is God’s power flowing through us and as we open ourselves to be vessels of this power, we are one with it - it is ours as well. Valerie Hudson has said: “Sisters in the gospel are acting with the power

and authority of Heavenly Mother.” What if, as women - as Her apprentices - it is Her power that is one of the resources we are practicing being good stewards of? We will explore this later as we explore what it means to be a Priestess.

Working definition of a (divine) steward: guardian, keeper, one who uses resources responsibly.

Working definition of a (divine) sovereign: master who rules and acts with divine embodied power.

What resources have we been given, and how can good stewardship over them lead to empowerment? Perhaps our stewardships provide the space to practice and build sovereignty, as we choose to become part of a heavenly kingdom.

The more in-depth question for me becomes: ***how can I use my agency to be (and become) a good, joyful steward of the sacred resources God has given me? And how can I practice ruling with embodied divine power, as a woman (aka a Queen/Priestess-in-training) in my various roles?***

From the [Elaine S. Dalton talk](#) I quoted from earlier, she goes on to tell a story that I *do* resonate with. (And for the record, I’m a huge fan of Sister Dalton.) She speaks of meeting the prophet, President David O. McKay, while attending college:

After we had finished [introductions], he leaned back in his chair and reached for his wife’s hand and said, “Now, young women, I would like you to meet *my queen*.” There seated next to him was his wife, Emma Ray McKay. Although she did not wear a crown of sparkling diamonds, nor was she seated on a throne, I *knew* she was a true queen. Her white hair was her crown, and her pure eyes sparkled like jewels. As President and Sister McKay spoke of their family and their life together, their intertwined hands spoke volumes about their love. Joy radiated from their faces. Hers was a beauty that cannot be purchased. It came from years of seeking the best gifts, becoming well educated, seeking knowledge by study and also by faith. It came from years of hard work, of faithfully enduring trials with optimism, trust, strength, and courage. It came from her unwavering devotion and fidelity to her husband, her family, and the Lord.

I appreciate this anecdote for a couple reasons: firstly, it’s an example of queenliness as cultivation of divine personal qualities that can only come through empowered, humble self-determination and faith. And secondly, to some (men and women) being “treated

like a Queen” by one’s partner means that she is fragile and needs to be put on a pedestal and kept safe, etc. Essentially, she is dis-empowered -- which, to me, is an inaccurate understanding of what it means to be a Queen. This story instead shows respect, unity, and strength in a partnership.

In seeking to understand how our queenliness is connected to Jesus Christ, we learn in the scriptures that we have the opportunity to be “joint-heirs” with Christ in the kingdom of heaven. [Blogger Rocket Cordray](#) calls attention to it in one of his posts:

Paul calls Christ's children "joint-heirs" in Romans 8:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that **we suffer with him**, that we may be also glorified together.

Okay, so now we are beginning to understand the requirements for obtaining this power. If we are to be joint-heirs with Christ, we must be joint-sufferers also. Meaning that we must submit to anything God sees fit to inflict upon us, and also meaning that anything suffered is suffering unto godly glory. The first beatitude reads:

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

3 Nephi 12 gets more specific:

3 Yea, blessed are the poor in spirit **who come unto me**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Here we have reference to the kingdom of heaven - as we are poor in spirit and come unto God, we will naturally receive our Queen-ship. As we open up to Christ’s suffering and become one with Him, we naturally are a part of the kingdom of heaven and are glorified. This takes courage, humility, and compassion - definitely traits of a true Queen. The stewardship of being his disciple provides the space to practice and build sovereignty, as we choose to become part of a heavenly kingdom. His crown of compassionate suffering can become our crown as well.

Working definition of a (divine) Queen: a good and joyful steward, who chooses to be and act in her stewardships as a sovereign woman with embodied divine power



(“Compassion,” by Autumn Skye)

III. PRIESTESS

And now, about becoming a Priestess. What does the word “Priestess” mean, in the temple language context? And how are we, to borrow Amber’s end phrase, a “Priestess in-training?” This is something that seems to have much less acknowledgment in our culture than even the idea of becoming a “Queen.” I can find a small collection of quotes from a few decades ago that contain the phrase. Here are a few examples:

“Have you forgotten who you are, and what your object is? Have you forgotten that you profess to be Saints of the Most High God, clothed upon with the holy priesthood? Have you forgotten that you are aiming to become kings and priests to the Lord, and queens

and priestesses to him?” (The Gospel Kingdom [1987], pp.229-230; Hugh B. Brown (1883-1975) First Presidency)

“We do not rear children just to please our vanity. We bring children into the world to become kings and queens, and priests and priestesses for our Lord.” (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, edited by Edward L. Kimball [1982], p.331)

“Whatever disappointments may come, still be true to him and I promise you, in the name of the Lord, that if not in time, in eternity, you shall have like honors and glory and privilege. If you are faithful over a few things here, you shall be ruler over many things there, and become kings and priests unto God. And you sisters who have dwelt in reflected glory will shine in your own light, queens and priestesses unto the Lord forever and ever.” (Melvin J. Ballard, Quorum of the Twelve, Conference Report, October 1934, p.121)

Reading through the Church’s publishings of the initial Relief Society minutes, I found these nuggets:

“[Joseph Smith:] The Society should move according to the ancient Priesthood, hence there should be a select Society separate from all the evils of the world, choice, virtuous and holy - Said he was going to make of this Society a kingdom of priests as in Enoch’s day - as in Pauls day...”

And the commentary from footnote six reads:

The January 6, 1842, entry in Joseph Smith’s journal, apparently dictated by Smith, stated that God was initiating the restoration of “the ancient order of his Kingdom,” which would prepare “the earth for the return of his glory ... and a kingdom of Priests & Kings to God & the Lamb forever. On Mount Zion.” Most early Latter-day Saints understood this connection between priesthood and women as a part of temple worship. For example, Bathsheba W. Smith, a founding member of the Relief Society and one of the small vanguard of men and women who received temple ordinances from Joseph Smith prior to the completion of the temple at Nauvoo, recalled in a 1905 address that Joseph Smith “wanted to make us, as the women were in Paul’s day, ‘A kingdom of priestesses.’” She then explained, “We have that ceremony in our [temple] endowments as Joseph taught.” ... Eliza R. Snow, who had long ministered to women in temple rituals, also taught of the connection between Relief Society, priesthood restoration, and heavenly destiny in an 1875 address in which she

appealed to the women to join the Relief Society “for your own cultivation, to elevate to prepare you to become queens and priestesses, to prepare you to become suitable companions to your husbands, to become as anciently, holy women of God.” Elsewhere, Snow promised faithful women they would “become Queens of Queens, and Priestesses unto the Most High God.”

So those were fascinating to find, but I don’t remember *ever* being taught as a young woman about becoming a priestess - possibly because of the connotations to the word that I mentioned earlier. There is a wealth of information to study about priestesses in the history of the world, with varying perspectives on the ‘appropriateness’ of their roles. (I’ll talk a bit more about this later.)

For our purposes, the word “priestess” seems to be the female version of priests (as queen is to kings), and seems to be the female version of the role of someone who accesses God’s power and acts in God’s name. This connects back to what I mentioned earlier with regards to women being conduits of Heavenly Mother’s power - this being possibly one of our greatest stewardships. In the Church, we are taught and encouraged to seek to access grace through Christ’s Atonement, and taught to seek the companionship of the Holy Ghost, both of which I am extremely grateful for. And what if we were additionally taught, as women, about our lineage and apprenticeship to Heavenly Mother and our unique access to God’s power? And the beautiful stewardship this can be? (More on what this might look like soon.)

In the talk I quoted earlier (which I call “the priestess talk”), President Nelson says:

Every woman and every man who makes covenants with God and keeps those covenants, and who participates worthily in priesthood ordinances, has direct access to the power of God. Those who are endowed in the house of the Lord receive a gift of God’s priesthood power by virtue of their covenant, along with a gift of knowledge to know how to draw upon that power.

The heavens are just as open to *women* who are endowed with God’s power flowing from their priesthood covenants as they are to men who bear the priesthood. I pray that truth will register upon each of your hearts because I believe it will change your life. Sisters, you have the right to draw liberally upon the Savior’s power to help your family and others you love.

An important reminder might be that God’s power (Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother’s power) flows from them through the Savior to and through us. He is necessary

for that power to be accessible. The leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ are giving greater and greater clarity about women's access to priesthood power - that we DO have it - and they are pleading with us to receive it more fully. (Though there's still some lack of clarity as to why only men are given "offices" and "keys" of the priesthood and women are not.) Again, this seems to be a place where personally seeking is an important part of the process. Though they aren't using the word "priestess," we are being counseled by leaders of the church to seek to understand our access to God's power and open ourselves up to it. Besides the quote above by our current Prophet, the following quotes are a few examples from a recent BYU Women's conference:

Sheri Dew, a former counselor in the general Relief Society presidency: "What does it mean to have access to priesthood power? It means that we can receive revelation, be blessed and aided by the ministering of angels, learn to part the veil that separates us from our Heavenly Father, be strengthened to resist temptation, be protected, and be enlightened."

Elder M. Russell Ballard, speaking at BYU Women's Conference: "Like faithful sisters in the past, you need to learn how to use the Priesthood authority with which you have been endowed to obtain every eternal blessing that will be yours."

Sister Eubank has nicknamed Doctrine and Covenants 121 a handbook to accessing true priesthood power. "This is one of the most transcendent promises in all scripture ... it's about priesthood and it is for all of God's daughters and sons ... This is the power that Jesus Christ shares with us and I testify that it pours down on us like a mighty rain if we will turn our faces to it." (BYU Women's Conference)

Again, I'll quote President Nelson here:

You won't find this process spelled out in any manual. The Holy Ghost will be your personal tutor as you seek to understand what the Lord would have you know and do. This process is neither quick nor easy, but it is spiritually invigorating. What could possibly be more exciting than to labor with the Spirit to understand God's power—priesthood power?

What I *can* tell you is that accessing the power of God in your life requires the same things that the Lord instructed Emma and each of you to do.

So, I invite you to study prayerfully section 25 of the Doctrine and Covenants and discover what the Holy Ghost will teach *you*. Your personal spiritual endeavor

will bring you joy as you gain, understand, and use the power with which you have been endowed.

And while personal revelation is my first priority, the study of feminist historical perspectives can provide helpful information from which to draw inspiration. I'll add here a few quotes that I've personally found helpful.

Feminist Scholar, Margaret Toscano, puts the recent history of female power in the Church of Jesus Christ into an enlightening perspective :

Nineteenth-century Mormonism was radical in many ways and challenged the status quo of American culture at large, including the position and role of women. Joseph Smith's theology introduced a concept of a Mother God, acknowledged the power and equality of women, and gave them priesthood through the temple ritual, according to a number of scholars (see bibliography below). Although Mormon women in early Utah were the second group in the USA to receive the vote in 1870, which was only two months after Wyoming granted women this right, Utah women were actually the first to use their franchise and vote in an election. Mormon women had other rights during the 19th century unknown to most women in the rest of the country: married women had the same legal rights as single women, including the rights to own property in their names, represent themselves in court, and win easy access to divorce. In the 19th century Mormon women were avid suffragettes who argued and fought for the rights of all women. They were in contact with Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and others in the national women's movement. Through the LDS women's organization, the Relief Society, Mormon women controlled their own money and buildings, organized a hospital and other charitable organizations (which, among other things, collected, stored, and distributed grain and other food supplies), supported home industries (such as silk farms), and ran a women's newspaper (the Women's Exponent, 1872-1914), which advocated female independence, education, and careers, and emphasized female leadership and spiritual gifts.

In the early 20th century Mormonism went through a redefinition in order to fit into mainstream American culture and rid itself of its polygamous and politically autonomous past, which had been seen by many as anti-American. In a conservative reaction to its own history, Mormonism attempted to shuck off those elements of its theology and practice which made it unacceptable to the larger culture, while still retaining enough of its uniqueness to set it apart as a religion with a divine and separate calling from the rest of Christianity in

America. Among the things lost during this period were the concepts of women's spiritual gifts and their role as priestesses (a term used to define such women as Eliza R. Snow in the 19th century). Although women retained control of their own Relief Society organization until the early 1970s, they gradually lost the management of their own affairs and publications from the time of statehood in 1896 onward, along with their sense of independence. Ironically, the image of Mormon women as docile homemakers, a la June Cleaver serving jello to a smiling family in a 1950s sitcom, is just one of the many things Mormonism adopted from conservative American culture

Influenced by the national feminist movement in the 1970s, Mormon women began to reclaim their history and to participate in women's groups as part of an attempt to redefine women's roles and opportunities in an LDS context. This is not to say that Mormon women did not participate in feminism during the first half of the 20th century (Toscano, "A Brief History of Mormon Feminism").

"Currently, Mormon doctrines of female priesthood and female divinity are not seen as essential or fully legitimate, nor have their implications been sufficiently explored or ramified. Though these concepts are rooted in Mormonism, they have remained as dormant seeds, planted in the early days of the church. It appears to be the work of women and men of our day to water these seeds, to let them sprout, grow, blossom, and bring forth fruit" (Toscano, "Put on Your Strength.") (This combination of quotes found in [this essay](#) by Elizabeth Russel.)

This understanding has helped me to see more clearly the cultural influences on women's power in theology and practice in the Church of Jesus Christ in the latter-days. This clarity (combined with an effort to view those in the past with compassion) has helped me to slowly start to shed the cultural images and perspectives that I don't feel are serving me, my family, and the women and men around me, yet still maintain connection with my faith community - to tend 'the seeds.' Sometimes 'the seeds' are in the soil of my personal soul, and sometimes 'the seeds' are in church meetings and conversations.

Going back much further with [women's spirituality historian Elizabeth Russell](#), she cites [and comments on the work of Marija Gimbutas](#) (a contemporary archeologist who reconstructed goddess-centered cultures that predated historic patriarchal cultures by many thousands of years, in her book "Living Goddess"):

One point of resonance that I've located in *The Living Goddess* is Gimbutas' analysis of the sacred nature of the primordial temple-centered society. Gimbutas states, "Our Neolithic ancestors intimately wove their secular and sacred lives together without ideological segregation. Art, craft, and religion were one" (74). She says that the contemporary mind finds the Neolithic temple-centered society "incomprehensible because our daily activities normally are separate from our spiritual lives" (74). The Mormon tradition, however, is not a once-a-week religion but a prophetic movement engaged in the ushering in of the future Zion: a sacred, temple-centered society that creates heaven on earth, or the hermetic maxim: "as above, so below."

Gimbutas found that, "old European temples integrated women's daily activities, particularly bread baking, cloth weaving, and pottery making into sacred practice...spinning and weaving constituted other activities carried on by women in temples" (73).

Abstruse, arcane rituals did not take place here. The temple sanctified everyday activities. In fact, the location of the temple among dwellings further strengthens the connection between the temple and everyday life. In Old Europe and throughout much of prehistory, people did not separate the sacred from the mundane. The sacred force imbued every activity (98).

Unfortunately, Gimbutas says, "Drastic cultural transformation eventually caused the devaluation of "women's work" and its removal from the spiritual sphere" (98). She concludes that, "The temple evidence confirms the strong position of these groups of Neolithic women. Perhaps we can even say that the temple belonged to the realm of women, who both supervised and participated in its rituals" (98).

This idea in particular has helped me re-contextualize my role in my home and community, and the daily tasks that present themselves in my various stewardships. How can I carry the sacredness of the temple with me? How can I be a Priestess in my home? A priestess of my body? My mind? My spirit? As previously mentioned, God's power? My Family? Work? Community service? The Earth?

In the interview mentioned previously, Hudson reminds us of something she has written about before: "We know that the word ordinance means a physical act with deep spiritual meaning. So certainly pregnancy, childbirth, lactation are all ordinances of the

gospel. They cannot be otherwise. They are clearly the priestesshood ordinances presided over by women.” In another [article](#), she writes:

The ordinances of the priestesshood are the ordinances of the First Tree, over which the daughters of God preside. These are the ordinances of opening the door between Heaven and Earth for the souls of the children of God, ushering those souls into the mortal realm with full agency, clothing those souls with a physical body, and awakening those living souls to the light of Christ through pregnancy, childbirth, motherlove, lactation, and other priestesshood practices. These ordinances parallel the priesthood ordinances of the Second Tree, over which the sons of God preside, such as baptism, confirmation, and so forth; ordinances which open the door between Earth and Heaven.

She calls these “the ordinances of embodiment,” which I deeply resonate with, and have never heard before. I was already a good bit into writing this essay when I listened to her interview. Her naming of these ordinances and our priestesshood is validating and exciting to me, as I have been feeling that somehow women’s access to God’s power was closely linked to our bodies and perhaps our creative potential that lies therein. I also feel that it is important to note that a tragic consequence of living in a fallen world is that not all women may have the opportunity to experience the literal ordinances of pregnancy, childbirth, lactation, or even have a positive/desirable experience of those ordinances. I believe that this power of creation and nurturance is still inherent in our beings and can be manifest and accessed in many different ways - through whatever relationships and creative endeavors that we use to help to “awaken living souls to the light of Christ.”

She clarifies in her interview: “Embodiment ... is a joining of things that belong together in a happy state. So we know spirit and body belong together and have a fullness of joy. And notice how integral women’s power is to that joining. But also think about other joinings that are so important ... Think of all the things that women would seek to join together.”

My personal opinion and experience is that our connection to the interrelatedness and unity of our bodies, minds, and spirits has been torn apart - and power can come more fully and freely in the joining together of these elements of ourselves. I believe that as we seek the healing of our world, our communities, and families, the power of embodiment - joining things that belong together in a happy state - starts with us doing, finding, and creating it within the stewardships of our own bodies, minds, and spirits. Then it flows

out from there - with every stewardship that I can to be a sacred keeper of, I build my sovereignty.



("Healing," by Autumn Skye)

Working definition of a (divine) Priestess: a woman who embodies divine power and uses it to serve her loved ones in her stewardships.

How can you open yourself up to receiving and embodying and letting God's power flow through you as a Priestess in the stewardships in your life?

In the greater context of you being a Queen-in-training, with your opportunities as a Priestess-in-training preparing you to more fully embody God's power and consciousness, does this change things for you? Maybe it does, maybe it doesn't. If so, how?

Every woman has the opportunity to figure out through listening to her instincts, intuition, and the guidance of the Holy Ghost, what this means for her and how she engages with these ideas. Our instincts, intuition, and the guidance of the Holy Ghost are incredible gifts and stewardships that I honor as sacred.

WHAT A PRIESTESS DOES (my list):

Honors

Serves

Cleanses

Celebrates

Creates

Presides

Blesses

Because my temperament leans towards desiring to know the pragmatics of an idea, I've been seeking to understand and explore looks and feels like in my daily life. For me, as I think, wonder, and listen about how to engage with my day in a way that honors my desires and potential to be a Priestess of God, I come to the start of my day:

(My perspective is influenced by my experiences in yoga, eastern wisdom and lifestyle perspectives, and being a member of the Church of Jesus Christ.)

Some kind of Morning Meditation to help remind me of my Priestesshood:

- Align self with God & Nature
- “Marvel over the miracle of existence, over the day that is about to begin, and all its untapped potential. Allow this miracle to instill a deep-felt reverence for all life in the core of your being, and request Nature to maintain and amplify your own harmony during the day, so that you will interact harmoniously with everyone and everything you encounter and your own harmony will increase.”
- Awaken and engage innate creativity and nurturing to “awaken living souls to the light of Christ”

These are the various stewardships in which I am endeavoring to embody divine power and let it flow through me to serve others as a Priestess of God - an apprentice to my Heavenly Mother:

- Body
- Mind/Emotions
- Spirit
- Soul (the joining of body, mind, spirit)
- Spiritual Gifts
- Each Day
- Family

- Husband
- Children
- Parents
- Siblings
- Friends
- Home & Belongings
- Earth
- Community
 - Church
 - Neighbors
 - Civic

Your list may look a little different than mine, but I can imagine that the list is lengthy for most of us. I am definitely still in the throes of figuring out how to maintain the embodiment of a Priestess in all of these opportunities. In some ways it is counter culture, in some ways it isn't. It has taken me a lot of slowing down, and re-writing (in my mind and body) how I want to engage with these stewardships, and then endeavoring to actually do it. (Ha!) But as I see this list in the context of these being stewardships to engage with in a more holy way - in a way where I engage as a Priestess, using my Priestesshood - it slowly starts to shift things inside of me.

I believe that that “someday” of becoming a Queen and a Priestess is a personal day between you and your Heavenly Parents, and that you will know where you are along that path of progression as you tune into yourself and Them and seek this gift that is offered.

Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dews from heaven.

The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever.

D&C 121:45-46



(“Fierce Love,” by Autumn Skye)