

Dear Wesley,

March 13, 2005

Happy 14<sup>th</sup> Birthday, a little early... You will now be ordained a Teacher in the Aaronic Priesthood. Congratulations!

Each advancement in the Aaronic Priesthood is a milestone in your life and added responsibility. Learn your new duties as a Teacher and strive to fulfill them to the best of your ability. At age 14 is the time when you begin to set habits that will serve you the rest of your life. 14 and 15 is the time when the church loses most of its youth to inactivity. It is a crucial time when you set habits of church attendance, prayer habits, scripture study habits, and learning habits. I'm not the least concerned with your activity, but only mention this so that you think about the habits you set now that will serve you the rest of your life, such as scripture study and prayer. For you this the beginning of the next phase in your life. Consider making goals to saying your personal prayers each morning and each night and studying the scriptures daily. A good portion of my testimony comes from the spirit that I have felt when I read the scriptures and the principles that ring true to me when I have read. In addition, there are personal answers to your prayers that can be found while immersing yourself in the scriptures.

Congratulations on your advancement to the rank of Star. Scouting has taught me that being prepared is critical to success in life. Whenever faced with a task to complete, I always prepare so that I will be successful. You can never really "wing it" in life. It only gets you by so far. The Savior prepared himself 30 years before embarking on his 3 year ministry that ended with the completion of the atonement.

Congratulations on your win at Klondike. It is a thrill to me to see the troop work so hard to prepare and then be rewarded by winning.

Wesley, you are a gifted, intelligent, and talented individual. You come from a great family. I have high expectations for you. I fully expect you to earn your law degree and fulfill your dream of practicing family law. Take life at your own accelerated pace, push the envelope, and think outside the box, because you have so much potential. You remind me somewhat of myself when I was your age – very dignified, thoughtful, resourceful, and intellectual. I also knew at 14 what I wanted to do – which was to attend college and become an engineer. Education has always been rewarding to me. I never have enough time to read to satisfy my desire for learning. I am currently working toward my second Master's degree.

Making good on what you have been given comes with hard work and dedication. The truly great men that have lived on this earth have remarkable work ethics and work habits – the Prophet Joseph Smith, President Hinckley, the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and President Bush. I can say the same goes for our current leaders – our former stake president President Hughes, Bishop Jensen, Bishop Thompson, and your new leaders: Dave Thurgood and Jonathan Plummer. As I want to become a great man some day, I take every opportunity to observe how these men operate so I can emulate them. I

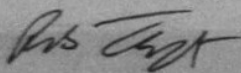
encourage you to study these great men – observe their habits and watch how they conduct themselves.

Wesley, you have a special calling in life. I know it because of the family and opportunities you have and because you hold the priesthood of God. Very few of your peers hold this sacred power and responsibility. It is the authority to act in God's name, which is namely blessing the lives of others through your service and administering of gospel ordinances, such as the sacrament. The Lord's work, which is the building of His Kingdom on earth (His Church), is carried out by his Priesthood holders – you and me. You will now have the opportunity to prepare the sacrament before church each Sunday. Hold this duty with high regard and see to it that you arrive early, at the time designated by your leaders, so you can prepare the sacrament in time for sacrament meeting to begin. You are performing an incredible act for the rest of the ward, and for me and my family. The sacrament is something that I look forward to each week. It is a time when I reconcile my past week's errors with the ways of the Lord, ask for forgiveness and help to do better, and then promise to do better. The sacrament is literally a renewal of your baptismal covenants. My mission president taught me that if approached in the right manner, with faith and repentance, the sacrament will have the same affect on you as if you had been rebaptized, because it is a renewal of your baptismal covenants.

I look forward to having you on our combined campouts this year: the Young Men's Combined campout which will be May 6-7, the Sawtooths Backpacking trip in July, and the 50-miler in August.

Wesley, I hope I have demonstrated by my testimony and my actions that I know that this church is true – because I know it. At age 12 was when I first read the Book of Mormon and when I prayed and received an answer that it is true. Hold your own testimony precious and strive to grow it. It is one of the only things that we will take with us in the next life.

Your friend,



Rob Tuft