

FROM THE MISSION FIELD

A POWERFUL



Scripture

The Lord promises that each of us can have the power to do God's will.

By Tom Ballard

It was my first transfer as a senior companion in the Argentina Buenos Aires South Mission, and I felt like I was quite on top of my game. My companion and I had achieved what every missionary dreams of: we had found an entire family that was willing to have us teach them. The father, Hugo, was especially willing to listen to the gospel.

Hugo loved everything about the Church. He loved listening to our message, the Church members, and the scriptures. He and his whole family wanted to join the Church so badly, but he had to quit smoking first. My companion and I planned and prayed, trying to come up with a solution to help Hugo with his addiction.

One night, we were creating a plan with Hugo to quit smoking. He was discouraged and doubted whether it would be possible. I felt inspired to share with him a scripture that would later become one of my favorites: “And Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me” (Moroni 7:33). I asked Hugo, “Do you think that your baptism is ‘expedient’ to Jesus Christ?”

“Absolutely, Elder Ballard,” Hugo replied. “But I don’t think I can quit smoking.”

“The Lord promises you in this scripture that if you will have faith in Christ, it will be possible,” I assured him. We finished making our plan with him, which was a quick process that would eventually require him to stop completely, and he resolved to follow it.

Hugo quit smoking within the week and his whole family was baptized into the Church the following Sunday.

I know that Hugo had found power in the scripture I shared with him.

Several months later, however, I found myself feeling not quite so on top of my game. I was training a new missionary, and we didn’t have many investigators. Finding people to teach was a challenge. One afternoon I became so discouraged that I began to wonder whether we could find any success in our work. As we went from house to house, trying to find a door that would open to us, I felt as though it were impossible to find anyone who would accept the gospel, despite the success I’d experienced earlier in my mission.

Suddenly, I felt a great reassurance come over me. I received a strong impression reminding me that this work is not mine—it is the Lord’s. And if I would but have faith in Christ, we would find success.

The next Sunday at church the ward mission leader approached us. “Elders,” he said, “I have a referral from the Church offices in Buenos Aires.” We were amazed. I had never received a referral in this way before, and it had been a while since we had found someone interested in the gospel.

We went that afternoon to contact the referral and found Grisell, a woman who had already read up to Alma in the Book of Mormon, which a co-worker had given her. She believed every word about Joseph Smith and the Restoration. We committed her to baptism on the spot.

Grisell was very excited to join the Church and loved learning about the gospel, but as we continued teaching Grisell, many challenges came up, as they usually do when someone commits to baptism. Her family opposed her attending church, and she was becoming distressed. I decided to share the same scripture with her that I had shared with Hugo many months prior. Grisell’s downcast face changed to the expression of joy and excitement she had shown when we first met as I read her the promise that she would be able to do anything that was the Lord’s will.

Suddenly I realized that this scripture was not only true for Hugo and Grisell. Just weeks before I had doubted my own ability to do what God had commanded me. As I reflected back on my recent discouragement and my mission up to that point, I knew that the Lord’s promise was true for me as well. **NE**