

Bible Study #1

One Mission

Introduction:

Not long after coming into office, the General shared with the international Salvation Army her vision. This has three very simple but profound components – One Army, with One Mission and One Message. But how do we fulfil it? Recognising the need for us to be focussed in our ministry, territorial leaders were asked to share their priorities/strategies with International Headquarters. Several resounding themes emerged and these were incorporated into the mission priorities as statements of action.

This vision plan is imperative to both our present and future as it reflects the very essence of what we are about. If we are not united in our purpose and direction, we will be divided in our outcome and resolve.

Over the next three months, we will be considering the vision plan and how the mission priorities impact us in our Christian journey. This month, our focus is:

One Mission

Into the world of the hurting, broken, lonely, dispossessed and lost, reaching them in love by all means.

We will:

emphasise our integrated ministry
reach and involve youth and children
stand for and serve the marginalised
encourage innovation and mission

Where do we begin?

1. What is our commission?

One of the most well-known verses in scripture is John 3:16 – ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.’ Through his death and resurrection Jesus showed humanity that God’s love was for everyone. No-one should be bereft of hearing about or discovering this love and it is our responsibility to tell them. Christianity is a missionary faith and we need to do all that we can to make his love known.

Read Matthew 28:16–20

This passage can easily be misinterpreted. God does not command us to ‘go’. He commands us to ‘make disciples’. We do this as we journey life with him, ensuring that no-one is overlooked or forgotten. How do we do this?

- by being people of the word who live out the truths of the gospel
- by being disciples of Jesus ourselves, learning and receiving fresh insight from him daily
- by being committed to the mission and doing our part in it
- by being bold in our message and innovative in our sharing of it

For reflection:

- What comes to mind when you read Matthew 28:16–20?
- As you reflect on your life, how well are you living as a disciple of Jesus?
- What can you do to share God’s love with others?

2. Who is it for?

The message of God's love and grace is for all humanity and this message needs to be shared with and by all ages. This starts with children.

Read Matthew 18:1–6

This passage not only asks us to care for the children of our age, but Jesus challenges us to be like children ourselves. Jesus then challenges our attitudes:

- we should seek to become like children
- we should receive children because we want to and not because Jesus has told us to
- we should be careful not to cause children to stumble
- we should not chastise them

But children don't remain children. As they grow and mature into adulthood, they need our continual support. We are all God's children. We need to embrace his love for us and share it with others.

For reflection:

- In what ways does Jesus say we should be like children?
- How are you influencing the lives of people around you?
- What can you do to show your love more?

3. How can we live it out?

There are many passages of scripture which encourage us to live our lives for God. We are to show others God's love and how God can transform their lives. Many people have either not heard of God's love or have walked away from it because of life's circumstances. They have lost hope and do not see that God can make any difference. They may also have lost hope in others and no longer believe that anyone can help them. We need to care and show them Christian love in action.

*Read Matthew 25:31-46
Luke 4:14–21:
Ephesians 5:1–2*

There are two significant aspects in these passages:

- Who we are to serve
- How we are to serve

Motivation and openness to God's Spirit are key to our service. But to reach the marginalised and hurting, we need to be innovative in our mission

For reflection:

- What verse in these passages challenges you most and why?
- Who are the marginalised in our community?
- How can we reach out to them in love?

Conclusion

A God-raised and Spirit-filled Army is a new song specifically written by Commissioners Robert Street and Dick Krommenhoek to support the International Vision launched by General Linda Bond. Verse 2 of this song summarises our study well:

Responding to your great commission,
Our charge from your hand we will take;
The young and the old as our mission,
Disciples for Jesus we'll make;
Bring freedom and hope through our living
Serve others with strength from above;
O Lord, give us your holy vision,
One mission, your mission, of love.

*One Army, one mission, one message,
One Saviour and Lord of all;
An Army with purpose and passion,
We are united to answer his call.
An Army following Christ together,
Reaching the lost with his love;
One Army, one mission, one message
For the world.*

All Bible quotes are from the *New International Version*.

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