

Bible Study #3

One Army

Introduction:

For the past two months we have been considering the International Vision Plan and what it means to be one in our mission and message. We have seen that these two aspects, working together in partnership, make us effective in our witness and ministry. Through this we experience unity in our focus, thereby enabling God to achieve the purpose for which The Salvation Army was raised. Are you ready and willing, however, to be part of the Army moving forward? Let's take time this month to focus on what it really means to be:

One Army

We see a God-raised, Spirit-filled Army for the 21st century – convinced of our calling, moving forward together

We will:

- deepen our spiritual life
- unite in prayer
- identify and develop leaders
- increase self-support and self-denial

Where do we start?

1. How can we be one Army?

It is often said that a leader can only be as good as those working with them. So it is with The Salvation Army. Everyone involved in our mission and ministry, regardless of their gender, age, culture or position is important and significant. God has called us to serve him together, in unity and in partnership.

Read John 17:20–26

This passage shows the concern of Jesus in regard to experiencing spiritual unity. This unity is just like the oneness Jesus experiences with the Father and it is through this oneness we realise that:

- we may belong to different corps, cultures and countries but we all belong to the Lord and to each other
- our unity is based on the person and work of Jesus
- it is this unity that gives us a credible witness in the world
- we need to look beyond ourselves and build on our fellowship
- as we grow together in the Lord so the glory within us grows and reveals itself through what we say and the way we say it as well as through what we do and the way we do it

Read John 14:5–14

It is in Jesus that we find the spiritual resources we need to maintain our unity. Jesus doesn't simply teach us the way or point the way. Jesus **is** the way.

For reflection:

- What challenges you most in these two readings?
- How can you journey these challenges with others?
- What intentional changes are needed to enable unity to be experienced in greater measure in your Salvation Army community?

2. What impact does this have on my spiritual life?

As one Army, we need to be intentional in keeping in step with the heartbeat of God. This will come through prayer, reading the Word and sharing in fellowship together. Our daily lives should reflect the challenge given by the Lord to Solomon.

Read 2 Chronicles 7:14

We must be an army that is intentional in prayer, seeking God's wisdom, vision and direction – being obedient to his voice. One way we can do this is to be a part of the international worldwide prayer meeting every Thursday. But we also need to be responsible in developing our personal spiritual life, nourishing our souls daily and being stimulated in our understanding.

*Read Joshua 1:1–9
1 Samuel 17:1–15
Ephesians 3:14–19*

In these passages we are encouraged to:

- believe God and obey his commands
- meditate on the word and believe its promises
- make God's word part of our inner person daily
- trust God and wait on his timing
- have a heart that is right before God
- develop spiritual strength through a deeper experience of God's love

We cannot ignore our personal responsibility in this or pretend it is not important.

For reflection:

- What can you do to enhance your prayer life?
- Consider your daily study of the word – are you spending enough time meditating?
- In what specific ways can you deepen your spiritual life?

3. How can we live it out?

As we deepen our spiritual life and unite ourselves in prayer, God will continue to reveal other ways in which we can reflect his love and our commitment to him.

*Read 1 Kings 17:7–26
Acts 4:32–35
2 Timothy 2:1–2*

There are three significant challenges in these passages:

- Living by faith
- Sharing what we have with others
- Developing those around us

In looking beyond ourselves and giving what we can, we are able to support the development of leaders, our ministry and be a witness to God's transforming power. The future depends on us.

For reflection:

- What verse in these passages challenges you most and why?
- How does this impact your giving?
- In what ways can we support the on-going ministry and development of The Salvation Army?

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 1 of this song summarises our study well:

A God-raised and Spirit-filled Army,
Convinced of its calling today
To enter the world of the hurting
With Jesus, the Life, Truth and Way;
We ask that your Spirit's infilling
Will guide us, empower and inspire;
O Lord, give your presence to make us
One Army, your Army, on fire.

*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.

Written by Lieut-Colonel Jennifer Groves and originally published in *The War Cry*
The Salvation Army Singapore, Malaysia and Myanmar Territory

Copyright © 2012 The General of The Salvation Army