

Exploring

SOLDIERSHIP



Exploring soldiership

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Australia Territory 2020

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The following officers were engaged in the production and review of this resource.
Their thoughtful feedback and contributions are much appreciated (in alphabetical order).

Kate Baudinette (Captain)
Janine Donaldson (Commissioner)
Robert Donaldson (Commissioner)
Lyn Edge (Lieutenant-Colonel)
Peter Farthing (Major)
Natalie Frame (Lieutenant)
Marenda Freind (Aux-Lieutenant)
Terry Grey (Lieutenant-Colonel)
Sarah Innes (Captain)
Matthew Pethybridge (Aux-Lieutenant)
Leanne Ruthven (Major)
Mark Schatz (Captain)
Belinda Smith (Captain)
Mark Townsend (Captain)

The Salvation Army acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and recognizes their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to Elders past, present and emerging. Our vision for reconciliation is to be a faith movement committed to equity, freedom and righting of injustice.

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Welcome

This course is an exploration of what it means to be a soldier within The Salvation Army. Our hope is that by the end, you will have grown in your faith and know whether being a soldier is right for you.

We will look at the eleven doctrines, or beliefs that are the foundation of The Salvation Army. Soldiers embrace these beliefs and enter into a covenant or agreement with God about the way they will live in the world.

All people are welcome at The Salvation Army – whether you are a soldier or not. The Army, like the Christian church, exists for others, as well as for our members.

God wants you to know and follow him. Jesus calls you to be his disciple. That means you learn from him and seek to obey him. It means you live for him day by day. You become light for the place where you live. You serve the people there in Jesus' name. As a disciple, you will also belong to Christ's body – his church. You will seek to love others in the church and the the poor, the hurting and the lost in the community. .

Soldiership is one way to do this. Around the world, more than a million people have responded to God's call to soldiership. It is a lifelong commitment to align with The Salvation Army and its mission in the world.

As a soldier, you commit to the disciplines of The Salvation Army. You play a critical part in our mission. You will live a lifestyle that supports our mission and are encouraged to wear uniform, especially when representing The Salvation Army in the community. As a soldier, you will do all you can to advance our mission and be one with other Salvationists around the world, supporting them with prayer, gifts and love.

During the course, we will meet some soldiers and hear their stories. We encourage you to ask soldiers in your corps what it means to them and why they choose to express their obedience to Jesus in this way.

As we move through the course, we pray that you grow as a disciple of Jesus. And we pray that the Holy Spirit speaks clearly to you about the next step in your journey with him.



Introduction

The Salvation Army was founded in England in 1865 by William and Catherine Booth.

It began as a mission to bring salvation through Jesus and to do that especially for the poor and forgotten of Britain. It evolved into an army of salvation, and in 1878, it became The Salvation Army. Within a few years, it had widened its work to fight against the injustice and miseries of this world. From the beginning, it has sent its people out to do its mission.

In 1880, the movement began in Australia and has since spread to more than 130 countries around the world. Together, we are united by Jesus Christ across nations, cultures and languages.

Australian Salvos are part of this international movement, which is an evangelical part of the universal Christian church. The Salvation Army's message is based on the Bible. Our ministry is motivated by the love of God, and our mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in his name, without discrimination.

Our vision for Australia is a tribute to the passionate spirit of our founders and an expression of our conviction that the love of Jesus has transforming power.

Vision

Our vision is what we aim to achieve in Australia.

Wherever there is hardship or injustice Salvos will live, love and fight alongside others to transform Australia one life at a time, with the love of Jesus.

Mission

Our mission is the heart of what we do.

The Salvation Army is a Christian movement dedicated to sharing the love of Jesus. We share the love of Jesus by:

- *Caring for people*
- *Creating faith pathways*
- *Building healthy communities*
- *Working for justice*

This mission is holistic. It means we seek to care for the whole person – physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually.

Holistic mission is God's mission in the world that seeks to restore and renew the whole of creation – not only relationships between God and people but also relationships between people and with the environment.



Local Mission Delivery

Local Mission Delivery is the way Salvation Army teams around Australia collaborate in local areas to deliver holistic mission in a way that is nationally consistent.

This includes:

- Corps
- Social and community engagement centres addressing homelessness, family and domestic violence, youth outreach, and alcohol and other drug services
- Chaplains
- Mission Enterprises (e.g. Salvos Stores).

Together, we work to use our different gifts and services to innovatively live out our mission.

Discuss

1. What attracted you to The Salvation Army movement?
2. What are you hoping to learn from doing this course?

Meeting suggestions

1 **11 sessions** addressing one doctrine per session

2 **6 sessions**

- I. Welcome, introduction, doctrine 1
- II. Doctrines 2–3
- III. Doctrines 4–5
- IV. Doctrines 6–7
- V. Doctrines 8–9
- VI. Doctrines 10–11 and next steps

3 **5 sessions**

- I. Welcome and introduction
- II. Doctrines 1–3
- III. Doctrines 4–6
- IV. Doctrines 7–9
- V. Doctrines 10–11 and next steps



Doctrine 1:

Word of the living God

We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.

Big ideas

- **Scripture is the basis for Christian belief and practice**
- **Scripture is trustworthy because it is inspired by God**
- **Scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness**

“All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and for training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work”
(2 Timothy 3:16–17).

How do we know that what we believe about God is true?
How do we know how to live as followers of Jesus?

We believe that in the Bible, God has revealed all we need to know about him and to follow him. It is the authoritative revelation of God to human beings. It was written by many different authors, but tells the same story of God and his work in the world.

The Old Testament tells us of God's work in the world up to the time of Jesus. It recounts God's creation of the world and human beings, our fall into sin and God's plan to restore the world. It tells of God's constant love for the world and desire to see people flourish in relationship with Him.

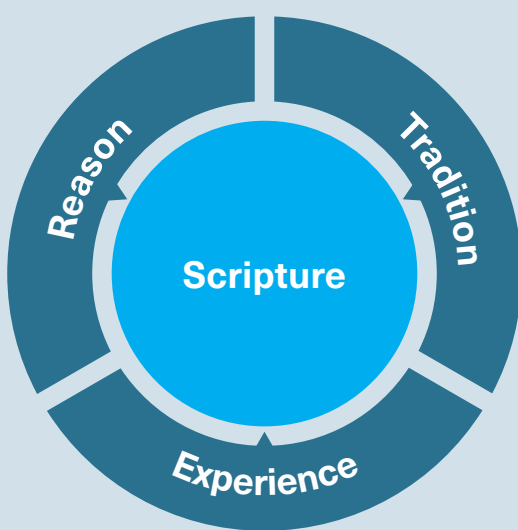
The New Testament tells us about Jesus Christ, the point in history when God came into the world as a human being. It tells of his life, teaching, death on the cross and resurrection. It also includes letters that help us understand what it means to follow Jesus as his people in the world.

The Bible is a library of 66 books. It is made up of different types of writing including histories, biographies, wisdom, letters, laws and poetry.



How do we know God?

The Salvation Army's understanding is influenced by John Wesley, an 18th century English theologian. He believed there are four sources by which God reveals himself to people: scripture, reason, experience and tradition. He emphasised scripture and encouraged people to test everything against God's word in the Bible.



The Christian church has always valued reading the Bible – both personally and in our meetings as a community. 'The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring people to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God' (A. W. Tozer). It is a source of wisdom, encouragement and understanding for a flourishing life with God:

“ *How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth*

*Your word is a lamp for my feet,
a light on my path.”*

(Psalm 119:89, 103, 105).

The Gospel of John concludes:

“ *Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name”*
(John 20:30-31).

Discuss

- How has the Bible shown you truth, encouraged you, corrected your thinking or trained you to live God's way?
- What questions do you have about the Bible?



Doctrine 2: Creator of Heaven and Earth

We believe that there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the creator, preserver, and governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.

Big ideas

- **There is one God who created, sustains and governs creation**
- **God is personally involved in creation, caring for people and all creation**
- **God deserves our worship**

“**Hear O Israel. The Lord, our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength**”
(Deuteronomy 6:4–5).

If God is loving and powerful, why is there so much pain and suffering in the world? This is a common and important question.

Christians believe we have one God who is perfect. God is the creator, preserver and governor of all things. This belief provides us with security and peace, because there is one loving God behind everything.

God is intimately related to creation. In the Bible, we learn, too, of God’s work in creating, sustaining and ruling creation. If God was not closely involved with creation on an ongoing basis, it would cease to exist. In creation, we see God’s power and creativity

“*The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
Yet their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world*”
(Psalm 19:1–4).

“*For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse*”
(Romans 1:20).



As Christians, we worship God because of God's character and all that God has done in the world. In the Bible, God is revealed as perfect and steadfast in love, full of compassion, mercy, holiness, wisdom and forgiveness.

“*The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin*” (Exodus 34:6–7).

In coming into the world in Jesus, we also learn of God in the flesh. We see and hear what God is like in the way he teaches, heals and engages with people. We learn of his love in coming to die on the cross and his power over death and evil in his resurrection.

“*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters*” (1 John 3:16).

“*By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also*” (1 Corinthians 6:14).

Our response to God's extraordinary love and power is to give God our worship and praise. We do this individually and we do this as part of a community – the family of God. God has created us to worship him and serve others in relationship with others – not alone.

“*Therefore, I urge you brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Romans 12:1–2).

Discuss

- How do you see people express their worship of God?
- How do you seek to express your worship of God?
- If God is so loving and powerful, why is there so much pain and suffering in the world?



Doctrine 3:

The God who is never alone

We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost – undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.

Big ideas

- **Christians worship one God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit**
- **God is a perfect community of love**
- **The three persons of God are distinct but united**

“*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all*”

(2 Corinthians 13:14).

God is never alone. He is a fellowship or a community of love, even before the creation of the world. The Father loves the Son, the Son loves the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit loves the Father. They are mutually dependent and interwoven with one another in an eternal dance of love. We are called into this community of love, service and grace.

This is known as the doctrine of the Trinity. One God but three distinct persons.

God as Father is significant in the teaching of Jesus. Jesus calls us to pray to God as ‘Our Father’ using the intimate expression of a child’s love – ‘Abba Father’ or ‘Daddy’.

This, then, is how you should pray:

“*‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven’*”
(Matthew 6:9–10).

Jesus is the son of God who came in the flesh as a baby and grew to be the man on the cross at Easter and raised to life. He came to make God known in a very personal and vulnerable way – not distant, but intimately coming into our world to be God with us.

“*The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word*” *(Hebrews 1:3).*

“*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him*” *(Colossians 1:15–16).*

The Holy Spirit is the presence of God in us. The Spirit inspires us to understand, believe and obey God's word. It brings God near to us and directs our attention to Jesus, while uniting us in our relationship with God and empowering us to serve.

Our connection with this dynamic, loving relationship of the Father, Son and Spirit is seen in John 14–17.

“*I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day, you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you*” (John 14:18–20).

“*These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. All this I have spoken while still with you. But the advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you*” (John 14:26).

Discuss

What difference does it make to think of God as a loving community of grace and service?

Putting belief into practice

I will be responsive to the Holy Spirit's work and obedient to his leading in my life, growing in grace through worship, prayer, service and the reading of the Bible.

Let's look at how these ways of growing in grace spring from the doctrines we have looked at:

- Worship is the recognition and honour we give the one God, the Lord of all. It's not just something we do on Sundays but how we live our lives.
 - Prayer is how we actively engage all three persons of God – we pray to the Father, because of the Holy Spirit urging us, and in the name of Jesus, who gives us confidence that our prayers will be heard.
 - Service is our response to the grace and love of God in mission. This is an expression of our worship that involves us in the loving service of God and others.
- “*Offer yourselves as a living sacrifice to God, dedicated to his service and pleasing to him. This is the true worship that you should offer*” (Romans 12:1).
- Reading the Bible is the main way we hear God, and learn more about his character and how we can live and flourish in life.

The first lifelong commitment soldiers make is to grow in grace. We grow more aware of God's generous goodness through worship, prayer, service and reading the Bible. This our obedient response to God.

Reflect and pray

Take some time to prayerfully reflect on your own response to God.

- How do you worship?
- How do you find prayer?
When do you pray?
- How do you seek to serve?
- How do you find reading the Bible? What have you found to be helpful for you?

Doctrine 4: God's eternal son

We believe that in the person of Jesus Christ the Divine and human natures are united, so that He is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.

Big ideas

- **Jesus is fully human and fully God**
- **Because Jesus is one of us, we can know God**
- **Like Jesus, God calls us to use our bodies to do his will on Earth**

“*The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth*”
(John 1:14).

People sometimes say they want God to show himself in the world.

The Christian faith believes that God did just that when he came into the world as a human being – Jesus of Nazareth. God becoming human in Jesus is called his incarnation. God entered history ‘in the flesh’ and became one of us. Christianity is a historical faith and the New Testament tells the history of Jesus.

Jesus was fully human. He was tired, angry, hungry, thirsty and tempted in every way. Yet, people were amazed at the authority of his teaching, his ability to heal the sick, his power over the wind and sea, and his extraordinary love for people that others saw as unimportant. He was “tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

Christians believe that Jesus shows us what it means to be fully human – to fully reflect God's image into the world. This means that as we trust and look to Jesus, we find forgiveness and the restoration of our own humanity.

“*The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word*” (Hebrews 1:3).

Hebrews also talks about Jesus acting as our high priest. He represents the people to God – and God to the people. This is good news because he understands our weakness and has shared in our temptations. Jesus is the eternal go-between between us and God. This gives us confidence to draw near to God and know that he cares and understands us.

“*Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need*” (Hebrews 4:14–16).



We saw the full extent of God's love for the world when Jesus gave up his life for us on the cross. Only God could deal with the sins of the world and defeat death.

“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” (John 3:16).

Yet the death of Jesus on the cross is not the end of the story. His resurrection from the dead to life is the incredible good news that convinced people that Jesus was truly both human and God. Only as a human could he die, only as God could he defeat death. He is still fully human and fully God.

“God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact” (Acts 2:32).

“You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this” (Acts 3:15).

“And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead” (1 Corinthians 15:15).

The incarnation of Jesus shows us how God is willing to humble himself and engage with people – and not be distant. To follow Jesus is to follow his example by drawing near to others – to share our time, gifts and life in service.

What does this mean for us? It will be both challenging and extremely rewarding. It means that we will reach out in love to those who society regards as insignificant. Jesus does this. It will mean loving our enemies and seeking reconciliation with those we have conflict with or have hurt us. Jesus does this. It will also mean loving ourselves despite what life may have taught us about our value Jesus does this too.

Discuss

How is Jesus' incarnation both an encouragement and a challenge for us?

Doctrine 5:

Distorted image

We believe that our first parents were created in a state of innocence, but by their disobedience they lost their purity and happiness, and that in consequence of their fall all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.

Big ideas

- **Everything was created good – human beings and creation**
- **Our nature is to disobey God, which cuts us off from the source of life**
- **God longs for us to love him, but love must be freely given on our part**

“*As it is written: There is no-one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God*”

(Romans 3:10–11).

In creating us with the ability to love, God has also given us the freedom not to love. This is the nature of free will – and real love. Every choice we make in life boils down to a question of love – love for God, love for others and love for ourselves.

The Bible says God created people in his image and that in the beginning, everything was good. We were made to love God and others. People were like God in their hearts, and they knew him.

“*Then God said, ‘Let us make human beings in our image, in our likeness’. God saw all that he had made, and it was very good*” (Genesis 1:26, 31).

But people turned away from God. They chose to ignore God and fell into more and more sin – not loving God and others. Now, all human beings have the tendency to stuff things up in our relationships with people, with God and the world. Sadly, we see the evidence of this all around us in broken relationships, bullying, addictions, physical and sexual violence, wars, theft and pollution of the Earth.

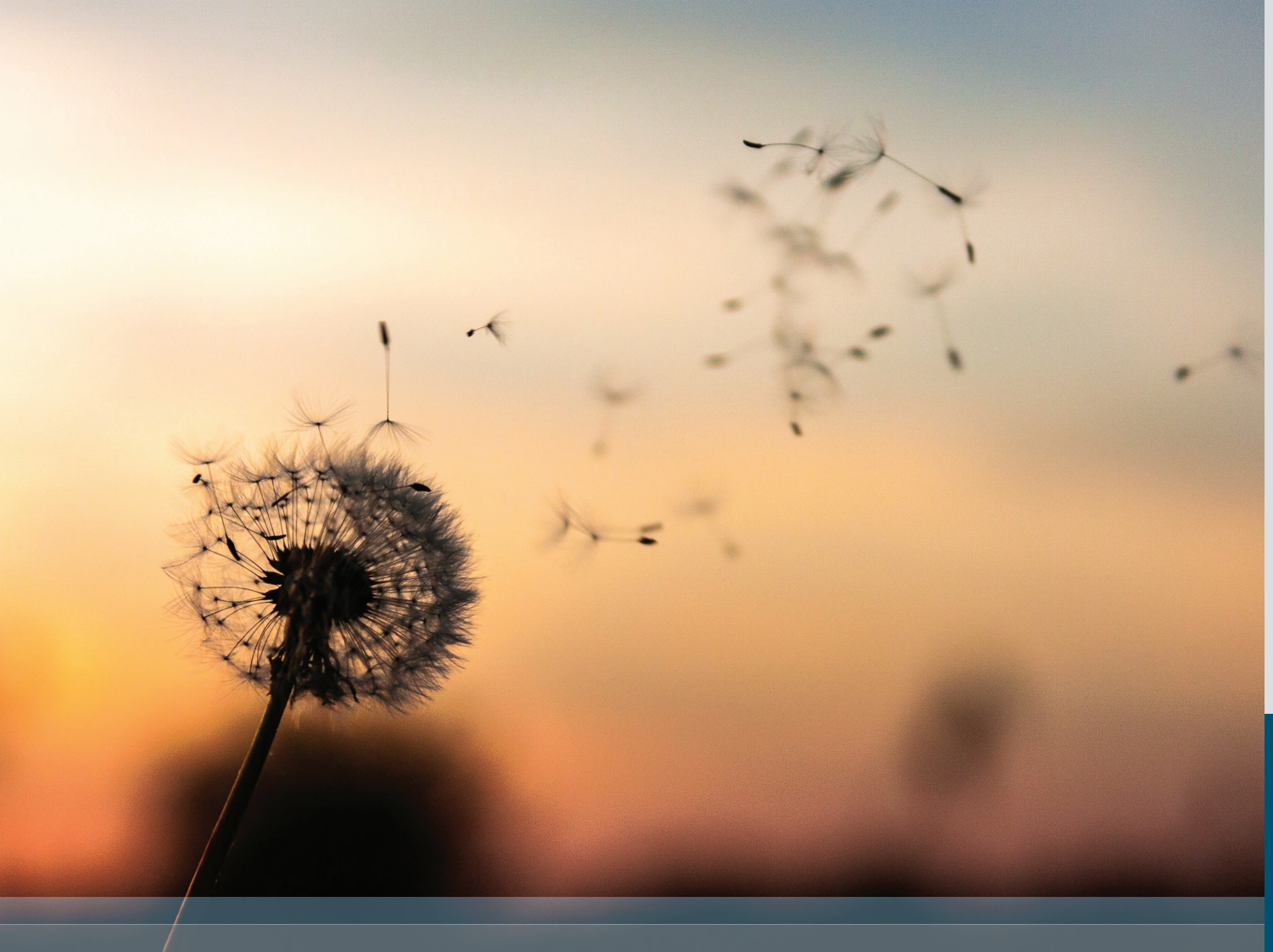
This problem in humanity is called total depravity. It is depraved – it is broken and stained. It is total because it affects every part of people. As God is love and holy, God cannot ignore humanity’s sin. God is against everything which spoils and hurts people. His opposition to sin and injustice is called his wrath or anger.

We see Jesus’ anger or wrath at those who damage or hurt children:

“*If you harm one of these little ones, better for you that a millstone be draped around your neck and you be dropped into the depths of the sea*” (Luke 17:2).

We see Jesus’ anger or wrath towards self-righteous religious leaders when he calls them “blind guides” (Matthew 23:16), “hypocrites” (Luke 13:15) and “fools” (Matthew 23:17).

If God was not angry with sin, God would not be loving. It would suggest that God did not care about sin and the hurt that we cause in the world.



Putting belief into practice

I will make the values of the Kingdom of God and not the values of the world the standard of my life.

I will uphold Christian integrity in every area of my life, allowing nothing in thought, word or deed that is unworthy, unclean, untrue, profane, dishonest or immoral.

I will remain Christian ideals in all my relationships with others: my family and neighbours, my colleagues and fellow salvationist, those to whom and for whom I am responsible, and the wider community.

Our culture esteems the rich, successful and powerful and marginalises the most vulnerable – people who are poor, homeless, unemployed, displaced, and those with mental health issues. The Christian faith and the work of The Salvation Army is counter-cultural and has always taken special care of the socially vulnerable and marginalised.

The world or the culture around us values wealth, careers, pleasure and materialism – the buying and consumption of stuff. The Kingdom of God values relationships, community, caring for the world and one another.

Following Christ will mean learning to live with and deal with temptation to follow the values of the world. When faced with a decision or action, we can look to God, his word and your Christian brothers and sisters for wisdom and encouragement.

Discuss

- What are the values of the world?
- How are they different from the values of the Kingdom of God?
- How do the values of the world tempt you in life?



Doctrine 6: Atonement through Christ

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has by His suffering and death made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.

Big ideas

- **Jesus' life, death and resurrection opened the way for humanity to be reconciled to a loving God**
- **Biblical metaphors for the atonement include: ransom, punishment, sacrifice, victory and love**
- **Understanding the generosity of God motivates us to tell others about Jesus**

“*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*”

(John 3:16).

The Bible uses many metaphors to help us understand how Jesus made peace and restored our relationship with God. This is what is referred to as atonement.

Ransom – The payment Jesus made to secure our freedom from sin and death.

“*For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many*” (Mark 10:45).

Law courts – The punishment for our sins was experienced by Jesus on the cross.

“*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed*” (1 Peter 2:24).

Sacrifice – Jesus died in our place as a sacrifice to restore fellowship between God and people.

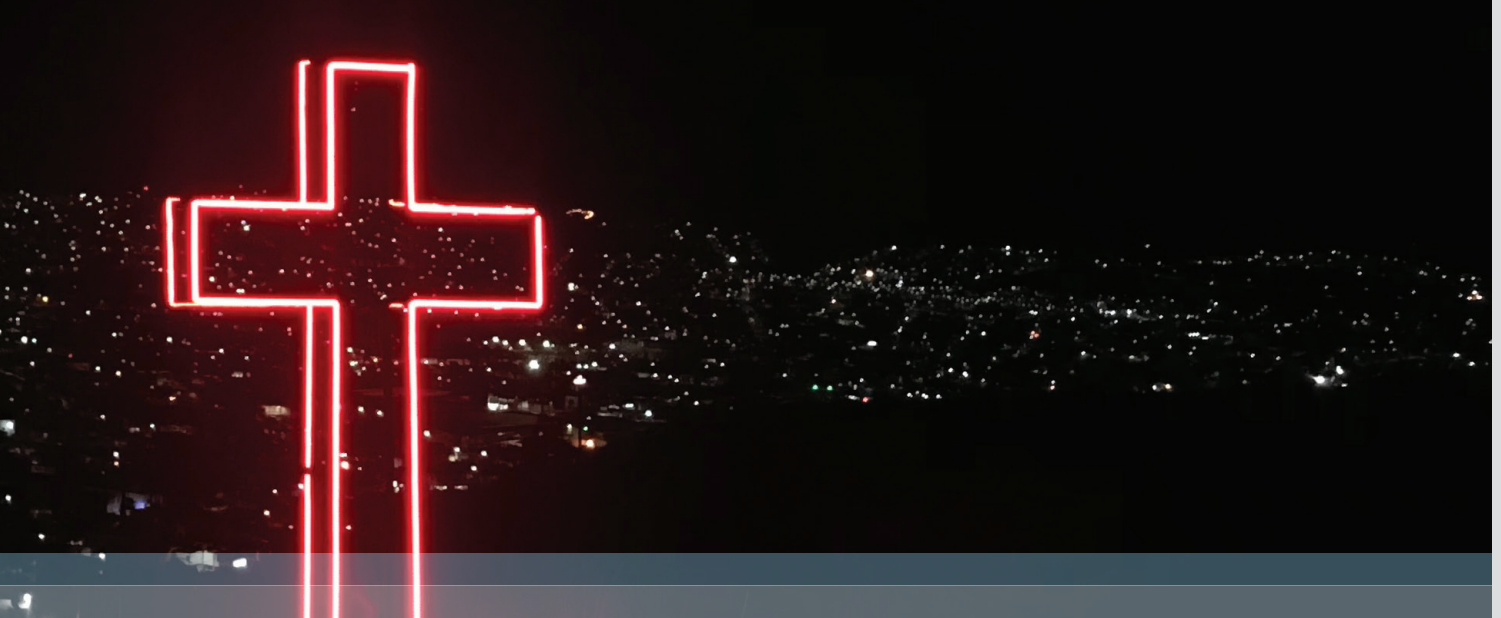
“*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Victory – Jesus defeated sin, death and powers of evil and we can share in that victory.

“*He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross*” (Colossians 2:13–15).

Love – The self-giving love of God for people and this world.

“*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us*” (1 John 3:16).



On Good Friday, Jesus died to take our sin and death into himself. On the cross, Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice of love – to die for us. On Easter Sunday, Jesus defeated sin and death. In Christ, we can now share in his resurrected life and be saved. Jesus' death demonstrates his great love and the resurrection demonstrates his incredible victory. We share in both his death and his resurrected life.

“If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin – because anyone who has died has been set free from sin” (Romans 6:5-7).

This relationship with God is freely available to all people. When we appreciate and experience the power of the cross, we are motivated to share the love of Jesus with others. Evangelism is the sharing of the good news of God's love and is the heart and soul of the Christian story.

To be a soldier in The Salvation Army is to join in that great calling and to care for the needy and disadvantaged.

Putting belief into practice

I will be faithful to the purposes for which God raised up The Salvation Army, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, endeavouring to win others to Him, and in His name caring for the needy and the disadvantaged.

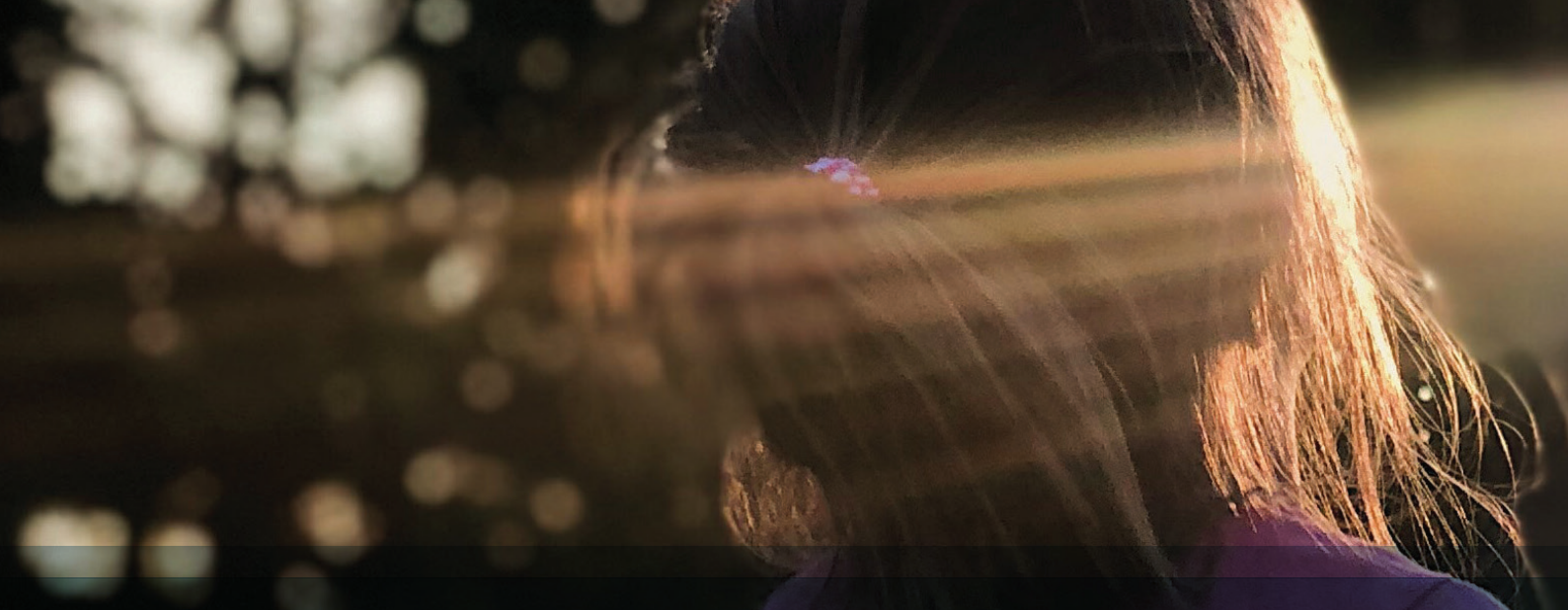
- **Be ready to give an answer –**

“Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander” (1 Peter 3:15-16).

- **Preach the gospel** – Study what the Bible has to say about what Jesus did for us. Be ready to explain what God has done for us and how people can follow Jesus and become a Christian. What difference has the gospel made in your life? What was life before? What is it like now?
- **Caring for the needy and the disadvantaged** – Don't back away from friendships with people who don't know Jesus – or people who are very different from ourselves. Spend time with people and show them the generosity and love of God. Be intentional in building relationships and showing Christ's love to the needy and disadvantaged in your community.

Discuss

- Share your testimony of how you came to know Jesus and follow him.
- Discuss how you can show the love of Christ in 'caring for the needy and disadvantaged' in the community.
- How is The Salvation Army serving the community in your area?



Doctrine 7: The process of salvation

We believe that repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, are necessary to salvation.

Big ideas

- **Repentance is a response to the work of Jesus**
- **Repentance is a change in life to follow God**
- **Repentance and faith in Jesus leads to a new way of living**

“*The time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news*”

(Mark 1:15).

When you have taken a wrong road, it's great to find out and turn back to the right road. It would be bizarre to keep driving down the wrong road and not get to your destination. It is the same if you have taken the wrong road in life. We need to change direction.

Repentance means to change our mind about sin and to turn to God. It is a turning of our life back to God and his ways. It is a change in purpose and direction that leads to transformation or regeneration. It involves being sorry for our sin and receiving God's promised forgiveness.

Repentance is ongoing through life and a response to God's love and mercy.

“*God's kindness leads you to repentance*”
(Romans 2:4).

Faith is trusting the living person and message of Jesus Christ. Everyone places their faith or trust in different things. In driving, we place our faith in the car, the driver and our GPS. In life, we can place our faith in money, other people or our job. The question is not how much faith you have – but who do you place your faith in? It is a trusting acceptance of Jesus – his life, teaching, death on the cross and resurrection life.

“*I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus*” *(Acts 10:21).*

Regeneration is being re-made or transformed by God. Jesus described it as being born again (John 3:3–8). Paul described it as becoming a new creation. It is God's work in us to change our hearts and have new desires. We are freed from sin and transformed to be more like Jesus.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Salvation is God's work in which he accepts us, forgives us and adopts us as his child. This brings us into a family of brothers and sisters to engage in God's mission in the world. God also gives us his Holy Spirit. This brings a radical new beginning known as the new birth and a new way of living.

“The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit” (Galatians 5:16–25).

Putting belief into practice

I will abstain from alcoholic drink, tobacco, the non-medical use of addictive drugs, gambling, pornography, the occult and all else that could enslave the body or spirit.

I will be actively involved, as I am able, in the life, work, worship and witness of the corps, giving as large a proportion of my income as possible to support its ministries and the worldwide work of the Army.

Becoming a Christian means taking on a radically different way of life and becoming more like Jesus. This is a lifelong work of God in our lives. Over time, the fruit of the Spirit will become real in our lives.

For soldiers in the Army, this includes abstaining from anything that could enslave the body or spirit – and actively committing to the ministries of the Army. These ministries include loving and caring for people in our corps and social mission expressions (i.e. family violence, homelessness, recovery and youth services). Being an active member of The Salvation Army community in the local area means looking to serve and show the love of Christ to others.

Discuss

- Why is repentance ongoing through our life?
- How have you seen evidence of God bringing about changes in your life as a follower of Jesus?



Doctrine 8: The nature of salvation

We believe that we are justified by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.

Big ideas

- **Justification is a gift from God and received by faith**
- **God gives the justified person assurance of their right relationship with him**
- **Good works flow out of this right relationship with God**

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand”

(Romans 5:1–2).

Justification describes the process of coming back into a right relationship with God. God declares us as righteous or not guilty and fully accepted. Our broken relationship with God is healed and restored.

Grace is the undeserved mercy of God. It includes forgiveness freely offered in Jesus' name. It is a gift.

So being justified by grace means that our salvation is a gift of love from God. We don't earn it by being good people. We don't earn it by being religious or seeking to please him. We can't even discover it unless the Holy Spirit prompts our understanding. It is a freely given gift for us to receive.

Faith is the way that we receive justification. The only thing we need do is swallow our pride and humbly accept the truth of Jesus' love for us. It is a trusting acceptance of God's gift of love for us. It is to rely on the saving work Jesus did for us on the cross where he died for our sins.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not as a result of works so that no-one may boast”
(Ephesians 2:8).



The second half of the doctrine is a bit hard to understand, even in modern language: you who believe have the witness in yourself.

This is talking about assurance or being confident of God's love. Jesus' gift of love is permanent. We often fail, but God's love never fails. It does not depend on how we feel about our faith or about God. It depends on the word of God and the work of Jesus. The Bible says that when God saves us, God gives us his Holy Spirit, and the Spirit gives us an inner assurance that we belong to God. The Spirit witnesses to us that we are God's child.

All our lifestyle commitments as a Christian and as a soldier are a response to this work of God.

We love because we know we are loved. We value others because we know we are valued. God's love for us overflows to others. We serve and show mercy because God has served us and shown us mercy. Our lives are changed because we are in a right and thankful relationship with God our Father.

This means we will live according to values of the Kingdom of God. We will seek to live with integrity, care for relationships, look after families and marriages, and be a faithful steward of all that God has given us.

Soldiers don't make these lifestyle commitments or covenant to earn God's favour or acceptance. We make these commitments as a response to the love of Christ. The love of Christ compels us (2 Corinthians 5:14a).

Discuss

- What difference would it make if God accepted us because of the good things we did?
- If we can receive God's love as a gift, why should we bother with serving others or becoming a soldier?



Doctrine 9: Obedient faith

We believe that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.

Big ideas

- **Obedience to God is our choice and God has given us freedom to love.**
- **We need to continue to trust and obey God throughout our life.**
- **We need to guard and nurture our relationship with God.**

“*Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me*”

(John 15:4).

Jesus' love is steadfast and will never fail. However, God has created us with the freedom to love and respond to him. This freedom to live by grace includes the freedom to turn away.

Like a healthy marriage, our relationship with God needs ongoing care, attention, trust and communication. This involves the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, service and worship with the body of Christ. These disciplines help us to continue to meet with God, hear his word and cooperate with the work of the Spirit.

There is regular encouragement in scripture to develop and nurture a life of obedient faith:

“*Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the day approaching*”
(Hebrews 10:23–25).

“*But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life*”
(Jude 20–21).



God wants us to live holy and obedient lives. However, God knows our weaknesses and promises that:

“ *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins*” (1 John 1:9).

If we get to a point where we don't even try to obey God, we have a problem. We must honestly ask ourselves whether our disobedience comes from a heart that has hardened towards God. Deliberate ongoing disobedience can result in loss of connection with Christ.

Problem of pain

People can reject or drift away from God when they experience pain, disappointment, rejection or persecution. What can give us faith, hope and peace through the difficult times? Here are some ways the Bible talks about suffering:

- Jesus knows what pain and suffering are like (Hebrews 2:18)
- God is present with us in our pain as our comforter and refuge (Psalm 46:1)
- Christians can expect trouble in this world (John 16:33)
- Our character can be improved through suffering (Hebrews 12:7)
- In the new heaven and new earth, God will wipe every tear from our eyes (Revelation 21:1–4)

Putting belief into practice

I will uphold the sanctity of marriage and of family life.

I will be true to the principles and practices of The Salvation Army, loyal to its leaders, and I will show the spirit of salvationism whether in times of popularity or persecution.

There are values and behaviours the Bible teaches that our society will say are outdated, silly or foolish. Continued obedient faith means living by God's teachings even if you are out of step with popular views. This can be difficult in Australian culture and can lead to prison or death in other countries around the world.

Discuss

- How is our relationship with God like a healthy marriage?
- What are values of the world that make it difficult to continue to trust and obey God?
- How can we help and support one another to continue to trust and obey and grow in our relationship with God?



Doctrine 10: Holiness

We believe it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Big ideas

- **Sanctification is the process of becoming more like Christ in every part of our life**
- **The Holy Spirit works within us to make us more like Jesus – to be holy**
- **Sanctification is a life changing and ongoing process**

“*Be holy, because I am holy*”
(1 Peter 1:16).

Sanctification describes the process by which God's people are made holy and set apart for God's purposes. As we grow as Christians, we aim to become more and more like Christ in our character. This is the privilege of all believers and not just for some. It also affects the whole of our lives. There is nothing in our lives that is not touched by the Spirit and his work of holiness.

The cross is at the heart of holiness. Scripture calls us to die to sin and the old self. As we identify with Christ in his death, we understand that our old self died with him. At the same time, “if we died with Christ, we believe that we also live with him” (Romans 6:1–14). We share in his death and his resurrection.

“*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone and the new has come*”
(2 Corinthians 5:17).

The Holy Spirit is the key that makes holy living possible. Jesus overcame temptation through the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:1–14). Through the same Spirit, we also have victory over sin and are being transformed to be like Christ.

“*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit*”
(2 Corinthians 3:17–18).



Sanctification can take place through times of crisis and is also an ongoing process. Sometimes the Spirit brings us to a crossroads where we are empowered to make radical changes of direction in our lives. We may be challenged about an area of sin in our life and be convicted to repent. It may be a decisive turning point.

At the same time, sanctification is a lifelong and ongoing process. As we seek to follow Jesus, pray, serve, read his word and meet with his people, the Spirit changes us. We are changed in the way we see God, ourselves and others.

Putting belief into practice

I will be a faithful steward of my time and gifts, my money and possessions, my body, my mind and my spirit, knowing that I am accountable to God.

Discuss

- What behaviours does a soldier promise to put off and put on?
- How can we help one another to continue to grow in holiness?

Put off sin, put on holiness

Read Colossians 3:1–17 together. List the things we are called to put to death or put off and those things we are called to put on.

Put to death therefore whatever belongs to your earthly nature . . . (v.5)

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with . . . (v.12)



Doctrine 11: Resurrection hope

We believe in the immortality of the soul; in the resurrection of the body; in the general judgement at the end of the world; in the eternal happiness of the righteous; and in the endless punishment of the wicked.

Big ideas

- **The Christian hope in life over death is based on physical resurrection of Jesus Christ**
- **Judgement is the final victory of good over evil**
- **Our bodies, and the entire creation will be made new**

“*And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you*”
(*Roman 8:11*).

Is death the end? Do we have any basis to hope that there is more to life than death?

Jesus' resurrection was a physical, bodily resurrection. It was not just a spiritual one. After his resurrection, he ate and drank, proving that he was not just a spirit or ghost. His resurrection was a defeat of death and the source of hope. It is the pattern or firstfruits for our own resurrection.

“*But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him*” (1 Corinthians 15:20–23).

Not only will our lives be renewed and resurrected, the whole of creation will be renewed and restored in a new heaven and a new earth (Revelation 21:1). The reality of pain and death is real but Jesus' resurrection provides a certain hope for the future that sin and death will not have the last word.



Victory of good over evil

Judgement on evil is good. We don't want evil to be ignored and we don't want God to be indifferent to evil or injustice. Thankfully, God alone is the judge and is just and fair.

“ *The Lord reigns forever;
he has established his throne for judgment.
He rules the world in righteousness
and judges the peoples with equity.
The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.
Those who know your name trust in you,
for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who
seek you*” (Psalm 9:7–10).

God does not favour the rich, the famous or the powerful. This is a source of hope for those who are poor, oppressed and cannot achieve justice through human channels.

God's judgement also recognises the importance of human life. People, made in the image of God, are accountable for our actions and decisions in life. Our lives are significant. At the same time, we know that God is full of grace and mercy. By faith in Jesus, we need not fear judgement.

Hope

We all experience problems in life. It may be an illness that won't go away, or a lifetime of poverty or oppression. Sometimes there are no solutions to these problems in the here-and-now. However, the resurrection of Jesus provides hope for a future where God will:

- Fully heal and restore us – body, soul and spirit
- Remake and renew the whole creation
- Bring about justice for the poor and oppressed
- Bring an end to evil and death

“ *God will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away*” (Revelation 21:4).

Some might be tempted to sit back and say: “Well God intends to clean everything up himself at the end. I can put my feet up and relax”. Others might say: “The soul is more important than the body. We need to just focus on evangelism, and not on social justice and caring for the world”.

However, God has called his church to partner with him in bringing about individual and corporate renewal. This is why William Booth said: “Making heaven on earth is our business”. This takes up Jesus' teaching on how to pray:

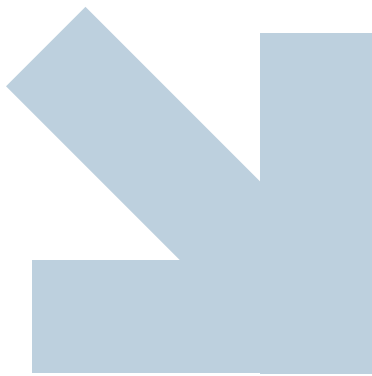
“ *Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*” (Matthew 6:10).

The Bible sees people as whole – physical and spiritual. Jesus saw people as whole – and cared for the physical and spiritual needs of people. This doctrine helps broaden our vision to be concerned for both evangelism and social justice.

God's call is for his people to point to the resurrection of Jesus and to live now in anticipation of the final resurrection. This is what The Salvation Army stands for in a broken world.

Discuss

- What are the dangers if we lose sight of the whole person and focus just on the spiritual or just on the physical?



Next steps

At the start of this course, our hope was that it would help you grow in your faith and know whether being a soldier is right for you.

All people are welcome at The Salvation Army – whether you are a soldier or not. The Army, in fact the whole Christian church, exists for others, as well as for the members. We want you to feel loved and accepted. We want you to feel you belong and can serve. God loves you and gave his Son to die for you. We are here to express that same love.

God wants you to know and follow him. Jesus calls you to be his disciple. That means you learn from him and seek to obey him. It means you live for him day by day. You become light for the place where you live. You serve the people there in Jesus' name. As a disciple, you will also belong to Christ's body – his church. You will love others in the church. You will love the poor, the hurting and the lost in the community.

The end of this course is a good moment to think about the next steps on your journey of Christian discipleship. What is your response to Jesus' call to committed Christian living?

If The Salvation Army is your church, you are welcome to follow and serve Jesus with us. You will be encouraged to be active in ministry as a disciple of Jesus.

You may also choose to become a more formal member. You may sign up to serve God with this army of salvation and commit to the mission of the Army. You can dedicate yourself to live a holy life that blesses this world.

You may choose to become an adherent and make The Salvation Army your church. You promise to support the work of your local corps. You commit to a lifestyle which shows Jesus to others. Adherents do not wear the soldier's uniform.

You may choose to become a soldier. A Salvation Army soldier embraces the truths on which the Army stands – that is, the 11 Doctrines. A soldier commits to the disciplines of the Army. For example, you will play a part in the Army's mission. You will live a lifestyle that supports the mission. That includes the disciplines of not using alcohol, drugs, gambling or pornography. You are encouraged to wear uniform, especially when representing the Army in the community. As a soldier, you will do all you can to advance the mission of The Salvation Army and be one with other Salvationists around the world, supporting them with prayer, gifts and love.

Formal leadership within The Salvation Army, such as corps leadership or becoming a cadet for officership, will require you to be an active soldier.

If you have any questions, feel welcome to ask your corps officer or the person leading this course. You may want to talk and pray with them about the impact that the course has had, and any ways you feel called to deepen your commitment to following Christ.



The Salvation Army Doctrines

1. **We believe** the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, and that they only constitute the divine rule of Christian faith and practice.
2. **We believe** there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.
3. **We believe** there are three persons in the Godhead – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, undivided in essence and co-equal in power and glory.
4. **We believe** in the person of Jesus Christ the Divine and human natures are united so that he is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.
5. **We believe** our first parents were created in a state of innocency, but by their disobedience, they lost their purity and happiness, and that in consequence of their fall all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.
6. **We believe** the Lord Jesus Christ has, by his suffering and death, made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.
7. **We believe** repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, are necessary to salvation.
8. **We believe** we are justified by grace through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.
9. **We believe** continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.
10. **We believe** it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
11. **We believe** in the immortality of the soul; in the resurrection of the body; in the general judgement at the end of the world; in the eternal happiness of the righteous; and in the endless punishment of the wicked.

The soldier's covenant

Having accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord, and desiring to fulfil the mission of God he has for me and his Church here on earth as a soldier of The Salvation Army, I now by God's grace enter into a sacred covenant.

- 1.** I believe and will live by the truths of the word of God expressed in The Salvation Army's eleven articles of faith:
- 2.** I will be responsive to the Holy Spirit's work and obedient to his leading in my life, growing in grace through worship, prayer, service and the reading of the Bible. I will make the values of the Kingdom of God and not the values of the world the standard for my life.
- 3.** I will uphold Christian integrity in every area of my life, allowing nothing in thought, word or deed that is unworthy, unclean, untrue, profane, dishonest or immoral.
- 4.** I will maintain Christian ideals in all my relationships with others: my family and neighbours, my colleagues and fellow Salvationists, those to whom and for whom I am responsible, and the wider community.
- 5.** I will uphold the sanctity of marriage and of family life. I will be a faithful steward of my time and gifts, my money and possessions, my body, my mind and my spirit, knowing that I am accountable to God.
- 6.** I will abstain from alcoholic drink, tobacco, the non-medical use of addictive drugs, gambling, pornography, the occult and all else that could enslave the body or spirit.
- 7.** I will be faithful to the purposes for which God raised up The Salvation Army, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ, endeavouring to win others to him, and in his name caring for the needy and the disadvantaged.
- 8.** I will be actively involved, as I am able, in the life, work, worship and witness of the corps, giving of my own income as there is need to support its ministries and the worldwide work of the Army.
- 9.** I will be true to the principles and practices of The Salvation Army, loyal to its leaders, and I will show the spirit of salvationism whether in times of popularity or persecution.
- 10.** I now call upon all present to witness that I enter into this covenant and sign these articles of war of my own free will, convinced that the love of Christ, who died and now lives to save me, requires from me this devotion of my life to his service for the salvation of the whole world; and therefore do here declare my full determination, by God's help, to be a true soldier of The Salvation Army.

Extension materials

The Salvation Army Handbook of Doctrine.
London: Salvation Books, 2010.

Doctrine 1	Word of the living God (p. 1 – 24)
Doctrine 2	Creator of Heaven and Earth (p. 25 – 50)
Doctrine 3	The God who is never alone (p. 51 – 78)
Doctrine 4	God's eternal son (p. 79 – 108)
Doctrine 5	Distorted image (p. 109 – 126)
Doctrine 6	Atonement through Christ (p. 127 – 144)
Doctrine 7	The process of salvation (p. 145 – 162)
Doctrine 8	The nature of salvation (p. 163 – 178)
Doctrine 9	Obedient faith (p. 179 – 190)
Doctrine 10	Holiness (p. 191 – 222)
Doctrine 11	Resurrection hope (p. 223 – 246)

See also:

Edge, Lynette and Morgan, Gregory. *Partnering with God: Being a Missional Salvationist*. Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2017.

Needham, Phil. *Christ Standing Outside the Door: Biblical Keys to our Salvationist Future*. London: Salvation Army, 2018.

Notes

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