

The Salvos Field Guide Devotional

22 daily reflections from Salvos



JESUS
Centered



Recognising Jesus in our everyday

Based on excerpts from
Steve A Brown: *Jesus Centered: Focusing on Jesus in a Distracted World*



National Prayer Focus 2022

AUGUST 21 - SEPTEMBER 11

Visit mysalvos.org.au/NationalPrayerFocus2022 for the
live online nightly prayer meetings

Introduction

The Salvation Army
National Prayer Focus 2022: Jesus Centered
SUNDAY, AUGUST 21 – SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11 2022

Access all the resources here:
mysalvos.org.au/NationalPrayerFocus2022

The Salvation Army Australia invites you to join in 22 days of prayer for our National Prayer Focus from Sunday, August 21 to Sunday, September 11. Our 2022 theme is 'Jesus Centered' and has three key ways to get connected:

National Prayer Focus 22 Daily Devotionals

'The Salvos Field Guide Devotional: Recognising Jesus in Our Everyday'

This freely available 22-day devotional can be read online, downloaded or printed. Featuring 22 short reflections from Salvos, the devotional has thought-provoking questions, worship song suggestions and first-hand story about how these Salvos recognise Jesus in everyday of life. There are four accompanying sermon outlines for each of the Sundays in National Prayer Focus 2022, available on the site.

National Prayer Focus 22 Nightly Online Meetings

Find the link for National Prayer Focus Online meetings live or recorded here: mysalvos.org.au/NationalPrayerFocus2022

Join us from Sunday, August 21 to Sunday, September 11 for 22 nightly online prayer meetings. These will go for 45 minutes each and feature a variety of ways to pray, ideas for being Jesus centered and times of

Paperback 'Jesus Centered: Focusing on Jesus in a Distracted World' by Steve Brown

There will also be a Salvos Field Guide Devotional for Kids made available from July 31, with simple activities and reflections to engage the children in our lives in prayer.

The Salvation Army Australia's National Prayer Focus 2022 will be a powerful time of connection, rejuvenation and joy as we seek God and seek good together. The National Prayer Focus 'Salvos Field Guide' daily devotions and corresponding nightly online meetings will provide a deep and valuable prayer resource as we walk forward into the future. We expect remarkable things as God's people stop, listen and lean into what God is saying. May we recognise Jesus in our everyday as we place Jesus as the centre of all we do.

‘Being ‘Jesus Centred’ means living a life that is focused on him. In our distracted world it’s easy to focus on other things. Following Jesus is a daily commitment we must choose. Cultivating a Jesus centred life takes time and effort. We have the most incredible invitation to be part of that as we live Jesus centered lives. Jesus put it this way, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing” [John 15:5].

The Holy Spirit helps us, guides us and leads us as we spend time in prayer, reading his word and growing. When we understand that we are free in Jesus, we live differently. We believe Jesus wants you to encounter his love, to know his will, to hear his voice and to know his purpose for your life.

A Jesus centered life starts and deepens by his invitation.

He loves you.

He’s inviting you to experience him.

He’s inviting you to live a ‘Jesus Centered Life.’

COMMISSIONERS JANINE AND ROBERT DONALDSON

Notes



Follow Him

Peter McGuigan

'Following' is both a decision and an action all of us make every day. We decide to follow someone on Instagram or Twitter and press the follow button. We follow the advice of trusted friends and colleagues. We follow the directions of line managers at work. We follow the form of our favourite sporting teams.

When it comes to Jesus, following takes on a more profound meaning in our lives. It's like following goes to a whole new level because following Jesus transforms your life and gives you new perspectives on just about everything.

You think with God's input into your life and align your behavior with Godly values. There are new priorities and greater purpose. There is also a new power, the power of the Holy Spirit within, that helps you ditch old ways of thinking and acting that you know weren't good for you.

The impact of Jesus' life, death and resurrection, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world, become personal! The Scriptures come alive and inform our daily living. Seventeenth-century writer Brother Lawrence described this life as 'practising the presence of God'. We become people of prayer and of the Word who are mindful of God leading us. Being Jesus-centered people becomes a lifestyle. A guiding principle for all Christian leaders must surely be: 'I am a follower first'.

When Jesus invited the fishermen Peter and Andrew to 'come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people', they said yes immediately. 'At once, they left their nets and followed him' is how the Gospel writer describes the scene (Mark 1:17,18). Jesus didn't promise them that following would be easy, nor did he give them a detailed plan of action.

EPHESIANS 3:14-21

‘For this reason we kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. We pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And we pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.’

But they instinctively knew that following Jesus would be the best decision for their lives.

It wasn’t about religion or philosophy or volunteering, but saying yes to the irresistible presence of Jesus standing in front of them and who, later, they would discover was ‘the Son of God’ (Matthew 16:16). The invitation to follow Jesus is so compelling because of who Jesus is.

Reflection Questions

- » Read Mark 1:14-20. How do these verses speak into your experience of following Jesus?
- » In a world with so many distractions, how can Jesus followers today say ‘yes’ to him with the same compulsion as his very earliest followers?

Song

Christ is Enough | Hillsong Worship

© 2013 Hillsong Music Publishing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teUxQpnhezY>

Activity

- » Begin each day by praying: ‘Lord Jesus, I step into this day with you. Holy Spirit, I receive you afresh filling my mind, my body and my spirit with your presence for all that today may bring.’

Abide in Him Part 1

Brad Watson

'I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.' John 15:5

How freakin' liberating!

I mean, think about it!

My only job, in the first instance, is to remain in Jesus. That's it.

Of course, I've other jobs, too – parent, son, Salvo – but my first job is simply to remain in Jesus. Everything falls into place after that. Everything gets empowered by that.

Besides, there's so much power in that 'remaining', 'abiding' or 'living in union' with Jesus (depending on your translation).

If I want to make a difference in the world, then I should remain in Jesus, follow his teachings and show his inclusive love. If I want to live an abundant (fruit-bearing) life, then the same applies.

I can't do it without him.

I can't save myself. Good works won't work. While God did prepare things for me to do in the world (Eph 2:10), they aren't my salvation. God has already done the work of salvation. So, our job isn't saving ourselves – it's remaining in him.

I can't save the world either (Pity!). All of us that work in Salvo mission want to create a better world. But I only do that through remaining in him and letting God's power, that is within me, do its thing. (Actually – in doing so, God will do more than we ask or imagine! Eph 3:20-21).

Outro

We are deeply joyful to have journeyed through 22 days and nights of prayers together with you in
The Salvation Army National Prayer Focus 2022: Jesus Centered.

This indeed has been a powerful time of connection, rejuvenation and joy as we seek God and seek good together. This National Prayer Focus 'Salvos Field Guide' daily devotional and corresponding nightly online meetings are available to use as a prayer resource at any point in the future for your community here:

mysalvos.org.au/NationalPrayerFocus2022

**Adele Masters**

I have been a Salvationist all my life and after moving throughout QLD and NSW, I currently live in Wollongong, NSW. I attend the Wollongong Corps and enjoy supporting the musical and technical ministries of the corps.

I am currently working as a Mission Events Coordinator for the NSW/ACT division and I am passionate about creating safe, organised spaces for people to encounter Jesus. I am also completing some study working towards a graduate diploma in theology with Eva Burrows College.

**Janine and Robert Donaldson**

Our names are Janine and Robert, Commissioners who have been serving in Australia as the Territorial Leaders since 2019.

In our 35 years of officership, we have ministered in a variety of appointments ranging from Corps, training and education, governance, women's ministries, social mission and more. We are excited to see what Jesus is revealing through the Salvos in Australia.

But, OK, for the sake of argument, let's consider the alternative. Personally, I know when I try and do things my way the result isn't anything amazing. Generally speaking, it's exhaustion and anxiety. Jesus said that if we get to that point, guess what! The answer is remaining in him ('Take my yoke upon you and learn from me' Matt 11:29).

So, I remain in him. I remain in the confidence that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available daily to those that seek God. I remain in his peace and the liberating knowledge that it's God who will bring about the 'fruit' through my living – not 'just' me.

Reflection Questions

- » What difference would it make for you to embrace the thought that 'it' is not all up to you? (Whatever 'it' is for you)
- » What simple, practical steps could you take to turn your attention to remaining in Jesus' way – learning and applying his teachings, demonstrating his powerful and inclusive love, trusting in his powerful Spirit?

Song

This song flips the concept, as Matt Redman pleads that God abides with him... but as he gets to the bridge he affirms that God's love will never let him go. God doesn't fail us – so it's up to us to stick with God.

Abide With Me | Matt Redman

© sixstepsrecords and Sparrow Records

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJvIsJxiOUM&feature=youtu.be>

Abide in Him Part 2

James Condon

Scripture Reading: Colossians 1:15-23 – key verse 18

My wife Jan and I were stationed as Corps Officers at Auburn in Sydney and during our time there I was greatly challenged following my reading of Colossians chapter 1 in my daily devotions one day. I was particularly drawn to verse 18 – ‘that in everything He might have pre-eminence.’

Some of the more modern translations like NLT express it this way – ‘So He is first in everything.’ This became a focus for our ministry at the corps.

I read the other day that ‘life is marked by a single choice’ – who or what we will center our lives around.

Colossians Chapter 1:15-23 is a great reading as we think about Jesus at the center of it all.

As I look back over half a century of service to God through The Salvation Army, I reflect on the challenge to keep Jesus at the center of it all. It is so easy to get side-tracked by issues: be it with The Salvation Army, local community, politics, people or even problems around the world. So many things take us away from Jesus being the center of it all.

May I suggest a daily prayer – ‘Jesus be at the center of it all today.’

A number of years ago I discovered the song ‘Jesus at the Center’. It must have been a few years ago as I have it on a CD and I often played it in the car.

I quote the words of the first verse:
‘Jesus at the center of it all.
From beginning to the end



Amanda Lennestaa

I began worshipping with The Salvation Army in 2013 and currently serve as the national Gender Equity Coordinator. I am committed to working through the complex systems, theologies and philosophies that lead to exclusion. I am passionate about communities of faith becoming safe and inclusive places that offer radical hospitality.



Lauren Kirkham

I am currently serving as Corps Officer in Dja Dja Wurrung country at The Salvation Army Bendigo. I have a background in Youth Work, love the great outdoors and creative challenges. I am passionate about creating spaces for people to share their stories with one another and to encounter Jesus in their own story.



Jo and Peter Brookshaw

We have been Salvation Army Officers for 13 years, serving in the NT, back home in Victoria, and now leading Morley Corps in WA. Pete is passionate about mobilising the people of God to live holy and sold-out lives for Jesus, activating a missional church. Jo is an artistic, prophetic leader, challenging the people of God to express their love for Christ with all their passion, skills and unique gifts. They have three world-changing, beautiful kids.



Sandy Hogg

I currently serve Jesus as a Corps Officer at Taree Corps in NSW, in Biripi Country. I'm blessed with a wonderful husband and daughter, and 3 pets who keep us on our toes! Coffee, chocolate and music make me happy, and I love putting words together in poetry. In over 20 years of officership, I have learned that Jesus is faithful, he can be trusted, and his love and grace really are amazing!

It will always be You, Jesus.
Nothing else matters.
Nothing in this world will do.
Jesus, You're the center
Everything revolves around You.'

As I said, it is not easy to keep it that way, which highlights the absolute importance and discipline of daily prayer and daily time with God. For me that's at the beginning of the day when I ask Jesus to be the center of it all. As I reflect and think about this, I find myself in many different locations praying that prayer: Australia, United Kingdom, Papua New Guinea and other countries when we were serving, visiting, leading and teaching.

Another verse of the song goes on to say, 'Jesus be the center of your Church.' If I could personalise that, I would express it as 'Jesus be the center of The Salvation Army.' But that must begin with Jesus at the center of my life.

Reflection Questions

- » How do I handle side-tracks in my life and ministry?
- » What will my life and service look like if Jesus really is the center of it all?

Song

Jesus At The Center | Israel and New Breed
© 2011 Integrity's Praise! Music
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cF8lfktCgqk>

Loved by Him Part 1

Sandy MacDonald

EL ROI

I was seen warm covered in blood writhing wriggling emerging into the world anticipated expected loved

I was seen smiling dancing in the sunlight playing skipping laughing enjoying the world innocent childlike carefree

I was seen useful willing to serve harvesting cooking homemaking handmaid's duty fulfilled needed used abused

I was seen fertile belly growing round expectant pregnant quickening jealous sister wife despised rejected abandoned

Seen by human eyes

Seen for what I could provide

Seen for my body but not my heart

I was seen shivering beside desert spring defeated despised suffering ready to die deserted forsaken Hagar

I was seen weeping heart beating double vulnerable fragile exposed the world stops I am noticed affirmed loved

Seen not by human eyes

Seen by God

Seen by El

Seen for the first time

Truly seen

Truly known

Truly loved

No longer invisible

No longer ashamed



Steven Haworth

I am currently serving as the Area Officer for Tasmania South and The East Coast of Tasmania.

I have also recently taken on the role of Chaplain to the Homelessness Stream.

I have been serving in Tasmania for the last three and a half years. During that time I have also held the roles of Officer Recruitment and Corps Officer to Kingborough-Huon Corps.

I love hiking and photography and am able to combine these two loves in the beautiful State of Tasmania. My wife Kim is the Divisional Commander of Tasmania and we have three children: Jayden, Stacey and Bryce.



Henry Roehrig

I am currently serving The Salvation Army as a Corps Officer to Inverell/Glen Innes Corps in NSW/ACT Division. I am humbled that I get to reveal portions of God to people in the community.

I believe the Gospel is for all. I love video gaming and table-top gaming with my young family.

**Sarah Healey**

I am a creatively curious Jesus follower from NZ. I am currently serving as a Captain with The Salvation Army at Adelaide Congress Hall/City Salvos alongside my husband Shane. I love what I do and who I do it with, and I have a passion to learn and inspire others to be more like Jesus.

**Louise Mathieson**

I live, play and work on the traditional lands of the Turrbal and Yuggera peoples, in Meanjin (Brisbane). My current role is as Worship Arts Coordinator for Queensland, and I serve in my home church, North Brisbane Salvos on the preaching and music teams.

I love Jesus, coffee, my husband Shelden and my crazy cat Jemima. I am also passionate about music, words and stories in all combinations, and have recently embarked on Writing and Literature studies.

No longer forsaken

El Roi

*The God who sees
Is the God who hears
The God who sees
Is the God who sees me
The God who hears
is the God who hears me
I was seen
I am seen*

I was challenged by Hagar's story in Genesis 16. Names in the Hebrew Bible hold so much weight, so much significance. Hagar's own name means forsaken. Out of this experience at the lowest point in her life she named God as the God who sees and later named her son Ishmael, the God who hears. She went from a life of not being seen or heard, to this radical awareness of being seen and heard by God. She was no longer forsaken. This seeing, hearing God is a God of love. God is love.

How many people feel invisible in our world today? How many feel abandoned, forsaken, unloved? Maybe your own story has had moments or seasons like this? Perhaps your response to God's lavish and steadfast love is to write your own stanza of what it was like to be seen by God, known and loved for the first time?

If God calls you beloved, can you allow yourself to be loved at your most vulnerable?

Loved by Him Part 2

Earle Ivers

A young man, full of ambition and self-motivated satisfaction stood before him with questions and expectations consuming his mind. An impressive resume is shared.

Surely, this will be the key to acceptance! Surely, this is the moment where all of the achievement soaked in dutiful compliance receives the praise, applause and affirmation it “rightly” deserved.

Jesus simply stood and listened! ***‘Jesus looked at him and loved him!’*** He looked beyond the façade of performance and achievement. He centered on the heart and he called the young man to let go of the false hope that had become a stronghold within him. Regrettably, the encounter doesn’t have the ‘fairy tale ending’ we might expect since, as we know, the young man went away sad. For him, the cost was too great.

Yet, a foundational principle emerges. ***‘Jesus looked at him and loved him!’*** What a powerful example this is for the follower seeking to live a life centered in the love that has won us and now compels us (2 Cor 5:14).

Jesus, ‘Love displayed in flesh and bones’, meets us where we are and how we are. He sees us through the lens of love and compassion and gets to the heart of the matter. He speaks a sometimes uncomfortable truth in love and he calls us to do the same. But, above all, his love remains constant.

It is love at the center and from here all else flows.

The challenge for us, then, is that we might look beyond our human prejudices, disappointments, past experiences and apprehensions



Kathleen Johansson

I was born, raised and commissioned as an officer in Australia but have since also served in Sweden and most recently Bulgaria, where my Swedish husband and I were the first officers to open fire in 2020. My motto is “the World for God!” with a special heart for the Balkan part of Europe, where I dream of seeing The Salvation Army fighting in all the countries of the region.



Margaret MacDonald

I have been an officer for more than 46 years working with The Salvation Army and Rotary Path of Hope to break the cycle of Family and Domestic Violence. I am a recipient of the John Garland AM Meritorious Service Award.

I have been a trainer of the Positive Lifestyle Program© and provide pastoral supervision.

**Debbie Serojales**

I have served in Corps, Divisional, Social and Territorial roles during my 25 years of Officership. I had the privilege to be appointed to the Philippine Territory for eight years, where I was responsible for Joyville Children's Home for six years and spent two years as Public Relations and Literary Secretary. I am currently appointed to the Sunraysia Corps in Mildura, together with my husband Major Rod and two daughters, Shaella and Amaya.

**Alison Templar**

I am a Corps Officer at Brunswick Salvos, which is on Wurundjeri Country. Before becoming a Salvo, I was a high school teacher for over twenty years, a career in which I learned to use my "teacher voice" to get students much taller than me to listen and follow my instructions. This is a skill I still use on occasion.

and see things with a different set of filters. It is a call to simply look through the lens of love, no matter the situation and circumstance, no matter the 'who, what or where'. When our hearts are grounded in his love, our outlook is shaped, and our expectation takes on a whole new perspective.

'Jesus looked at him and loved him' and he calls us to do the same.

It may not be easy, and as clearly demonstrated in the encounter found in Mark 10, the outcome may not always be what we pray for. Yet, we love 'beyond and because'. We love with a love placed deep within us and we continue to love because we know, that in the end, love breaks through.

Who will you see and who will you love with the love of Jesus today?

Reflection Questions

- » In choosing to look through the lens of love, will you pause a moment to see that this is the way that Jesus sees you? **'Jesus looked at him and loved him'...** and he looks at and loves you too, no matter 'who, what or where'! What will be your response to Jesus? (Don't go away sad!)
- » Ephesians 5:2 calls us to... **walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.** What might this mean for you today in the outworking of the love that is found deep within you?

Song

Jesus be the Center | Darlene Zschech

© [Merlin] Absolute Label Services

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D8HOOFTXmIq>

Grounded in Him

Judy Shaw

Mark 1:11 says: 'And a voice from heaven said, 'You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy' (New Living Translation).

Can you picture yourself in this scene and hearing God saying this about you? Is it easy to imagine or does it seem like a bit of a stretch? I have to admit that there are times my own response has been 'Really? Me?' Often this will be because there are other voices competing with His. Know the feeling?

In Chapter 4 of Steve Brown's 'Jesus Centered', we are invited to fill in the blank of the statement: 'I'm not ____ enough.' It didn't take me long to come up with a list of things. How about you? There are plenty of examples in the Bible of people who were able to tell God what they weren't, like Moses and Jonah. It can be easy to compare ourselves to others but it can be tough when we feel that the comparison is coming from others. When they feel (and let us know) that we're not measuring up.

Lauren Daigle sings a great song, 'You say.' Here is a great line from it:

*'The only thing that matters now is everything You think of me
In You I find my worth, in You I find my identity.'*

It's so easy to get caught up in what other people think and say and their expectations, so much so that we can lose sight of who and what God says we are.

So much of our self-esteem comes from various aspects of our lives, but when we entered into a relationship with Christ that old life was finished and a new one began. Colossians 3:3 talks about us being 'hidden in



Norm Beckett

I recently retired as a Salvation Army Officer having served 44 years in Australia as well as in Latvia and Taiwan.

I attend Canberra City Salvos. Here I enjoy journeying with those who are in recovery from brokenness caused from a variety of circumstances. It is exciting to see change and transformation in their lives as their faith develops.

My interests are reading theology and biography and working for Salvos Funerals.

(note the uniform has the Latvian insignia on the lapels – P = pestīšanas (salvation))



Crystal Lee

Kaya. I am the Corps Officer Team Member in Western Australia at The Salvation Army Mandurah Corps. This is my first year of Officership, and it has been such a remarkable journey. I am excited to continue seeing and joining God's mission of transforming lives with the love of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Earle Ivers**

I have been an Officer for more than 30 years, serving in Corps and Divisional Leadership roles in Australia and New Zealand. I have also engaged in numerous short term mission and guest speaker opportunities in countries including The Philippines, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and The Solomon Islands.

My love for his family, music/creative arts, wood-work and cycling continues to shape, satisfy and bless me abundantly.

**Judy Shaw**

I'm the Team Leader at the Unley Corps in Adelaide, SA. This is my fourteenth year as a Corps Officer and I love the diversity that being a CO offers and that every day can be completely different from the one before.

I love leading worship and my passion in ministry is to walk alongside of people and help them to see their value because of what Jesus has done.

Christ with God.' We are safe with God, and just as God loves the Son, God loves us.

This should be life transforming.

Steve Brown reminds us: 'Jesus knew that the truest thing about him, was what the Father said about him.' Oh that we would do this too firstly for ourselves but also for others!

Reflection Questions

- » What's the hardest thing to accept about who God says you are?
- » Who can you build up?

Songs

You Say | Lauren Daigle
CCLI 7071357

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=slaT8Jl2zpl>

Voice of Truth | Casting Crowns

© 2003 Be Essential Songs (BMI)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cKm_mYVPQE

Think Like Him

Norm Beckett

The 'faith community' that I belong to has a particular focus – a ministry to those who are experiencing brokenness through addictions or life's circumstances. We often speak in terms of 'doing the next right thing' to those who come into our embrace. Just to 'do the next right thing' is a real battle of the mind – sometimes a moment by moment conquering. To be able to 'do the next right thing' that does not lead to regret or revenge is about being able to 'think rightly'.

Steve Brown in his book 'Jesus Centered' draws attention to Dallas Willard's notion of 'thinking well', which is not only the need of those who are broken, but is also the need of all believers who desire to 'do the next right thing'. We all know the moment when that challenge comes and may lead to regret.

Paul writes, 'Make each thought captive to Christ' (2 Corinthians 10:5). The Passion Translation offers, 'We capture, like prisoners of war, every thought, and insist that it bow in obedience to the Anointed One'. The believer is to hold captive 'faulty patterns of thought'. The image calls us to review our faulty thinking. It is our responsibility to 'capture' each unhelpful thought that leads to unwanted consequences.

As we capture each thought, Jesus by his Spirit does the work of renewing our minds. I like how the Passion Translation says, 'but be inwardly transformed by the Holy Spirit through a total reformation of how you think' (Romans 12:1).



James Condon

I have been an Officer of The Salvation Army for more than 50 years, and in retirement I am involved in the Caloundra Corps as Pastoral Care Director and leader of Just Men and the House of Prayer.

I have served in a variety of leadership roles in three countries: Australia, Papua New Guinea and the United Kingdom.

I was a Corps officer, served in Public Relations, Administrative roles, Church Growth Consultant and was a Field Training Officer at the college.



Sandy MacDonald

I have been a Salvation Army Officer for 20 years, serving in corps appointments in remote, regional, rural, suburban and city settings as well as several years with a dedicated focus on youth and children. My current appointment is as the First Five Years of Officership and Auxiliary Lieutenant Development Coordinator. Along with my husband Nigel and teenagers Jordan and Jorja, I enjoy travel and I'm looking forward to ticking the final Disney park off my list!

**Peter McGuigan**

I describe myself as a 'communicator and collaborator for a better world'. I have written a substantive body of opinion and feature articles, and books on leadership, mission and spirituality. I delivered award-winning journalism across several editorships and have led large and small teams in both communications and front-line mission work as a Salvation Army officer, including internationally.

I have served as President of the Australasian Religious Press Association and Chair of The Salvation Army's Moral and Social Issues Council. I have a Master of Arts (Writing).

My latest book is titled: A New Day: Writing During the Pandemic on Relationships, Responsibility and Spiritual Renewal.

**Brad Watson**

I am a Salvo officer currently serving as national Head of Community Engagement programs. Growing up with the Salvos, I spent a few years in the Victorian Public Service before starting full time ministry. I spent 15 years as a corps officer, some time in youth work and public relations and have had side hustles as an Army Chaplain and International Emergency Services team leader. I am dad to Zoe and Dominic and I live in Hobart.

A Prayer

*'O that in me the mind of Christ
A fixed abiding place may find.'*

The Salvation Army Songbook 2015 #617

Reflection Questions

- » Recall a time when you did not 'think rightly'. What was the outcome?
- » How does Paul's exhortation to capture each thought challenge you in your daily life?

Song

Holy Spirit, Living Breath of God | Stuart Townend

© 2009 Integrity Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eia7Hs6jSMg>

Serve Like Him

Crystal Lee

In the reality TV Show MasterChef, contestants are often required to participate in service challenges, where they cook and serve a three-course meal to others. Serving food to someone is one of the many definitions of the verb 'serve.' According to the Oxford Dictionary, 'serve' also means 'to perform duties or services for another person or an organisation.' All of these definitions indicate that there are those who do the serving and those who are being served. Human nature automatically dictates that those who are being served are the ones with privileges, status, and power, while those who serve are lowly and insignificant.

Yet Jesus came down to earth and chose to live and serve radically differently. Philippians 2:6-8 readdresses the definition and illustrates Jesus' example of true servanthood. As the Son of God, Jesus chose to become a helpless baby. As the King of Kings, the only One worthy of worship, Jesus chose to be on his knees, serving by washing others' dirty feet. Jesus is the sustainer of life, yet he chose to experience hunger, exhaustion, and deep sorrow. As the all-powerful and sinless One, Jesus still chose to submit to the soldiers, and bear the sins and evil of all time on the cross. Jesus demonstrated to his followers that servanthood isn't about a position, rather a heart posture. The heart posture of humility.

In a world that encourages self-promoting and self-efficiency, Jesus set and lived out a revolutionary cultural-counter way. Jesus calls his followers 'to not be proud, instead to humble ourselves' (1 Peter 5:5-6). Humility is never gained by seeking it. Rather than placing ourselves at the throne of our hearts, may we be the people of God who acknowledge and exalt God in his proper place, flowing from a healthy

the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing' (John 15:5).

Reflection Questions

- » How do we experience God?
- » Where am I in my relationship with God?
- » Of all that God has said to you over these 22 days of prayer, what are the priorities you will pursue over the next couple of months?

Song

Jesus At The Center | Israel and New Breed

© 2011 Integrity's Praise! Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cF8lfktCgqk>

Activity

- » Make contact with a friend and ask them to be your accountability partner for the priorities you have set and share your spiritual walk with.

Conclusion of Jesus Centered

Janine and Robert Donaldson

Janine: Being 'Jesus Centered' means living a life that is focused on him. In our distracted world it's easy to focus on other things, maybe our work, our family, our goals. This is not wrong in itself, but sometimes when our focus is away from Jesus, it distracts us from Jesus. The human heart is designed for worship, and if it does not worship God, it will worship something else.

Following Jesus is a daily commitment we must choose. Cultivating a Jesus centered life takes time and effort. The Holy Spirit helps us, guides us, and leads us as we spend time in prayer, reading his word and growing. When we understand that we are free in Jesus, we live differently.

I believe Jesus wants you to encounter his love, to know his will, to hear his voice to know his purpose for your life. A Jesus centered life starts and deepens by his invitation. He loves you. He's inviting you to experience him. He's inviting you to live a 'Jesus Centered Life'.

Robert: In the conclusion of 'Jesus Centered' (p173-5), Steve Brown refers to Apple's 'Think Different' advertising campaign. It starts, 'Here's to the crazy ones,' and ends, 'Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do.'

I am one of the crazy ones! Are you? Not because I can do much, but because God planted his image in me, redeemed me, pursues and grows me by the Holy Spirit, positions me to serve a community, and surrounds me with other followers of Jesus to share the journey. God's abundant, extravagant, amazing love and grace does and will change the world. We have the most incredible invitation to be part of that as we live Jesus Centered lives. Jesus put it this way, 'I am the vine; you are

reverence of God. May we be the people of God who are opened to being stretched out of our comfort zones, so that we may submit ourselves and experience a greater dependence on Christ. Let's be the people of God who not only extend our help like the Good Samaritan, but are also not afraid to ask for and receive help. Whatever our status, pedigree, or skills, let's be the people of God who follow Jesus' example and serve with humility like Christ.

Reflection Questions

- » How much are you in awe of who God is and what he has done? How do you think this relates to your level of humility?
- » When and where does pride most often manifest itself in you? Why?
- » What helps and hinders you in acting like the Good Samaritan?

Songs

In Need | Praise and Harmony

© 1996 by Ross King

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smm1cFRjz3I>

As The Deer | Steffany Gretzinger

© 1984 by Martin J. Nystrom

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LthkibTzuj8>

Lord I Need You | Matt Maher

© 2013 Provident Label Group LLC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LuvfMDhTyMA&t=2s>

Respond Like Him Part 1

Debbie Serojales

*'Here on earth you will have many troubles.
But take heart, because I have overcome the world.'*
John 16:33 (NLT)

She walked with silent trepidation, her grip tightening to her mother's hand as they entered the gates of the Children's Home just a few hours outside of Manila. The young girl was afraid and filled with nerves due to her uncertainty about having to live away from her family, yet she also knew that this was her one opportunity for an education and a way to stop the cycle of poverty that had captured them for generations. Even with her fear, she knew that this would change her life for the better. She could have fought this, but she let go of the hand encasing her own and stepped forward... she chose courage!

I watched this happen time and time again when I served at Joyville Children's Home in the Philippines. Every time young people arrived it was with great hesitation, but also an inner strength as they knew that this was the best place for them to gain a brighter future.

What about you? Have you ever done something that made you nervous or scared, but you did it anyway? Sometimes we have to take courageous steps forward because there is the possibility for something greater up ahead.

Every day we can learn from the 'rocks' we trip over on the path, the 'mountains' we have to climb and the 'rapids' we pull ourselves through to get to our destination. We might be bruised, soaking and tired... but we will have achieved what we set out to do, learnt so much about ourselves along the way and maybe what we could do differently next time.

Often, I look at the problems that plague my local community; loneliness, homelessness, unemployment, and I am overwhelmed at where to even begin in seeking and saving the lost. Maybe it's time we all started with prayer. Maybe it's time to devote ourselves to prayer and actually pray for individual salvation.

Reflection Questions

- » How can you partner with God's mission and pray for others in your family, your local setting and the world?
- » When have you recently prayed for others?

Song

For the One | Bethel Music
© 2016 Bethel Music Publishing (ASCAP)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_bj6mjUj7k

Activity

- » Spend some time praying for others today; read the news, make a list or pray for those you interact with throughout the day.

Pray for Others to Follow Him

Adele Masters

The gospel writers continually present the importance that Jesus placed on prayer. Jesus was continually seeking solitude and communion with God, 'in the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed' (Mark 1:35 NRSV). Paul's letters to the early Christian churches also highlight the significance of prayer, as expressed in Ephesians 6:18-20; Colossians 4:2-6; James 5:13-18 and many more. Paul understood how powerful prayer is when partnering in God's mission, writing 'the prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective' (James 5:16b NRSV).

Many treat prayer as the preparation for the real mission, the stretching before exercising, the preparation of paints before painting, the warmups before playing an instrument. What if we treated prayer like the exercise, the painting or the music making? What if we remembered that prayer is the real mission? Paul often mentions how he is praying for the early church and then he asks for prayer as he continues on his mission. Paul emphasises this specifically asking in Colossians to 'devote yourselves to prayer' (4:2a NRSV). Imagine how our lives would be if we were devoted to prayer and devoted to praying for others? Pastor and author Adele Ahlberg Calhoun reminds us that prayer shifts our focus and allows us to move out of our personal concerns and out of our world.

Prayer is foundational to God's mission. The emphasis that Jesus placed on prayer before the start of the day and before he journeyed to the cross reminds us of this. Luke 19:10 says, 'for the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.' If we are to join the mission in seeking and saving the lost, prayer for the lost must become a priority.

Jesus was born a human child, he lived life on earth and faced challenges that caused great anguish and pain. Yet, he overcame. He responded with boldness and strength, always relying on his Father God. In John 16:33 Jesus says, '*you WILL have trouble, but take heart...*', basically he is telling us that life is going to be hard, he knows how we are feeling and he is encouraging us to not give up and to lean into him and feel HIS hand encasing ours as we step forward, as we choose courage.

Following Jesus can be the most joyful experience, yet it won't always be easy as we will need spiritual courage to '*choose to follow Jesus even if our knees are knocking!*' Courage is a choice, '*not the absence of fear, but pressing on in spite of it.*'

Reflection Questions

- » What have you learned to do differently during your last challenging life experience?
- » What are you in need of today from Jesus? Listen to the song 'In Need' and write in your journal, create with some clay or contemplate what you need more of to help you in your current life situation.

Song

In Need | Praise and Harmony

© 1996 by Ross King

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smm1cFRjz3I>

Respond Like Him Part 2

Alison Templar

‘Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you.’

The psalm makes it sound so simple, and yet it can be so hard. The needs of our community are relentless, and some days it feels like we are being asked to pour from an empty jug. I am familiar with fatigue – going home tired can be good on those days when I feel like I’ve achieved something. Compassion fatigue is something altogether different though. The challenge of listening and responding to stories of hardship and injustice over and over again without becoming jaded or overwhelmed is real. Emotional and spiritual exhaustion need much more than a good night’s sleep to overcome.

Even Jesus felt the need to take the disciples to a quiet place to rest (Mark 6:31). Sadly the rest they so desperately needed was not to be – they were followed by the crowd and ended up feeding the 5000 that day. How many times have I planned a quiet afternoon, only to have people in need arrive and wondered “Is this how Jesus felt?”

So, what are we to do in the face of unrelenting needs? That empty jug has to be filled. However great the need of our communities, our need to find that quiet place, to be still and allow Jesus to sustain us, is equally great. Our call is to work with Jesus, and that means choosing to allow him to work with us.

I have often been drawn to the beach when my life has felt overwhelming. The relentless motion of the waves somehow balances the relentless demands in my life. Sitting on the sand, I watch the waves break on the shore and then recede back to the sea. Over and over again. In that place I can cast my eyes on Jesus and clear my head enough to hear what he has to say to me.

bridge for the gospel to reach others.

Ultimately, we tell our stories through the way we live. ‘People need to see the gospel in you before they hear the gospel from you.’ What better way for people to see the gospel than for us to be living books, actively working and sharing with one another?

Reflection Questions

- » What stories/testimonies have you heard that hold meaning for you?
- » Who do you know who lives their life in such a way that it encourages you to follow Jesus?

Song

My Story | Big Daddy Weave

© Word Entertainment LLC

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1TKAN-nAsu8>

Activity

- » Do you know your story? Spend some time considering what difference encountering God has made to your life.

Build Bridges to Him Part 2

Lauren Kirkham

As a child, I remember sitting amongst the church congregation of a Sunday. And on most Sundays there would be an opportunity for people to share how God had been at work in their lives during the week.

Some people would be joyful; others would cry, telling of their struggles; and sure, some would even waffle on. Every Sunday, without a doubt however, from within someone's story there would be a little nugget of God's love that would stir my heart and go home with me.

Then, as I grew, I started to attend camps where I would hear stories from others about how God had not just been at work in their week, but how God had changed their lives. Their stories inspired me because I saw that God was truly at work in the world and if God could transform them, perhaps he could do the same for me.

It's no coincidence that Jesus taught through story. Parable after parable (e.g., Luke 15:3-32), he ultimately tells stories that meaningfully connect us to God's great love story for us and how we can encounter God at work in the world through the way we respond to others.

Many times I've doubted my own story. Thinking it wasn't big enough, important enough or dramatic enough to transform the lives of the people around me. However, my story is human and in a deeply vulnerable way, when I share my faith struggles and victories with others, something remarkable happens: connection.

People relate to stories. Story is engrained in every living and past culture. Enveloped in every story is something that any soul can identify with; whether it be doubts, questions, feelings or needs. When we share story with one another, we cultivate meaningful connection and build a

The last time I went to the beach, I brought home a rock that I had picked up on the sand. Now, when I can't get to a beach, I hold the rock and close my eyes. It allows me to stop for just a minute, picture the waves and hear them breaking on the shore, and reminds me that I need to rest, physically, emotionally and spiritually. It reminds me that Jesus will sustain me, if I choose to invite him.

Reflection Questions

- » Is there a quiet place that you are drawn to when you feel the need to rest?
- » How do you invite Jesus to sustain you?

Song

Be Still For The Presence Of The Lord | David J. Evans
© 1986 Thankyou Music
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZugvUQ4m9OU>

Activity

- » Close your eyes, slow your breathing and imagine your quiet place for one minute. Let all your senses experience it – what it looks like, sounds like, smells like, tastes like and feels like. Let it sustain you.

Pursue Holiness like Him Part 1

Kathleen Johansson

When you go to the cinema, do you like to get there in time to watch the previews?

If you're scrolling on the TV looking for something to watch, do you click on 'watch preview' first to get an idea of what you're getting yourself into?

For me, it's a big yes!

I'm going to suggest that holiness is like a movie preview – the 'now, but not yet' of God's kingdom.

Holiness is not only the core of God's character (Chapter 8 of 'Jesus Centered' by Steve Brown), it is also the core of God's redemptive plan for the whole of creation. Our being holy, as God is holy, matters – and not just for our own sakes.

Our holiness, the fruits of the spirit in us, becoming more and more like Jesus, is in direct opposition to the spirits and powers of this world. Our holiness is a piece of God's kingdom. Our holiness is light in darkness. Our holiness is leading others to Christ. We're not striving after holiness so that we can get a better seat in heaven, we're striving after holiness because it is an essential part of the Kingdom of God coming to earth.

So, in a way, us living a holy life, is a 'foretaste of glory divine' – a preview if you will! We start to see God's kingdom growing and forming around us and creation being redeemed. God's kingdom has come, and is still coming, all at the same time.

Surrendering your life to God, persistently following the leading of the Holy Spirit, resisting temptation, pursuing righteousness, being obedient

because he had safely and respectfully shared space and water with the woman. I don't believe it's a coincidence that the woman's spiritual transformation occurred when she experienced radical acceptance. I wish my Sunday School had taught me that.

Reflection Questions

- » Am I part of an inclusive community in which I offer such compassion and kindness that people are transformed by the very presence of Christ in me?
- » Do people experience such grace in my spiritual community that in their excitement to tell others of what they have seen and heard they 'leave behind their water jugs'?

Song

Let Us Be Known By Our Love | Liturgical Folk

© 2018 The Anglican Mission

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p2g7Vd3TBc>

Build Bridges to Him Part 1

Amanda Lennestaal

In my childhood, I attended Sunday School and sometimes the story of the “Samaritan Woman at the Well” was taught. I learned that the woman was the worst of sinners, but despite that, God loved EVEN her. I had no understanding that there was such beauty and grace present in this story, the antithesis of the judgement of sin I’d picked up. I didn’t learn to perceive the humble and authentic humanity present in Jesus who was tired and thirsty, sitting by the well in the heat of the day. I had no understanding that Jesus was showing us how to include rather than find reasons to exclude people from the kingdom of God.

I love that we see how Jesus doesn’t shy away from tough questions. He asks the woman directly about her husband and she answers that she has none. Instead of shaming her, Jesus acknowledged that she had had five husbands and was together with another man. He didn’t try to unpack this further, pathologise it or condemn her, but rather honours her honesty. The conversation must have been an incredibly safe and sacred space as it led to her profound revelation that Jesus was the Messiah. Her exuberance and liberation were so visceral that in her haste to run and tell others, she left behind her water jug.

We don’t see Jesus in this story as a triumphalist who drove a fancy car, listening to a leadership podcast as he asks the woman to fill in a card for church membership. Rather the woman’s gifts were present as she met Jesus’ request for water. This simple act led way to a conversation that changed her life. Her testimony of revelation led to Samaritans inviting Jesus to come and stay with them, which he did.

Lives were transformed because in authenticity Jesus acknowledged his thirst. He was offered hospitality in the Samaritan community

to God’s will and becoming more like Jesus is all a part of it. But good news; this isn’t an obligation – it’s a gift! You get to be a part of God’s redeeming plan. You get to be filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit. You, and your fellow Christians, get to be a preview to the world of the coming fullness of the Kingdom.

The reality of the fullness of God’s Kingdom is nothing that any of us can really imagine. What holiness can accomplish in this life is nothing compared to the full glory of God in God’s Kingdom. But ‘without holiness, no one will see the Lord’ (Hebrews 12:14), so we should at least watch the preview!

Reflection Questions

- » Do you like to watch the previews? Do you understand the parallel here?
- » Is your life a good preview for the Kingdom of God? If someone watched your life, would they get a good idea about what the Kingdom of God is like?

Song

*‘Blesséd assurance, Jesus is mine;
O what a foretaste of Glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.’*

Blessed Assurance | Fanny Crosby, Phoebe Knapp
The Salvation Army Songbook 2015 #455
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=56dfbGT7K3o>

Pursue Holiness like Him Part 2

Margaret MacDonald

As a seven year old I wanted to take my china doll for a walk in her pram. Our house was second to the top of a hill and I walked steadily up, proudly pushing my dolly. I topped the hill and began the descent on the other side. Just at the top of the slope, a dog lunged at me and in fright I let go of the pram. It started slowly going downhill but rapidly gained momentum. Soon it was careering out of control under the power of gravity and at the bottom of the hill it rolled over several times and my doll fell out. My little legs raced down the hill to survey the fragments of my lovely doll scattered on the ground.

Sin is like gravity. Once we let it have any sway we quickly lose control.

David wrote in Psalm 73:2-3, 'But as for me... my feet were slipping and almost gone... for I was envious of the wicked!' The beginning of the slide is subtle and David recognised it quickly and repented.

The antidote is Jesus. He has a stronger magnetism than sin. As we turn our face to Jesus, he draws us closer to himself. We actively have to organise time with Jesus otherwise pressures of life will crowd him out. The key is time with his word and time alone with him to enjoy God's presence.

I let go of the pram – no effort there, but there is effort needed to live close to Jesus. We have to chase him, pursue him with all our being.

Then 'we are being changed to become more like him so that we have more and more glory. And this glory comes from the Lord, who is the Holy Spirit' (2 Cor 3:18).

Holiness is our calling, so let's pursue it with all we have: 'looking to

How do we do that? By seeking him and his ways in our day-to-day lives, by learning from him through his word and his people, and by talking to him often in dedicated prayer times and in moment-by-moment prayers throughout the day.

The closer we draw to Jesus, the more he fills us with his grace and love which flows through us and draws others to him. We become magnets for Jesus.

I don't know about you, but that's the kind of magnet I want to be.

Reflection Questions

- » Who do you know that you would describe as a magnet for Jesus? How do they attract people to Jesus?
- » What is it about Jesus that draws you to him?

Songs

For the One | Brian and Jenn Johnson

© 2016 Bethel Music Publishing

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_bj6mjUj7k

Draw Me Close To You | Michael W Smith

© 2001 Reunion Records Inc.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7d_oYr-P16M

Activity

- » Spend a few moments writing a list of things about God that draw you to him.
- » Pause to tell God what's on your list and give thanks to him.
- » Ask God for the opportunity to tell another person about something on your list.

Point the Lost to Him Part 2

Sandy Hogg

'We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.' 2 Corinthians 5:20

What kind of magnet are you?

Magnets are interesting. On their own, they don't look like much, but they have an invisible power – a power or force that draws other magnets or magnetic materials towards them.

Magnets are handy – I wonder how many magnets are on your fridge? Do you have a favourite?

Magnets are versatile. Not only are they used to hold important documents on our fridge or filing cabinet, but they are used in all sorts of important machines and appliances – earphones, cars, medical equipment and so many more.

Magnets have many positives, but get on the wrong side of them and it's a different story. Instead of drawing metallic objects in, the negative side pushes them away. No matter how much you try, you cannot make two negative sides of magnets draw together. In fact, you can feel the magnetic forces pushing against each other.

So I ask again, what kind of magnet are you? Are you a magnet that draws people to Jesus, or one that does the opposite?

In 2 Corinthians 5:20, Paul is imploring the reader, on Christ's behalf, to be reconciled to God. The idea of being reconciled to God reminds me of being drawn to God like a magnet. What better way to be Jesus centered than to stick to him like a magnet?

Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith' (Hebrews 12:2).

You come to me in my quiet place
When I look for you, you're there.
You show your love in every way
In my life, in my home, in my everyday
And I love you Lord. Amen.

Reflection Questions

- » When have I found myself slipping? What brought me back?
- » Prayer and Bible reading are the keys to being in his presence. How often do you do this?
- » How do I ensure time alone with Jesus?

Song

The Power of Your Love | Geoff Bullock
The Salvation Army Songbook 2015 #601
Tune 868
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWIYQdICwu4>

Activity

- » Light a candle and sit quietly looking at it. Allow the Light of Life to draw near to you. Enjoy the Presence of Jesus.

Find Rhythms like Him Part 1

Sarah Healey

Pause for a second.

Take a deep breath, then breathe completely out.

Hold it... hold it... hold it... keep holding... holding... hold for as long as you can. Your whole body soon cries out for relief. That relief only comes when you breathe in again.

Now take a good deep breath in. Instantly your body relieves all the tension it has built up. Yet in a brief flash your body cries out to breathe out again. The cycle must continue in order for you to function, to live. Too fast or too slow and your whole body suffers. And unless you are an Olympic-level deep sea diver, this needs to be a regular rhythm.

Jesus spent much time doing big things – preaching to crowds, surrounded by listeners, healing, teaching, being challenged and challenging back, breathing out. Yet he knew that in order to sustain, be prepared and stay focussed for this he must spend time pausing and breathing in. He spent so much time in quiet prayer with his Father before and after many of the events of our scriptures. Also, don't forget the unwritten spaces between these events; when the Bible says they journeyed somewhere, remember this was logistically a good distance and few days of walking. During this time he chatted with the disciples, debriefing, laughing, having a meal, discussing the scriptures and spending times with his mates. Jesus didn't just equally balance all the expectations and demands on him. He instead had a healthy rhythm of 'on' and 'off' times. Times when he shared outwards with and for others, preceded and followed by the equally important and treasured times when he breathed in, refreshing and filling his soul tank with his Father.

passion or urgency to do something *about* it.

While looking frantically in the museum, we had incredible urgency, fierce focus and a deep passion to find our missing two-year-old. Our own limitations no longer mattered – *only our child*.

We are convinced that God has a gut-wrenching yearning for the lost to be found. God chooses to partner with us, as his hands and feet, to reach a world that desperately needs a Saviour.

Reflection Questions

- » What did it take for you to move from *lost* to *found* in Jesus?
- » Who did God use as his seekers... and how did they point you to God?
- » Can you pray for God to overcome any limitations in your life as you choose to also point others to Him?
- » Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal specific family, friends, colleagues and contacts, that He is desperate to reach through you.

Song

The Lost are Found | Hillsong Worship

© 2010 Hillsong Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywdaLbjGaQ>

Point the Lost to Him Part 1

Jo and Peter Brookshaw

Have you ever been to a museum, lost in wonder as you view an impressively huge dinosaur and discover you've completely lost track of a family member? Nope, not even that... imagine it's *your* child, they are *literally* nowhere to be seen and *you* lost them! Well let us tell you, it makes for a memorable day out. It's one of the most stressful adrenaline rushes you'll ever experience. As your heart begins pumping a million miles an hour, you run around in circles, anxious and upset, asking security guards, museum workers, and anyone you can find, 'Have you seen my lost child?!!'

This frenetic energy to find them at all costs leads you to abandon all daydreaming, all plans – because *all* your focus is now completely committed to one task alone – the lost *must* be found!

Imagine now, living each day with the driving desire in your heart to do *all you could* to find someone who is lost. Imagine your passion to search for them, find them and point out to them *how to get to Jesus*.

The heartbeat of this mission is partnering with God to find and connect with people so that they too can experience fullness of life found in God's son. Jesus came, 'to seek and to save the lost' (Luke 19:10) and like the parable of the lost coin and the lost sheep (see Luke 15), we're called to do *all we can* to find that which is lost.

So why don't we? What's holding us back from intentionally, compassionately and boldly seeking to be a signpost for the lost?

We think we speak for most Christians saying that on the whole we understand, theologically, that we're called to 'reach the lost' and called to 'lead people to Christ', but can have limited vocabulary, confidence,

It's a rhythm, not a balance. Music without a rhythm that includes rests and pauses is just a whole lotta noise. You cannot do much on an empty tank, spiritual or otherwise. Jesus didn't juggle. He breathed.

Reflection Questions

- » When in your life have you felt like you're breathing out more than in? Have you tried to run on a spiritually empty tank? Looking back, how much time had you spent intentionally breathing in spiritually before this?
- » There are many ways to breathe in; most involve just spending time with the source of the very air you breathe. Prayer, journaling, reading, nature, good conversation and company, exercise, or just quiet listening. What have you tried? What could you intentionally give a go today?

Song

Be Still My Soul | Kari Jobe

© 2013 Sparrow Records.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mq59iE3MhXM>

Find Rhythms like Him Part 2

Louise Mathieson

Do you remember playing on seesaws? Teetertottering, bouncing skyward when playmates jumped on, crash landing when they jumped off? Did you ever hover boldly in the middle, struggling to keep both ends up?

Do you remember how difficult it was to stand still there?

Perfect balance is a myth. We're not designed to stay static, holding our breath lest life dip out of alignment somewhere. Instead, God has crafted us for **restorative life rhythms**. Yesterday's devotion explored these for spirit and body. Today, I invite you to consider the recharging and refocusing of your mind and energy.

While I'm no expert (I am wrestling life-long with this), slowly, I'm paying more attention to God's gentle prodding: *'What are you really accomplishing here?... This is not good! You're going to wear yourself out!'* (Exodus 18: 14-18 NLT). Unlike Moses, we might not have a tribe to share our workload. Like Moses, we can all re-evaluate our unhelpful default patterns.

I've learned three important lessons in seeking better rhythms. The first is practicing **proactivity**. If I don't take control of my calendar, someone else will. In work, ministry, and social time, the more intentional I am about defining (and maintaining) schedule boundaries, the less frenetic I feel. Proactivity helps me be present as my best self, in each moment.

Second, I'm learning the benefit of **margin**. Juliet Funt describes this as whitespace – time to 'think the unthink thought'. Again, I must intentionally build it into my day – a short processing space after

Think about the times people have helped draw you into the kingdom; what sort of things have they been doing? Yes, for some it might be an especially powerful church service or prayer meeting. For others it's going to be in seeking emergency relief, a meals program, a well-placed chaplain, or an addictions program. Or it might just be in consistent good friendship.

We are kingdom seekers. We are seeking the kingdom in places it might not yet be, in places that it might be hard to find. When we reveal the kingdom, we bring it with us into those spaces.

Reflection Questions

- » What has being a kingdom seeker meant in your life? Is it an inward or outward attitude?
- » What parts of your life are you using to reveal the kingdom to others? Are there other ways you could do this?

Song

Build Your Kingdom | First15 Worship ft. Emily Huffaker
© 2021 First15 Publishing (BMI)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lpzi9qoG4k>

Seek His Kingdom

Henry Roehrig

Are we seeking a kingdom?
The fabled land flowing with milk and honey?
A land of plenty and prosperity?
A land of security and safety?

Or are we seeking the kingdom of our Creator?
You may ask 'but surely God's kingdom provides the above too?'
I am not so sure it is the same thing.

Reading Matthew 6:33 in its context really drums home a point: do not worry about what is to come; the Creator will care for us and give us what we need. Today's worries alone are enough to deal with, so do not even begin with tomorrow's worries!

A passage like this really makes us stop to look at just what is being said. Jesus is telling us not to worry about our daily needs, but to place our energy in a more important area – God's kingdom.

Are you a kingdom seeker? I am. And I have found God's kingdom many times.

Most times I have found the kingdom because someone has had a hand in creating a space for it. As Christians talk about being like Jesus; this is what it is about. Jesus cares deeply for every person. In his mortal life, Jesus did not drag people off to temple to encounter God, he brought the kingdom to them. Today, it cannot just be about the examples of Jesus showing that people matter by being with them and healing them and teaching them; it's us showing that each single person matters through love, justice, and reconciliation.

meetings, five minutes to pray between tasks, having lunch away from my desk.

Third, I'm embracing **restorative recreation**. For me, it's stitching. Even a short time lets me decompress, with extra benefit in gradually creating something beautiful. You might be a gardener, a bushwalker, a photographer, a swimmer. James reminds us '*Everything good comes from God. Every perfect gift is from Him*' (James 1:17 ERV). Including these good gifts in my life is not a luxury. It's my thanks to God for giving them.

Will you join me today, inviting Jesus to teach us fresh restorative practices to renew mind and soul?

Reflection Questions

- » Where in life is it most challenging for you to proactively schedule your time?
- » If you had an uninterrupted hour to spend in a restorative activity (other than sleep), what would it be?

Songs

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind | John Greenleaf Whittier
The Salvation Army Songbook #456
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y47vEE1zbDE>

Every Good Gift | One: A Worship Collective
© 2013 Integrity's Praise! Music/BMI
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ncnz3M-wCnc>

Activity

- » Proactively plan 30 minutes in the next week to spend in a hobby, activity or experience that you enjoy, thanking Jesus for this good gift to refresh you.

Develop Like Him

Steven Haworth

For several years, I've contemplated taking up a writing course to help me communicate what I have to say more eloquently, but contemplating is not doing. A couple of weeks ago, I woke early, very early, and couldn't get back to sleep, so to make the best use of my time, I grabbed my phone and started scrolling through Facebook. I quickly came across the invitation to write a devotional for the National Prayer Focus. Having just finished reading Steve Brown's book, "Jesus Centered," I felt prompted in my spirit (with fear and trembling) to do something I'd never done before – to write a devotional that other people would read. Eeek!

In Steve Jobs' 2005 Stanford University Commencement Address he said, *'You can't connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards. So, you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future.'* This is a quote I have used many times and I could see the dots connecting going forward. Putting my trust in God's prompting, as he lines up the dots of my future, here I am putting keyboard to screen, taking the plunge, and seeing how God might use this opportunity to develop me for his kingdom. This just seems like the next right thing to do if I want to continue to grow into the person God is calling me to be. Which is a good segue into a quote by Dallas Willard that has encouraged me for many years.

When asked by John Ortberg, *'If a person wants to grow spiritually, where should they start?'* This was Dallas Willard's reply. *'Do the next right thing they know they ought to do, because that's what God wants you to do, when you try that you may wind up going to church, because you're going to need some help, and nothing will drive you into the kingdom of God like trying to do the next thing that is right and growing*

from that, because you will need help, and you will get it because that's where God is.'

Reflection Questions

- » What is the next right thing you ought to do, that will give God the opportunity to drive you further into his kingdom and to develop like him?
- » Is God prompting you to develop others to be more like him? Pray about who that might be.

Songs

Who You Say I am | Hillsong Worship

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKw6uqtGFfo>

Way Maker | Passion

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1kBvpS3z9Qo>

Activity

- » At the end of each day, write down three times you think you have felt prompted to try something that might take you out of your comfort zone. After one month, see if there is a common theme or themes and try doing the next right thing you ought to do to develop like God.