

# JESUS Centered

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

**Access all the resources here:**  
[mysalvos.org.au/NationalPrayerFocus2022](https://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](https://mysalvos.org.au/NationalPrayerFocus2022)

Join us from Sunday August 21 to Sunday September 11 for 22 nightly online prayer meetings. These will be 45 mins in total, featuring a variety of ways to pray, artists and ideas for being Jesus Centered, and involve times of group prayer. The meetings and associated artistic creations will be uploaded after each night.

### **Paperback 'Jesus Centered: Focusing on Jesus in a distracted world' by Steve Brown**

The Salvation Army Australia's National Prayer Focus 2022 is based on 'Jesus Centered: Focusing on Jesus in a distracted world' by Steve Brown. 'The Salvos Field Guide Devotional' does not require you to be familiar with the book, but if you would like to purchase a copy to continue your prayer journey, The Salvation Army Salvationist Supplies have copies available at a discounted rate while stocks last. Email [trade.melbourne@salvationarmy.org.au](mailto:trade.melbourne@salvationarmy.org.au) to order.

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.





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## Sermon outline

# National Prayer Focus Week 3

SUNDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2022

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**Theme:** *We can be Jesus-centered by developing our character to be like Christ.*

**Bible reading:** *John 1:35-51*

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### Introduction

Week Three of our journey of 'centering Jesus' in The Salvation Army Australia's National Prayer Focus. In *Jesus-centered*, Steve Brown describes his mentor, Evon and the impact Evon had on Steve's life.

*\*To begin your sermon, talk about a mentor who had (or continues to have) an impact on your life. If you have never had a mentor, talk about a Christian who has encouraged you in your faith and modelled for you what it means to be a disciple-maker.*

### Main point 1: Disciple-making is for every follower of Christ

One point that Steve emphasises in his book is that every follower of Christ is called to make and develop disciples, regardless of your job, title or role in life. It's not an optional extra that officers or soldiers do; God calls and equips every Christian to make disciples. A Thrift shop volunteer can be an effective disciple-maker. A teenager can be an effective disciple-maker. A retired person can be an effective disciple-maker. Being an effective disciple-maker is not about perfect or having it all together: it is about knowing Jesus who is perfect, and who holds all things together.

#### ILLUSTRATION:

*Give an example of a person you know who is taking active steps to make disciples. Make sure this person does not have a formal title or position in the corps. If this person will be present on Sunday, you could do a short interview with them about what they do.*

### Main point 2: Jesus invested in the few for the sake of the many

Many of us are taught to think that success is about reaching many people. Businesses strive to promote their products to the maximum number of potential customers. On the internet, success is measured by the number of likes or followers. But the truth is, the more people you reach, the less impact you will tend to have in the long run. Jesus knew that going deep with a few followers would lead to greater impact, not only in those followers but in the lives of people that they would one day reach.

In this passage we see Jesus invite a few men to spend time with him. Notice how Jesus invited people who were already interested in what He was doing. He observes that two men are following him and he asks them: 'What do you want?' Jesus did not assume what they were seeking: he asked them. When they expressed interest in knowing more about God, he invited them back to his house.

#### ILLUSTRATION:

*Tell a story about a person you are building a friendship with at the moment. How did you meet that person? What do you do together? What are your hopes for your friend? Have you begun to share the gospel in conversation?*

#### APPLICATION:

*Who are the people in your circle of influence who are interested in spending time with you? Who are the people in your circle of influence who are curious about God?*



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*Let's pause for a moment now and write down those names. They are the people you want to pray for regularly. Those are the people you want to invite to spend more time with you. You could invite them back to your house like Jesus did, or meet them at a café, or share an activity you both enjoy.*

### Main point 3: Jesus prayerfully and wisely selected the few

Jesus prayed about the people he met, he looked for people who were willing to grow, and he invested in people who were faithful, available and teachable.

These are also the 3 guidelines Steve gives us for choosing the people we invest in:

**Prayer:** Who is God leading you to?

**Priorities:** Who is interested and willing to grow?

**Potential:** Who is faithful, available, and teachable?

In this passage, we see that Jesus saw that Andrew and his companion, Phillip and Nathanael were interested in God and His Kingdom. Andrew and his companion ask for Jesus' address so that they can spend more time with him. Nathanael was sitting under the fig tree, which according to Jewish tradition was a common place of prayer especially for young rabbinical students (see below). Jesus makes it a priority to focus his time and energy on these men who have shown interest in His mission. These men demonstrated by their actions that they are faithful, available and teachable. Of course they have a long journey ahead of them to become the disciple-makers God made them to be, but Jesus looks past their present flaws to see their God-given potential. To the impulsive fisherman, Peter, he says: 'You are a rock.' Of the cynical Nathanael he says: 'Here is a true Israelite in whom there is no deceit.'

#### APPLICATION:

*Look at the names of friends you wrote down earlier. Have you seen a glimpse of their God-given potential, however small? Have you seen them demonstrate courage, or faith, or kindness? What could you say to them to encourage them? If the Holy Spirit brings anything to mind right now, write it down and share it with your friend another time.*

### Review

Although Jesus regularly taught crowds of people, he focussed much of his time and energy in developing just a few people to become effective disciple-makers. As followers of Jesus, this is our task as well. We've seen that Jesus selected people to develop who were interested in God and His Kingdom, and who were faithful, available and teachable. He loved them, prayed for them and with them, spent time with them, and shared the gospel with them. And God will help you to do these same things with the people you know. It will take a lot of time, patience, and effort - it took Jesus three years - but it will be well worth it.

### Challenge

Today you have hopefully written down one or more names of people that you know, and who could one day become effective disciple-makers. Today you can begin praying for those people daily. You might like to use the handout as a guide for prayer. If you belong to a small group take your list of names to your small group meeting this week so that your whole group can pray for them. I will be asking the small group leaders to follow up on this.



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When you pray for your friends, also ask God:  
What is the next step I can take with this person?  
When God shows you what that is, take courage  
and follow God's directions. Remember your small  
group is praying for you and cheering you on. As  
we take these small steps together, it will have  
a big impact on developing others, expanding  
God's Kingdom and growing our corps. Together  
we can help each other to not only become more  
effective disciple-makers, but also to raise up  
new disciple-makers for the future.



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