

MOTIVATED BY

SELF DENIAL 2026

DEVOTIONAL



BELIEVE IN GOOD

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**Rosy is a New Zealand born Salvationist serving in
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a cute dog named Junia (named after the prominent
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husband named Scott and a love for spoken word.
Rosy loves old coffee and fresh ideas and believes the
best days of The Salvation Army are in the future.**



WEEK 1:
**INTRODUCTION
TO THEME**

It was almost 140 years ago that what we now know as the Self Denial Appeal began. In 1886, General William Booth urged Salvationists to give up something for a period and donate the proceeds to God. This practice is similar to Lent or fasting, where a faithful follower of Jesus Christ seeks to deny themselves something for a period.

As we feel the effects of that sacrifice, however big or small, something within us is reminded to draw closer to God, demonstrating and deepening our love.

SCRIPTURE:

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love” (1 Corinthians 16:13–14, NIV).

DEVOTIONAL:

Not only does this experience help us to encounter God, but it is also an active investment in the Kingdom. It is a courageous act of sowing seeds in faith, even if we won’t see the trees with our own eyes.

This is when Self Denial is at its best: when we take the resources we have and use them sacrificially to further God’s mission to strengthen the work of The Salvation Army internationally, while growing in our faith personally.

We may spend our lives trying to ‘be our best selves’ or self-improve, but in Matthew 16:24, Jesus tells us that the path of discipleship is laid upon a foundation of sacrificial love and bold faith that brings shape to the Kingdom of God. It is the same road Jesus modelled through his life, death and resurrection.



'Self-denial' is not a phrase that is used widely in today's culture. 'Self-help' may be more familiar upon bookstore shelves.

Yet Jesus tells us, "I am the way and the truth and the life" (John 14:6, NIV)

Surely, the way forward, the truth of all things and the meaning of life are what people are really searching for, whether in shops, or in their successes or on social media.

Mark 9:36–37 (NIV) says: "He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.'"

There is truly an upside-down and back-to-front way of doing things in God's Kingdom. Helping the smallest in the world's eyes helps us see others through God's eyes — and see God more clearly with our own.

Denying ourselves helps us find the way, the truth, and live a life that is motivated with love just as God always intended for us and our world.

QUESTIONS:

- How is the Self Denial Appeal like 'sowing seeds' for you?
- In what ways do you see God in small things in the world?
- What might God be drawing your attention to in this season of sacrifice?
- How might God be asking you to respond as you are motivated by love?

PRAYER:

Dear Lord God, please deliver us from the selfish desires that lead us astray. Draw us into your presence through the footsteps of your Son, Jesus. Bring, to full bloom, the fullness of life, we pray. Bless the work of your Salvation Army and may we all be motivated by love.

Amen.





WEEK 2: MALAWI

BE ON YOUR GUARD

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love” (1 Corinthians 16:13–14, NIV).

INTRODUCTION:

This week, we will be going deeper into the phrase, ‘be on your guard’ — the first instruction in this year’s Self Denial scripture. Short of guard dogs and guard rails, what does ‘being on guard’ look like, and how might it apply to our sacrificial giving for this Self Denial season?

SCRIPTURE:

“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow” (Isaiah 1:17, NIV).

DEVOTIONAL:

Have you ever seen the guards at Buckingham Palace?

Videos and photos show them in their bright red and black uniforms, with their distinctive black ceremonial helmets. But what you may not know is

that they are each skilled soldiers, and in fact, among the best in the world. While their fancy uniforms might make them seem purely ornamental, they are very effective at defending what they have been tasked to protect.

The Salvation Army is a distinctive movement, whose uniforms and military structure came about in early 19th-century England to unify its members. Soldiers, adherents and Salvos of today are part of a centuries-long history of social justice and loving Jesus.

But we are not merely ornamental. We ‘live, love and fight’ with different weapons to the world.

We are called to guard or defend those who cannot defend themselves. This is the love that Jesus demonstrates. We are also called to be on our guard in our discipleship and faith by being wise as Christ-followers.



James 3:17 (NIV) tells us, “But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”

Through this Self Denial season, we can measure the outworking of this wisdom and service through the ministries that our Self Denial funds help support.

We know, for example, that the work in Malawi, where The Salvation Army is working to prevent the abhorrent practice of marrying young girls, through education, reform and protection, is both a delicate and strong work. As they work with the most vulnerable, girls and their families in cultures that see this practice as necessary for the economy, while challenging those who are powerful and invested in the continuation of the practice for their own benefit - to change. We can serve alongside others to transform the future for children right now.

The giving of our sacrificial funds is not a token or ceremonial outworking just because we ‘should’ or because it looks good. It helps us be truly effective soldiers in the Kingdom of God, to protect and defend those who need it the most.

QUESTIONS:

- In what ways do you think your sacrificial giving helps you to be ‘wise’?
- What other ways do you believe God is calling you to ‘be on your guard’ in your faith?
- Who has helped guard and protect you in your faith journey?
- How might your giving, motivated by love, help others see God?

PRAYER:

Dear Lord God, we thank you for your generous work in sending Jesus to give his life for our sake. We thank you for giving us the Holy Spirit to help us stand firm in our lives and wise living. Help us to be generous and sow peace with our offerings, motivated by a love that truly demonstrates an Army that brings life.

Amen.





WEEK 3: SRI LANKA **STAND FIRM**

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever seen someone try to stand up inside a kayak? It usually ends with them toppling into the water!

We know that because the ocean is constantly moving, and the floatation devices we use are not always predictable. Jesus walked on water because he is the Son of God. He didn't need something extra. Our foundation, our trust in shifting times and seasons, must be placed on Jesus alone.

In Matthew 7:24–25 (NIV), we read, “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”

DEVOTIONAL:

How easy it is to place our faith in the ‘floatation devices’ of the world — the things that may seem to help us more easily in times of uncertainty, whether it is our money, our friendships, or our own talents.

Self Denial is a time where we take a significant portion of what we think helps us ‘float’ and offer it up to God. It is a sacrifice that says, “Will you help me walk on water instead?”

In Sri Lanka a water and well project is helping local communities access safe, clean drinking water. This is something most of us often take for granted. We can turn on taps and rarely worry about what flows out. But this everyday miracle is a privilege many in Sri Lanka do not share.



The apostle Paul writes: I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:18–19, NIV).

This is a picture of sacrificial giving — people offering what they could, trusting that any need created by that sacrifice would be held by God.

Jesus Christ is a worker of miracles. He asked Peter to step out in faith and he is still asking us to trust him boldly today. We can stand firm even when everything else feels unstable. He is the foundation upon which our lives are built, and in him we find a home that will not fall. Jesus turns raging waters into a pathway that leads us back to himself.

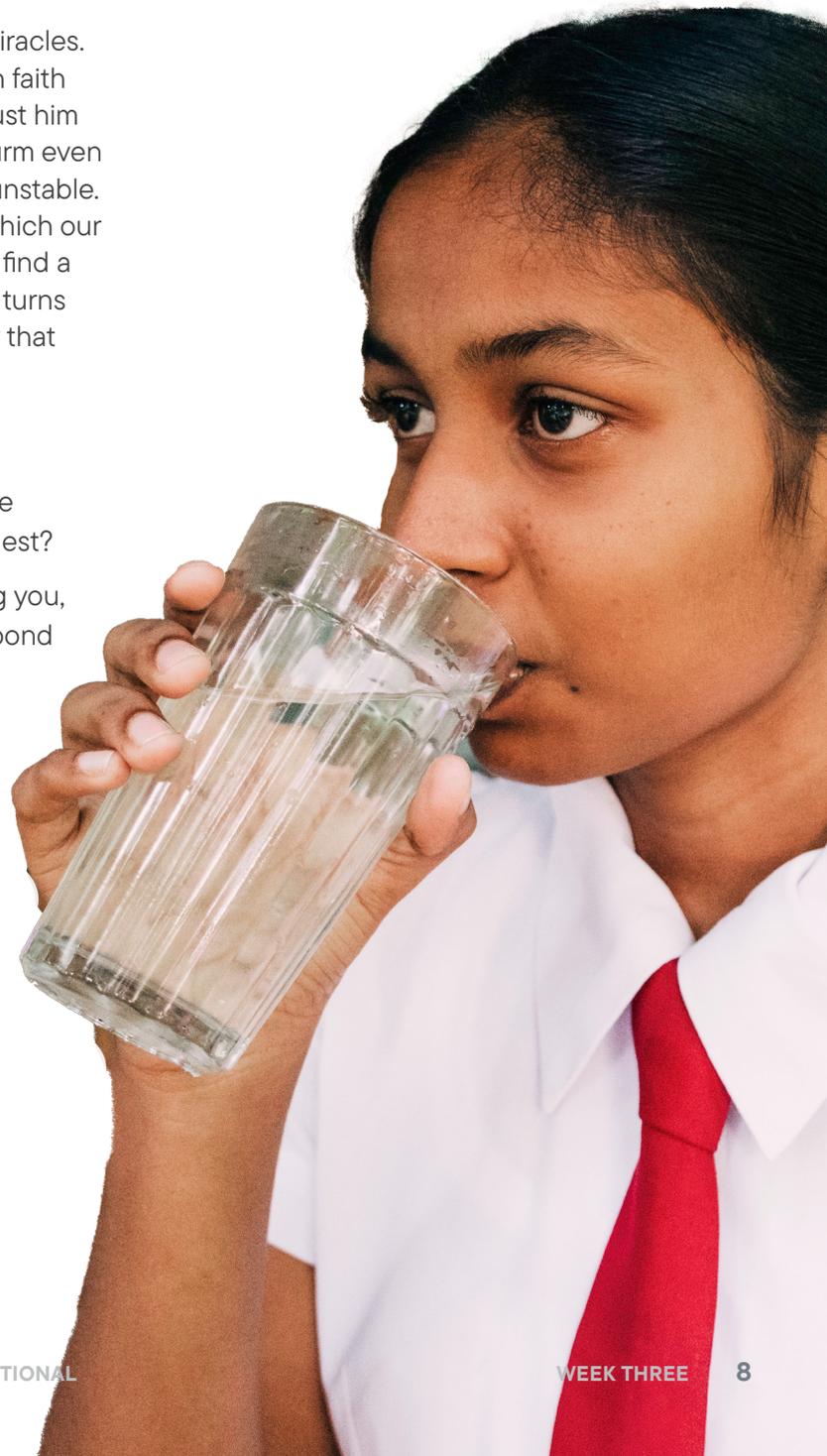
QUESTIONS:

- What makes it hard to give sacrificially, if you are honest?
- How might God be asking you, motivated by love, to respond to today’s message?
- How can you tell your foundation is Jesus?
- What things do you still feel uncertain about?

PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, please help us to hear your call clearly, to step out into freedom and into your blessing. Help us to stand firm even when all else seems choppy, because you supernaturally calm the waves. Help us to be certain of your command as we enter into our season of Self Denial motivated by love.

Amen.





WEEK 4: RWANDA

BE COURAGEOUS

INTRODUCTION:

Did you know that the word ‘courage’ originally came from the word for ‘heart’? Not all of us would say we feel courageous, but all of us have a heart.

When Jesus strengthens our heart, it becomes something more than an organ. It becomes like an orchestra that offers praises to God. Our Self Denial offering is an act of courage, an act of love, and a demonstration of heart that the world sorely needs to witness.

SCRIPTURES:

“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33, NIV).

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love” (1 Corinthians 16:13–14, NIV).

DEVOTIONAL:

Self Denial is the call to take heart and have courage. In 1 Corinthians 16:13–14, we are reminded that Jesus knew life would bring many challenges. He told his disciples — and tells us today — that we will face trouble, trial and opposition.

But when challenges come our way, we are to plant our feet firmly on God — our rock, raise our eyes to heaven and allow him to give us the heart that God has for the people of the world.

It would be tempting to be overcome with despair at the problems humanity faces. But we are told, “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21, NIV).

As we turn our attention to the people of the Rwanda education program, we know our prayers and financial offering can provide the aid that is needed to shape the hearts, minds and futures of young



children throughout the country. From teachers to resource materials, the United Nations has repeatedly told the world that educating children is one of the best ways to transform a nation and secure their future. From the oldest to the youngest, families find freedom and opportunity as their children's minds are taught and have the courage to learn new things.

"But what difference can I make?" you might ask. You might have enough worries and concerns on the home front, in your own backyard, or even your own finances and life. But God reminds us we are not alone.

We are to stand firm, and take heart. Faith in action means we see what seems impossible, we open our hearts and our hands to God, and say, "All that is mine is yours".

We can be people of courage because we know we do not do this alone. The Salvation Army around the world, and in our own countries — motivated by love — works together for good. When we are willing, when we take heart, when we trust God

in all that we do and have, we can help transform the world with God's love.

QUESTIONS:

- What is your prayer when you consider seemingly insurmountable world issues?
- What words of faith do you speak out right now over these fears?
- What is God requiring of you right now, where you are?
- How might you engage with scripture through the eyes of someone receiving the life-changing deliverance of one of these programs?

PRAYER:

Dear Lord God, please give us the eyes to see your people the way you see them — with love, deep compassion and a belief that their future can be shaped as they learn for generations to come, for good. Help us to see our finances, family and faith as a combined effort that can bring the Kingdom of God to earth by the power of your name and motivated by your love.

Amen.





WEEK 5: FIJI **BE STRONG**

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love” (1 Corinthians 16:13–14, NIV).

INTRODUCTION:

What do you picture when you hear the word strong? Maybe muscles and sweat? Maybe a mother lifting a car to save her child with superhuman strength? Not everyone can be a weightlifter, but all of us are called to be strong in the Lord, dedicating our lives to make the love of God evident to all.

How can your offering towards this year’s Self Denial help the world we serve be strong?

SCRIPTURE:

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,

present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4–7, NIV).

DEVOTIONAL:

At school and in competitions, strength is measured by power over another. If you win, you have beaten someone else. But in today’s chaotic and noisy world, we must train our minds and focus our eyes to understand what strength truly means as a follower of Jesus Christ.

How was Jesus strong? He was a servant who was humble, even though he owned the universe. He came to serve. He was mighty, but he didn’t use his might to coerce - he invited. Instead of shutting doors, he opened his father’s home for all.



So, through the example of Jesus Christ, we can recognise strength in a different way — a strength that at first glance, may look hidden or ordinary.

It may be the strength of a survivor of abuse carrying on against all odds. It may be the strength of someone with chronic illness who has to rise and meet the day. It may be the strength of someone with anger issues choosing not to lash out but instead, seeking counselling and healing.



Or it may be the strength to give and to trust, resisting the urge to hoard and hide.

We are invited to be strong. Ephesians reminds us, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes" (Ephesians 6:10–11, NIV).

This appeal invites more than our finances. It calls for our prayers, our awareness and our response. Next week we are invited to have open eyes for the needs around us and ready hearts motivated by love to act.

It reminds us that we can be strong in the Lord, strong in the ways that truly matter. Our arms can reach out to comfort through our sacrificial offering. Our hands can help heal, as Jesus commanded. Our prayers do not land on deaf ears — they open doorways to hope and peace.

QUESTIONS:

- What would it take for you to feel that what you are sacrificing is effective and motivated by love for others?
- How might you pray for these initiatives in the coming weeks, beyond the appeal?
- How has God's strength shown itself in your life?

PRAYER:

Jesus, we thank you for the breath of your Holy Spirit that makes us strong.

Thank you for giving us life and for calling us to be an Army that brings life.

Shake us awake, we pray.

Stir our hearts to generosity, knowing we cannot outgive you, and that people need us to be strong in the ways that matter to you.

Amen.





WEEK 6: ALTAR CALL

DO EVERYTHING IN LOVE

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love” (1 Corinthians 16:13–14, NIV).

INTRODUCTION:

Many of us might begin explaining our Christian faith by beginning with sin and the fall of humanity mentioned in Genesis 3. But the story of creation and God’s vision for us begins in Genesis 1, where all things were created to be good, and we were created and seen as ‘very good’, motivated by God’s love for us. As followers of Jesus, we see God’s plan restoring what was lost to sin and human brokenness, by offering the sacrifice of Jesus to make all things new, for God so loved the world.

Through the practice of self-denial, we seek not only to combat the harm and brokenness that we see at work in the world, but ultimately to restore what is good, God’s very good for all of life. Why? Because we are motivated by love, it is a whole-of-life, whole-of-world faith and response.

SCRIPTURE:

“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning the sixth day” (Genesis 1:31, NIV).

DEVOTIONAL:

It can feel like the world is on fire, and chaos and evil have the upper hand. We see countries at war, the cost of living seems to always be rising, leaders are being exposed as untrustworthy, and failures in ministry and government seem to be growing.

We do not ignore these things as we come before God and one another. But rather than throw our hands up in despair, we lift them in prayer and know that God’s power, love and mercy will prevail.



The Self Denial Appeal is over 130 years old. It is a tradition that hundreds of thousands of Salvationists have taken part in since the time of William and Catherine Booth.

But we do not undertake it simply as part of a religious calendar.

We practise it as a rhythm of life, because we believe it keeps our Army alive and brings new life.

Jesus saw that humanity could be made one again through the offering of his life. He held nothing back so that his creation might be reunited with him through his blood. He did this because he loved.

The Self Denial Appeal is an invitation for Christ followers everywhere to co-create with Christ. It is an opportunity to follow his example by giving and living sacrificially, expressed through and motivated by love.

We are being brought back into the rhythm of spiritual life set by God, and we do this out of love. As we live as God commands, true life is revealed.

This is not simply about money or projects. It is about living out the very good God intended for us — one that speaks and acts in love.

From creation to created beings, from lawmakers to lawbreakers, God

has a plan for love's restoration. One day, all will see, know, and bow.

This great heartbeat of love is calling. Will you respond?

QUESTIONS:

- What questions do you still have as you reflect today?
- How might your giving demonstrate that you are motivated by love?
- What are we to expect from God as we bring our offering of love?
- How might we respond with true worship?

PRAYER:

Dear Lord Jesus, in all that we do, we want to honour you. Bless the works and projects of The Salvation Army around the world. We offer all we have to you, knowing your free gift of grace is freely given and freely received. We bless your name and call you Holy, Peacemaker, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, worthy of all. Please look upon your children and show us your great love, we pray.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

