

MOTIVATED BY

SELF DENIAL 2026

DEVOTIONAL



BELIEVE IN GOOD

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Rosy is a New Zealand born Salvationist serving in Australia, with a particular passion for releasing people into experiencing the voice of God for themselves, obeying the promptings of the Holy Spirit and loving Jesus and community in new creative ways. Rosy has a cute dog named Junia (named after the prominent female Apostle in the book of Romans), a beautiful 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.

What is so beautiful is that as we offer our sacrifice, however big or small, something within us draws closer to God, deepening our love for him and for others.

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 more deeply, but it is also an active investment in the Kingdom of God. It is a courageous act of sowing seeds in faith, even if we never personally see the trees that grow from those seeds.

The beauty and strength of the Self Denial Appeal is that as we take the resources we have and use them sacrificially to further God’s Kingdom and mission, we not only strengthen the work of The Salvation Army internationally but also deepen our own faith.

We may spend much of 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. It is the true path of love.



‘Self-denial’ is not a phrase that is used widely in today’s culture. ‘Self-help’ may be more familiar upon bookstore shelves. People are desperate to find a way to improve their lives whether through experts, through their successes or on social media.

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. But a truly satisfying and meaningful life is found through following Jesus.

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, the most vulnerable and the most overlooked 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 life and example of your Son, Jesus. Bring, to full bloom, the fullness of the life you intended for us, we pray. Bless the work of your Salvation Army and may we all be motivated by love.

Amen.





WEEK 2: RWANDA **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 on television or real life?

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. The Salvos/the Sallies 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 weapons different to those found in the world.

We are called to guard and 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 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 Rwanda, where The Salvation Army is helping with skills training for mechanics, is changing livelihoods and communities around the country.

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 in our living with wisdom. 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.

Our Self Denial season 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 there is a water and well project in the Polonnaruwa District. This is helping local communities access safe, clean drinking water through a well and water filtration plant — 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 have received full payment and have more than enough. 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 onto the water, and he is still asking us to trust him boldly today. Because of him, we can stand firm even when everything else feels unstable. He is the foundation of our lives, and in him we find a home that will always stand. 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, as you beckon us 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.

Amen.





WEEK 4: MALAWI **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 season is a time when we are called 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, lift our eyes to heaven and allow him to give us courage as he shapes our hearts to reflect his love, especially for those who are suffering.

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 Malawi Child Marriage Prevention program, we know our prayers and



financial offering can provide the aid needed to transform a living hell for young girls and women into a situation of freedom, deliverance and a glimpse of heaven on earth.

“But what difference can I make?” you might ask. You may already carry enough worries and concerns for your own area or even your own finances. But God reminds us we are not alone, and that we are all connected to each other and to him.

For this reason, we are to stand firm, take heart and give to those in need. Faith in action means opening our hearts and our hands to God, and saying, “All that is mine is yours”.

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 is your fear when you consider what is needed for peace?
- 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 dedication to draw them into your presence. 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 through 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 our offering in this year’s Self Denial help us 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; rather, 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 calls for more than our finances. It asks for our prayers, our awareness and our response. We are invited to keep our eyes open to the needs around us and our hearts ready 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 doing 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:

There is a beauty in the way First Nations peoples connect with the land. Their knowledge of plants, seasons and the rhythm of nature remind us that God’s wisdom is woven into creation.

Through denying ourselves in this season of Self Denial, we seek not only what is good, but God’s very best for all of life. This includes a whole-of-life and whole-of-world 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.

Those who have gone before us, and we, do not undertake it simply as part of a religious observance.

We practise it as part of a rhythm of devotion to our Lord, because it brings



the Word of God and the love of Jesus to many in great need around the world. In sacrificing part of our lives, our faith grows and new life grows in others.

Jesus knew the only hope for humanity was 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 completely.

The Self Denial Appeal is an invitation for followers of Jesus Christ to partner with our Lord. It is an opportunity to follow his example by giving and living sacrificially, motivated by love.

Partnering with God in this way brings us into a richness and rhythm of life in step with him. This is how we were created to live. And as we reach out to others in love, we ourselves are filled with ever-greater love. As we live as God commands, a truly satisfied 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 the very beginning of creation to every human life today, God has been working out his plan of restoration through love. Be it rulers or rebels, lawmakers or lawbreakers — no one is beyond his reach.

One day, “at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Philippians 2:10–11, NIV).

This great heartbeat of love is calling us even now. Will you answer?

QUESTIONS:

- What questions do you still have as you reflect today?
- How might your giving demonstrate that you are motivated by true 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 mission of The Salvation Army around the world, transforming lives with the abundant life only you supply. 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.

