**LET GO AND LET GOD**

Captain Ben Ellis considers our willingness to take up God’s challenges in the third of three studies.

**PSALM 119:112**

The psalmist said: ‘I have determined in my heart to obey whatever you say, fully and forever!’ (Psalm 119:112 *The Passion Translation*). Salvationist songwriter Brindley Boon penned these words: ‘I will go where thou canst use me;/ Help me see my mission plain;/ Ask, for I cannot refuse thee;/ Lose I all, the crown I’ll gain’ (*SASB* 681).

The lyrics challenge us to surrender our lives fully to God and live differently. This transformation starts with a personal relationship with the Father and seeking his will for our lives. Therefore, it’s important that we make time and space to hear God’s voice.

In 2020, within the space of a week, the world changed for ever. We were thrown into something uncomfortable, unknown and unprecedented. Our daily routines changed and we all had to adapt to the new normal. Corps and centres were forced to develop their mission to continue to show God’s love in action.

The psalms give us hope and encouragement that God will be with his people through times of hardship. Despite this assurance, during the global pandemic, many of us will have struggled at times to feel close to God.

 **QUESTIONS**

What distracts you from spending time with God?

What has helped you to feel closer to God in the past year?

Our study passage presents a challenge. In order for us to obey God’s will fully, we must first let go of our own plans and priorities. Instead of focusing our energy and attention on society’s ideals and standards, God requires each of us to focus only on him. This could mean placing less value on the security of the home you have created, the job you have worked for or the money that you are earning.

 **QUESTION**

To what extent are you willing to let go of such things and trust that God will guide and equip you for the task?

Across the UKI Territory and around the world, Salvation Army corps and centres continue to meet the needs of other people. The need grows. There are still many in our communities who are lost and living without hope.

God calls us as his disciples to make a difference in our neighbourhoods. Each of us has a different mission field. For some of us, it has been offering practical support by volunteering at food banks or vaccination centres. For others, it has been as prayer warriors, interceding for frontline workers and world leaders.

In his first letter, Peter wrote: ‘Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ’ (1 Peter 4:10 and 11).

In the same way that God’s mission takes different forms for each of us, our personal mission will change throughout our lives. We must be responsive to God’s call and, as we seek to live out the love of God, be willing to take on new challenges to meet the needs of those around us.

As national restrictions start to ease and we enter post-lockdown life, we might understandably be feeling uncertain about God’s plan for us. Paul also wrote these words of encouragement: ‘So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness’ (Colossians 2:6 and 7).

This is a challenge to submit to God’s will, daily – to invite him into our lives in the morning, to bring him into our conversations and actions during the day and to leave our dreams with him at night. As we make time in our lives for God to speak to us, we are making our response to him – fully and forever.

‘Be the change’ is the Candidates Unit strapline that has inspired many people to respond to the call of God to spiritual leadership. The theme for this year’s Candidates Sunday (16 May) was ‘Be Willing’.

In the chorus of a song of devotion, Agnes Heathcote wrote: ‘I’ll follow thee, of life the giver,/ I’ll follow thee, suffering Redeemer,/ I’ll follow thee, deny thee never,/ By thy grace I’ll follow thee’ (SASB 589). Are these words you can sing from the heart? Are you willing to follow wherever God leads?