

Words and thoughts for cadets...and others, too!

Prayer Power

by Mervyn Morelock, Lt. Colonel –

This month, a new class of cadets is entering the College for Officer Training at Crestmont.

What word of advice could be shared with these future leaders of The Salvation Army? There are many, and for the next two years they will be saturated with thousands of words of advice and instruction! They will have hundreds of class hours and field training experiences to equip them for service to the Lord.

I just have one verse of Scripture to share. It's a truth that needs to be caught rather than taught. I marked in my Bible even before I became a cadet.

Like many of you, I've marked many verses in my Bible that have special meaning. These underlined verses have a way of jumping out to my attention. It makes my Bible look a bit messy, but it contains very personal reminders of times when God spoke directly to me.

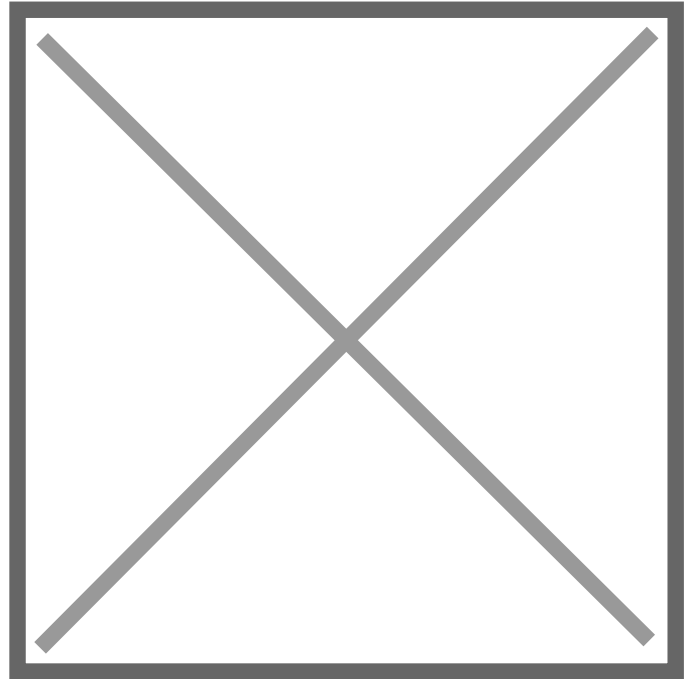
One of the first verses I underlined has been a special blessing. I find myself repeating it silently as I hear it being read from the pulpit.

The verse has a title written in the margin of my Bible. We used to call it "The YPL benediction." The title will be a mystery for most of those who are younger than 50 or so, but for some who grew up in The Salvation Army, there is instant recognition.

It was repeated, in unison, at the close of nearly every Young People's Legion meeting. It had a way of being retained in our memory throughout the week. It's a simple prayer that reminds us to take care in what we say and what we think.

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14 KJV).

Words and meditation. The things we say, and the things we think, have eternal consequences.



I remember the King James Version best. But *The Message* paraphrase makes the verse come alive in a different way.

**“Clean the slate, God, so we can start the day fresh!
Keep me from stupid sins,
from thinking I can take over your work;
Then I can start this day sun-washed, scrubbed clean of the grime of sin.
These are the words of my mouth;
These are what I chew on and pray.
Accept them when I place them on the morning altar,
O God, my Altar-Rock,
God, Priest-of-my Altar.”**

Who of us has not been guilty of thoughtless words? Words spoken in anger, in frustration, jealousy? Words that came back later to embarrass. How often have you said to yourself, “Oh, I wish I hadn’t said that!”

A story is told of an old nun’s prayer: “*Lord, make my words soft, sweet and tender today, for tomorrow I may have to eat them!*”

And who of us has not harbored thoughts that were unworthy, unclean?

Proverbs has some good advice about the importance of meditation, “***For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he***” (Proverbs 23:7 KJV).

May we not allow unworthy or unwholesome thoughts to enter our mind. A clean heart and mind, that’s what we need.

For the cadets, and all of us, let us work every day to take better care of our words and our thoughts so that our lives might be a blessing to others and be acceptable when we come before God.