



By President
Thomas S. Monson

Canaries with Gray on Their Wings

Nearly 60 years ago, while I was serving as a young bishop, Kathleen McKee, a widow in my ward, passed away. Among her things were three pet canaries. Two, with perfect yellow coloring, were to be given to her friends. The third, Billie, had yellow coloring marred by gray on his wings. Sister McKee had written in a note to me: “Will you and your family make a home for him? He isn’t the prettiest, but his song is the best.”

Sister McKee was much like her yellow canary with gray on its wings. She was not blessed with beauty, gifted with poise, or honored by posterity. Yet her song helped others to more willingly bear their burdens and more ably shoulder their tasks.

The world is filled with yellow canaries with gray on their wings. The pity is that so precious few have learned to sing. Some are young people who don’t know who they are, what they can be or even want to be; all they want is to be somebody. Others are stooped with age, burdened with care, or filled with doubt—living lives far below the level of their capabilities.

To live greatly, we must develop the capacity to face trouble with courage, disappointment with cheerfulness, and triumph with humility. You ask, “How might we

achieve these goals?” I answer, “By gaining a true perspective of who we really are!” We are sons and daughters of a living God, in whose image we have been created. Think of that: *created in the image of God*. We cannot sincerely hold this conviction without experiencing a profound new sense of strength and power.

In our world, moral character oftentimes seems secondary to beauty or charm. But from long ago the Lord’s counsel to Samuel the prophet echoes: “The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

When the Savior sought a man of faith, He did not select him from the throng of the self-righteous who were found regularly in the synagogue. Rather, He called him from among the fishermen of Capernaum. Doubting, unschooled, impetuous Simon became Peter, Apostle of faith. A yellow canary with gray on his wings qualified for the Master’s full confidence and abiding love.

When the Savior chose a missionary of



TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

When you teach . . . , it is often helpful to have learners look or listen for something specific" (*Teaching, No Greater Call* [1999], 55). To help family members understand President Monson's message, consider asking them to be prepared to share what they learn after reading the message together. Invite each person to share what he or she feels is an important point in the article. Conclude by bearing testimony of President Monson's message.

Teaching the word of God, as given through His prophets, can have a powerful influence on the lives of those we teach (see *Teaching, No Greater Call*, 50). President Monson states there is strength and power in knowing we are children of God. After reading the article, ask the family to share what helps them remember who they are.

zeal and power, He found him not among His advocates but amidst His adversaries. Saul the persecutor became Paul the proselytizer.

The Redeemer chose imperfect people to teach the way to perfection. He did so then. He does so now—even yellow canaries with gray on their wings. He calls you and me to serve Him here below. Our commitment must be total. And in our struggle, should we stumble, let us plead: "Lead us, oh lead us, great Molder of men, out of the darkness to strive once again."¹

My prayer is that we will follow the example of the Man of Galilee, who could be found mingling with the poor, the downtrodden, the oppressed, and the afflicted. May a true song come from our hearts as we do so. ■

NOTE

1. "Fight Song," Yonkers High School.

YOUTH

What Is True Beauty?

President Monson says in this message, "In our world, moral character oftentimes seems secondary to beauty or charm." Young women might struggle with their image of who they are and what they can become. Consider these thoughts about true beauty from Elder Lynn G. Robbins of the Seventy:

- A young woman whose countenance is aglow with both happiness and virtue radiates inner beauty.
- The virtuous smile is truly beautiful as it radiates in a totally natural way. This true beauty can't be painted on but is a gift of the Spirit.
- Modesty is an outward sign and requirement for inward beauty.
- If you are discouraged about your appearance, it will help to see yourself through the eyes of those who love you. Hidden beauty seen by loved ones can become a mirror for self-improvements.
- The kind of man a virtuous woman wants to marry also "seeth not" as the natural man seeth (see 1 Samuel 16:7). He will be drawn to the true beauty she radiates from a pure and cheerful heart. The same is true for a young woman looking for a virtuous young man.
- Our Father in Heaven expects all of His children to choose the right, which is the only way to lasting happiness and inner beauty.
- With the Lord, there is no competition. All have an equal privilege to have His image engraven upon their countenances (see Alma 5:19). There is no truer beauty.

To read the entire message, see Lynn G. Robbins, "True Beauty," *New Era*, Nov. 2008, 30. Young men can find similar advice in Errol S. Phippen, "Ugly Duckling or Majestic Swan? It's Up to You," *Liahona*, Oct. 2009, 36; *New Era*, Oct. 2009, 16.



CHILDREN

Sing Your Sweetest Song

President Monson told about Sister McKee's three canaries. Two were yellow all over. They looked perfect! The third didn't look perfect because it had gray spots on its wings. But Sister McKee loved it because it sang so sweetly.

Some people feel they are not as beautiful or as smart as others. But each person is valuable to the Lord. We can be faithful and brave and use our talents to serve others. Then we are like the yellow canary with gray on its wings. We are not perfect, but we are singing our sweetest song!

Color the picture of Sister McKee and her special canary. Then write down three ways you can sing your sweetest song for the Lord.



I can sing my sweetest song for the Lord by:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____