

BY RILEY M. LORIMER

THE WORTH OF WEEDS

Sometimes to really see yourself, you first have to see others more clearly.

The fresh mountain air cooled my lungs as I laced up my boots. Next to me, my horse whinnied impatiently. “I know, girl. I’m coming,” I said soothingly, as I stroked her reddish-brown mane.

I finished fastening the saddle, mounted, and was off. As I rode up the mountain, I thought of all the troubles that were weighing on my mind. I was a junior in high school—worried about friends, sports, final exams, and where to apply for college. Hundreds of thoughts swirled around in my brain. There were simply too many problems; I would never be able to solve them all. That’s really why I had come to the mountains. I needed to escape for a while.

After a time, I arrived at my favorite spot—a small out-of-the-way clearing that overlooks a mountain valley. I stopped my horse and said a small prayer in my heart.

“Heavenly Father,” I prayed, “I am so tired and so overwhelmed. Please give me some comfort. I just need a little peace.”

The answer came almost immediately. “Look up.”

As I raised my eyes, I was met with a scene of such astonishing beauty that I could scarcely breathe. All of my problems seemed to melt away as I soaked up the view. The farms in the valley were laid out like squares in a patchwork quilt, and on that day in May many of the fields had come to life in brilliant shades of green. What struck me most, however, was not the green. Throughout the fields of green were generous smatterings of the most vibrant yellow I had ever seen. The effect was mesmerizing, and it sparked my curiosity because I knew that there weren’t any local crops of that color.

I rode faster on the way down, eager to get to the valley floor and discover the source of that captivating yellow. When I reached the fields, I was astonished to find that the beauty that had so enchanted me didn’t come from anything exotic.

The fields were filled with simple, unassuming dandelions.

I picked one small dandelion and brought it close to my nose. It was amazing to me how much difference perspective had made. From high above, I was quite taken in by the beauty of something that most people on the valley floor would call a weed. I would never have recognized its worth if I had not been prompted to look up and find the beauty in it.

I realized that I sometimes treat people the way most people treat the dandelion I held in my hand. I decide that they aren’t really worth my notice, without pausing to get to know them better or to think of how greatly the Lord values them. God knew that the dandelion was beautiful in its simplicity, even when most people couldn’t see it.

It occurred to me that I was much like the dandelion. Small and imperfect—but important and cherished in the eyes of my Heavenly Father. Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (1926–2004) once said that “sometimes with smudges on our cheeks, dirt on our hands, and shoes untied, stammeringly but smilingly we present God with a dandelion—as if it were an orchid or a rose! If for now the dandelion is the best we have to offer, He receives it, knowing what we may later place on the altar” (*That Ye May Believe* [1992], 100).

Since that day I have never looked at a dandelion the same way. When I look at those little yellow flowers, I don’t see something to be stomped on, plucked up, or sneered at. I see effortless charm and loveliness. I will be forever grateful for the lesson I learned on that day—never judge someone or something until you have tried to see them from the Lord’s point of view, because the Lord, from His perspective high above mine, has a far better view and can much more easily judge the worth of flowers and of souls. **NE**

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