

Today's Devotional is provided by Jim Garner

Mr. Rogers and My First Year Away from Home

In the fall of 1983, I started attending classes at the University of Kansas. I was living on my own, away from my parents, for the first time in my life.

That first semester, God and I did a lot of wrestling. The campus was full of great looking young men and I was full of desire. But according to the way I was raised, these thoughts were very wrong. I did a pretty good job suppressing these thoughts in the past, but now the world around me had changed and I was struggling to come to terms with who I really am.

I prayed hard, earnestly, that God take these thoughts and desires away. But my prayers seemed to go unanswered.

I had my own very small studio apartment, and in it was a small 9-inch black and white television, a hand-me-down from my older brother. The screen showed only the top half of the picture and the one rabbit ear picked up only three stations, the local NBC, CBS, and PBS affiliates.

Each day after classes, around 3:00 p.m., I would return to my small space and turn on the television. The only thing I cared to watch was *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood*. I would watch it, telling myself that I was watching for nostalgia reasons, but, honestly, I never watched Fred Rogers that much as a child. As a college student, I was really getting into his show. He would frequently say "I like you just the way you are." Also, he ended each episode singing the same song:

It's such a good feeling
To know you're alive.
It's such a happy feeling;



You're growing inside.
And when you wake up ready to say:
I think I'll make a snappy new day.
It's such a good feeling,
A very good feeling.
The feeling you know, that I'll be back
When the day is new.
And I'll have more ideas for you.
And you'll have things you'll want to talk about.
I will too.

Looking back on that time, I realize that God was in fact answering my prayer, just not the way I was expecting. I was not paying attention. God was sending the answer through Mr. Rogers and that song, that feels like a psalm to me.

Prayer: Thank you God for sending angels when I feel alone, unsure, and am struggling to figure myself out. Help me be aware that angels come in many forms so help me keep my eyes and heart and mind open. Amen.

You can watch Mr. Rogers singing at this link,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xDRbhH2RH7o> --for your own visit to memory lane or to listen for the first time.