

Love Comes Softly - #1 of the Love Comes Softly Series

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 ESV

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.
Hebrews 11:1 ESV

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1 ESV

When Marty and Aaron journeyed west they were hoping to build a home and raise a family together. She would have never chosen the pioneering life on her own, but followed her husband as he sought his dreams. When Aaron died, Marty's dreams died with him.

Have you ever followed someone else's dreams? What are your dreams for the future?

When Marty had no place to go and winter was coming, Clark asked her to marry him and help raise his daughter in exchange for room and board. He promised her a ticket back home in the spring. It could have been a risky situation, moving into the home of a stranger, but thankfully Clark was a good man and treated Marty with respect.

Have you ever had to trust someone you didn't know? Did that person treat you with respect?

We all want to be loved, but like Missie, sometimes we feel the need to protect ourselves from being hurt. Missie didn't want to love someone who might leave in the spring. She didn't want anyone to replace her real mother. Our actions and attitudes can keep us from having loving relationships. Although Missie wanted someone to be her mother and love her, she wasn't kind to Marty in the beginning.

What are some of the ways that you protect yourself when you are scared or feel threatened?

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 tells us that love is patient and kind. Marty wanted to be patient and kind with Missie, but she was also dealing with her own grief over the sudden loss of her husband and her fear of the future. The burial of Aaron, her marriage to Clark, and the task of raising Missie all came at once.

How do you handle unexpected stress? Are you patient and kind? Are you irritable and resentful?

Clark told Marty that Missie could fall down and get hurt even if he was standing right there beside her, but the truth of God's love is that He will be with us pick us up and carry us thru our sorrow and hurts just as a father would do with his child. God works in our hearts and lives softly. He invites us to come to Him in prayer. God loves each of us, much more than we realize. Sometimes we are so concerned with our problems that we fail to see the good things that God is doing in our lives.

List some of the good things God is doing in your life.

Like Marty we worry sometimes that we're not capable of the task that is ahead of us. God knows us and invites us to come to Him and let Him work through us. He will do great things in our lives if we let Him. When we struggle with poor self-esteem, He lifts us up and tells us that we are His beloved children. When we feel discouraged and overwhelmed He invites us to come to Him and share our problems and struggles with Him. He will give us strength for the day and hope for the future as we learn to trust in Him.

Dear Lord, each of us carries many disappointments and discouragements from the past. Help us to lay these burdens down. Take away the pains and hurts of the past. Show us how to trust in You. Help us to build strong and healthy relationships with our family, friends and co-workers. Give us great joy in our love for You and love for each other. Help us to trust that you have a wonderful plan for our future. In Jesus name we pray, Amen