

## Love's Unfolding Dream - # 6 of the Love Comes Softly Series

*Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.*

*Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*

*Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.*

*Romans 12:9-15*

Belinda had a dream. She wanted to be a doctor. Even though the local doctor didn't believe that women could serve well in medicine she was persistent. Although her parents and grandparents had faith in her, others did not. When she had the opportunity to help Virginia Stafford-Smith she proved that she had a gift for helping her patients heal both physically and spiritually.

What dreams do you have for the future? What do you think your gifts and talents are?

Missie wanted to help Sadie Kent, the mother of one of her students, learn to read. Since Sadie's husband was a proud man and wouldn't let Missie teach his wife, Missie decided to hire her as a helper at the school and teach her to read. Although Sadie did learn to read, Charles wasn't very happy about it.

Why do you think that he didn't want her to learn? Maybe it was fear that she would be smarter than him.

Virginia Stafford-Smith offered to support Belinda in medical school and invited her to live in her home in Boston near the school. Belinda was reluctant to accept the gift because it involved such a large investment. At Virginia's insistence Belinda gratefully said yes. When Drew asked her to marry him she was confused. It was hard to choose between her life long dream and her love for him.

Have you ever had to choose between two things when you wanted both?

Belinda's dream was to be a doctor in her own hometown after graduation. Although she loved Drew she didn't want live in New York. When Drew saw how important her dream was to her, he offered to practice law in Boston while Belinda was in school and then return with her and become a lawyer in her hometown, a place that he also had come to love.

Have you made sacrifices for someone else? Has someone made sacrifices for you?

In the past weddings were simpler. The wedding was the doorway to the beginning of life together. Couples didn't live together until marriage. In the wedding vows the couple promised to remain faithful to each other until death parted them. When Belinda and Drew married they knew they had challenges ahead of them, but they were willing to plan together so that they would share the same dream.

What were your dreams as a child? Have they changed as you've grown older?

While life has changed dramatically since pioneer days, our basic needs are still the same. We need food, shelter, and clothing. Even our dreams are very similar to those of years ago. We still want good relationships. We desire to be loved and to give love in return. Happiness doesn't come because of things that we possess. God puts joy deep inside of us when we trust in Him and choose to live His way.

*Dear Lord, we want Your joy and hope in our lives. Take away our longing for more things and fill us with contentment in You. Teach us how to be peacemakers, not insisting on our own way, but working with others to plan goals and dreams that we can share. Help us to be devoted to each other, willing to listen and care about what others are saying instead of taking offense at things we don't like. Give us hearts that care about You and other people. In Jesus' name, Amen.*