

Love Takes Wing

Take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. 14 Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and, as shoes for your feet, having put on the readiness given by the gospel of peace. 16 In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; 17 and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints. Ephesians 6:13-18

Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 2 Corinthians 13:11

When Belinda came to Sykeston she was convinced that her training as a doctor would be what was needed to help the people of the town. She found that not only were people getting sick physically, they also had great needs spiritually. Some were prejudiced against the children at the orphanage and wanted to blame them for bringing sickness into the town.

Are you prejudiced against someone? Is there a person or group of people that you dislike?

Although Belinda could see the wrongs in other people's hearts it took her longer to be able to deal with the bitterness in her own heart. When her husband died years before, she turned away from God and also became cynical with other people. She had to learn to let God help her let go of her bitterness and anger so that she could be more loving to others.

Do you carry the hurt of painful losses in your life? Are you willing to let God help you?

Belinda was a strong-willed person. Her inner drive helped her become a doctor in an era when few women entered that field of work. Her tenacity helped her continue on when she didn't get the respect of the townspeople. Determination can be a good thing in our lives but it can go too far if we start to think that we need to have our own way on everything.

What are you determined to do? What kind of life do you want for the future?

Belinda loved her husband very much. It was hard for her to love someone else, even though her husband was gone. Her sadness over his death caused her to steer away from new relationships and caused her to be impatient with others. When we are hurting, either physically or emotionally, our own pain demands so much of our attention that we often fail to realize how our words and actions affect others.

Do you know someone who has suffered great loss or pain? How can you help?

Ray was angry and afraid of the disease that was spreading in the town. Instead of trying to help solve the problem he blamed it on the orphans and even tried to set fire to the orphanage. When troubles come our way it is easy to react with fear, anger and blame. God wants us to turn to Him so He can show us how to walk through difficult times. He says He will be with us wherever we go and whatever we do. He wants us to come to Him in prayer. When you are facing difficult times have you asked God to help you?

The disease spread because the water supply was contaminated. People had carelessly thrown their trash where it polluted the life-giving water they drank. When the water source was cleaned up the people were no longer in danger. When we allow our lives to become infected with discouragement, bitterness, and anger we block the joy and grace that God wants us to have.

Do you have bitterness or anger that is robbing you of joy? Ask God to help you forgive.

Dear Lord, we know that You want us to live in peace, and yet peace seems so far away sometimes. We want to love You and love others as You ask us to do, but sometimes we have so many struggles that it is hard to see outside of ourselves. Wash us clean. Give us peace and joy in life. Take away all anger and bitterness and fill us with Your presence. In Jesus' name, Amen.