

# Abiding in Love

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1-1-12

## Intro: Man Hits Paydirt.

A man was on a beach when he discovered an old lamp in the sand.

He rubbed it and a genie popped out.

The genie said "I will grant you three wishes. The only condition is that you cannot wish for more wishes."

"Alright," said the man, "I wish for more genies."

## Our Goal for Antrim:

- **To develop a church that is doctrinally sound, spiritually healthy, productive and pleasing to God.**
- No Genies exist to get us there.
- God has revealed how to do it

## Texts:

### John 15:9-11 ESV

**9** "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. **Abide in my love.**

**10** If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

**11** These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

### 1 John 2:4-6

**4** "Whoever says "I know him" but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him,

**5** but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him:

**6** **whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.**" ESV

## Notes:

- **God establishes covenants of love**
  - **The skins God made for Adam and Eve** to cover the nakedness brought on by their sin was a covenant of love. i.e. I will provide your salvation.

- **The covenant with Noah** to never again destroy the earth by water—symbolized by the rainbow—was a covenant of love.
- **The covenant with Abraham** to give him land and bless his seed was a covenant of love.
- **The cross** is a covenant of love—I will forgive your sins, removing them as far as the east is from the west.
- **The indwelling Holy Spirit** is a covenant of love—assuring us that we are sealed as God’s children.

➤ **The church is like Israel crossing the desert**

- **Christians are like Israelites leaving the mud pits of Egypt with the promise of great blessing before us**
  - Unlike Israel, who walked together as a nation, we are scattered all over the desert.
    - Some are barely out of the mud pits.
    - Others are stuck at the Red Sea.
    - Others are grumbling about the boring food or the bitter water.
    - There are those who, like Moses’ household, feel free to ignore God-sent leadership [both civil and spiritual government].
    - Most shocking are those who appear to be advanced to the edge of the Promised Land, but in a difficult situation appear to barely have one foot out of the mud pits.
- **Goals and plans are useless** if we do not make a covenant of love
  - **Israel failed** crossing the desert. Paul wrote that her failure was recorded as a warning to us so that we may learn to make right decisions; so that we can reach our promised land
    - **Israel’s grumbings** against Moses was a disregard of God’s authority
    - **God sent Moses to set them free**. Rather than gaining their freedom by love and faith-obedience, her rebellion led to several million miserable deaths in the desert. **They never saw the Promised Land.**

➤ **Will we establish a covenant of love with God today?**

- **Love is a law** and we are commanded to love. It is to our own peril that we ignore it, or dispense it to our own discretion and liking.
  - **To not love is a violation** of the God who loves you
  - **To not love is a declaration** that you do not want to be like God
  - **To not love is self-destructive** behavior

➤ **Let's get practical in our covenant of love**

## 1. **A Loving Covenant of my Tongue**

### **Proverbs 18:17-21** ESV

**17** The one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.

**18** The lot puts an end to quarrels and decides between powerful contenders.

**19** A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city, and quarreling is like the bars of a castle.

**20** From the fruit of a man's mouth his stomach is satisfied; he is satisfied by the yield of his lips.

**21** Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.

### **James 3:5-12** ESV

**5** How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire!

**6** And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

**7** For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind,

**8** but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

**9** With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

**10** From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.

**11** Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water?

**12** Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

### **Proverbs 6:16-19 ESV**

**16** There are six things that the Lord hates, seven that are an abomination to him:  
**17** haughty **eyes**, a lying **tongue**, and **hands** that shed innocent blood,  
**18** a **heart** that devises wicked plans, **feet** that make haste to run to evil,  
**19** a **false witness** who breathes out lies, and one who **sows discord** among brothers.

### **Notes:**

- It's hard for us to relate to these warnings because we have justified the use of our tongues.
  - "I only speak the truth."
    - Our opinion is not necessarily truth
    - To misrepresent someone while talking to another person is lying
  - To discuss a problem you are having with another person without giving the other person a fair and balanced hearing is spreading discord—you are forming opinions in the other person's heart.

## **2. A Loving Covenant of my Ears**

**Key:** Jesus often ended his teaching with: "**He who has ears to hear, let him hear**" (Matthew 11:15). ESV

### **Notes:**

- **This is deeper than cognitive understanding**, it is the deep acceptance of the heart.
  - Am I hearing the truths of God and applying them to my life?
- **Love refuses to participate in the sin of another's reckless tongue**
- **Obligations of a loving ear**
  - 1) I have time to listen with compassion to your need
  - 2) I have no time to listen to you talk about another person
    - **If I listen** then I am bound to go to the person you are talking about
    - **If I listen** then I am bound to speak to no other person about what I have heard

- **If I listen** then I am bound to intercede for that person
- **Love takes responsibility** for what we choose to hear

### 3. **A Loving Covenant of my Eyes**

**Job 31:1** "I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?  
ESV

- **Make covenants with your eyes**
  - If someone has something **nicer** than you can afford, covenant to rejoice with them and not desire what they have.
    - Don't criticize them for spending the money the way they did.
    - Don't strive to match or surpass them, stay focused on your purpose
  - If someone gains an **honor**, covenant to rejoice and bless them.
    - Don't sulk in silence, saying I won't build their ego with a compliment
  - If someone has a **beautiful or handsome body** do not lust.
    - Pray that they will not be drawn away from God, but will use what God has entrusted to them for his glory.
    - Don't pout as though you have been cheated in life.
    - Your physical features cannot stop you from fulfilling God's highest purpose for your life
    - Jesus was not a handsome, dashing man

### 4. **A Loving Covenant of my Time**

#### **Notes:**

- Time is a sacred entrustment
- Measure your life carefully
  - Facebook, Twitter and other social media can be thieves of time
  - **Key:** Fill your time with value that pleases God
    - Time to **worship**
    - Time to **pray**
    - Time to **seek God** in his Word
    - Time for the **right people** (Make no time for the wrong people)

- Time to **study** and prepare
- Time to **produce**
- Time for **pleasure**
- Time for **rest**
- **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8** reminds us that “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven . . . “

## 5. **A Loving Covenant of my Body**

### **1 Corinthians 6:19-20** ESV

**19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,

**20** for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

#### **Notes:**

- **God lives in a high and holy place**, and with the humble, contrite heart
- **Proper care of our bodies** is an act of worship—Romans 12:1-3
  - **Does the Holy Spirit have to share space with lust?**
  - **Do you turn to comfort food more than to God?**
- No one has to fight this more than I
  - In my teens I'd down two hot fudge sundaes
  - I once entered stores, smelled the pastries and bought—Today I enter the store, smell (even look), then try to move on.
- **Remember: Proper body care is an act of loving worship to God**

## 6. **Lovingly Care for One Another**

### **Galatians 6:1-3** ESV

**1** Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

**2** Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

**3** For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

## Notes:

- With our **tongues, ears, eyes, body and time** devoted to love, how much access does a person in need have to you?
- Let's expand the word **transgression** to a **wider area** of **needs**
- There are periods in life when deep emotional and spiritual needs emerge
  - **Retirement and old age** can make people feel worthless—like a useless drain on others.
    - Are you available to lift them to wholeness?
  - **Financial threats** can tempt people to improper decisions.
    - Can God send you as a stabilizing encouragement?
  - **Changes in life** can bring people to emotional crisis
    - **Can they find refuge in you?** Or do you have boundaries protecting you from intrusion?
    - **Many people have turned away** from the church because **no one had room in their hearts**, much as the **Inn keeper** had no room in the Inn for Jesus.
    - **Caring for those in prison** may also mean caring for someone facing an emotional imprisonment in a crisis.
      - **The Inn keeper became a nobody in history**, Jesus became the Savior of the world.
      - **The person needing your emotional support** may be raised up of God to a great position while you remain unnamed on the pages of history, all because you had no room in your heart.
      - **When you cannot embrace a person in need**, it is evident that you are the weaker person.

## Call to Action

**No Genies Exist: All worthy things come from people committed to love.**

### **Our Goal for Antrim:**

- **To develop a church that is doctrinally sound, spiritually healthy, productive and pleasing to God.**
- No genies exist to get us there.
- **God's people exist, and when we obey in love God brings the impossible to pass!**
  - **John 15:9-11 ESV**

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. **Abide in my love.**

**10** If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.

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