

What joyful events weddings are: full of hope and trust, excitement and celebration - and with the promise of a lifetime's journey of adventure. I love doing weddings; they send me home wanting to grab my wife and give her a really big hug...

Now it's autumn, though. This time of year seems to reflect a stage of our journey when all the freshness and vigour is starting to fade from the world around us. But actually this is a great time for the many of us in this benediction, who are in the autumn of our life, to pause on this journey and look back at what we've done so far. (This, of course, applies to any life, not just people that have found their vocation in committed partnership with another. Neither is it just a message for "oldies.") Let's think about what was really great - and what wasn't. Perhaps resolve to revisit in some way those "places" of our life that were truly good, if we can; take warning from the memories of hurt and failure, not to go there again.

Have another look at the life-with-one-another map set out at most weddings, equally true whether we're married or not: *Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things....*

*And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.*

(Paul's 1st letter to the Corinthians - you knew that, of course.)

Autumn is when things come to maturity and therefore is a good reminder that as we progress our life's journey we should indeed become older and wiser, more full of wonder and love.

"It *is* a wonderful life!" Frank Capra may have directed this for Jimmy Stewart but God is directing it for us. Listen to Him.