

# *The World Needs a Hug*

By  
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Whether I view the evening news, observe individuals drive down the freeway or watch people in a shopping mall, one thing is certain – the world needs a hug. Everywhere I travel I observe people who are anxious, tense, angry, discontented, downtrodden and dazed. I notice as I watch people’s body language, appearance, interactions and listen to their voice tone and attitude that the world has an unequivocal need for a large, enveloping bear hug - a loving embrace. Humanity seems to be more unhappy, callous, impersonal and unkind by the minute. I can’t help but wonder, – *Where is the love, Where is the joy?* Like an out of control fire that engulfs dry timber and needs to be extinguished, the forest of people all over the world need to be saturated with showers of unconditional love and kindness.

For the believer in Jesus the Anointed One, the world’s pain, hopelessness and depravity is fertile ground for the hope and love of God. I think Paul had something like this in mind when he wrote to the Corinthians regarding the apostles’ situation. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 4:11-13, *To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.* NKJV Paul, in dismal circumstances, continued to bless when reviled, endure when persecuted and entreat, or answer kindly, comfort, beseech and exhort when defamed. In other words, Paul offered hugs to those in the religious and the non-religious sect of society irregardless of who they were or how they treated him. Because God gave Saul a ‘hug’ that left him blind, humbled and saved unto salvation, Paul could therefore give unto others the unconditional love and acceptance he received from the Most High God.

A while back I was driving down the road and following a car with a man driving and a woman sitting in the passenger seat. There was nothing extraordinary about this scenario. In fact, I would not have retained this information except for the unfortunate event that ensued. Unexpectedly and much to my dismay, the woman began to assail, hit, slap, punch and swing at the man driving the automobile. The vehicle began to swerve then veer to each side of the road. Clearly, the driver was attempting to avoid the flailing airborne strikes. Immediately I pressed my brake to provide space between the cars. Concerned, I endeavored to avoid the unruly couple’s vehicle, pray and figure out what action I should take, if any. Now lagging behind some distance, I could still spot the woman smacking and slapping the man vigorously. After a period of time, the couple appeared to shout at one another, and from what I could discern, the barrage of hitting finally came to a halt. The woman appeared furious and crazed. I was left to draw two conclusions – one, the woman was unhappy over something and two, there was a strong need for a hug in that car.

Because I prefer to relate a Scriptural basis to life observations, experiences and interactions, I searched to see what the Bible says regarding the generalized need for a hug. In the Old Testament, one of the words that closely convey hugging is *chabaq*, which means to embrace, to clasp or fold one's hands in idleness.<sup>1</sup> There are several instances where *chabaq* shows up in the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup> When Laban first hears word that his nephew Jacob is on his way for a visit, he gleefully runs, embraces (*chabaq*) and kisses Jacob. After a long separation, Jacob and Esau reunite and Esau runs, embraces (*chabaq*), falls on then kisses Jacob; together they weep. Isaac, or Israel, when he is old with age, desires to bless Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh. Israel kisses then embraces (*chabaq*) the lads. Elisha prophesies that the childless Shunammite woman will, in one year, embrace (*chabaq*) a son. Proverbs exhorts us to embrace or *chabaq* wisdom in order to gain honor and understanding.

From the Scriptures I located on the subject of hugging or clasping, I deduce that embracing someone or something implies a connection and association with the object or person. Scripture shows we embrace someone we love, are affectionate with or we embrace something for shelter or refuge.<sup>3</sup> Christians have the remarkable opportunity to be the arms and shoulders of God for others to emotionally, mentally and physically lean on. There is no shortage of angry, bitter, hurting, needy and desperate people who need a word spoken in season, a kind gesture or loving embrace. Through these and other loving, selfless actions and attitudes, we stand out to be heavenly light and salt amidst a fading world. Let's purposefully make it a point today to offer someone a hug!

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<sup>1</sup> (from The Online Bible Thayer's Greek Lexicon and Brown Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon, Copyright © 1993, Woodside Bible Fellowship, Ontario, Canada. Licensed from the Institute for Creation Research.)

<sup>2</sup> The verses I mention are but a few. They are Genesis 29:13, 33:4+, 48:10+, 2 Kings 4:16 and Proverbs 4:6-8.

<sup>3</sup> Look at Job 24:8, Proverbs 5:20, Song of Solomon 2:6, 8:3 and Lamentations 4:5