

HUGGABLE AND BUGGABLE

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“In a ‘Peanuts’ cartoon, Lucy says to Snoopy: ‘There are times when you really bug me, but I must admit there are also times when I feel like giving you a big hug.’ Snoopy replies: ‘That’s the way I am ... huggable and buggable.’” (*The Tale of the Tardy Oxcart*, Charles R. Swindoll, pg. 477).

That’s how most of us are, aren’t we? Usually we want to hug each other, but there are times when we do more bugging than hugging. Why is that? The answer is simple: we are people and with that comes all the frailties and shortcomings that are present in everyone. None of us are perfect, and we often do or say things that can come across as unloving or uncaring. When that happens, how should we handle the situation? Again the answer is simple: the one doing the bugging needs to take ownership of it and apologize so the other can do some hugging!

The apostle of love wrote, “We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also” (1 Jn. 4:19-21). That is true, isn’t it? We show our love for God by showing our love for each other. James talked about the “royal law” of the gospel when he said, “If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well” (Js. 2:8).

What is it about this law that makes it a royal law? It is royal because it came from our King, Christ Jesus. Matthew recorded, “**Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets**” (Mt. 22:37-40). This may have been what James had in mind at the time of his writing. It is also a royal law because it is fit for priests and kings, which all Christians are (Rev. 1:6).

Many times, an individual may perceive a problem or an insult when there really isn’t one. We should always think the very best of our brothers and sisters and be willing to give them the benefit of the doubt (Phi. 4:8). However, there are times when a person is legitimately hurt over the words or actions of another. Even then, we still have a choice in our personal actions; we can return evil actions for evil actions, or we can walk toward our brethren in love, hoping a show of love will cause the guilty to repent (1 Pet. 3:8-9).

We must remember that all of us are something other than huggable, at times! However, we must never allow that to be a crutch or an excuse not to change. If we love each other in the way God asks, we will be successful in life and in the church. Always remember the words of Paul, “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:13).