“…a time to embrace.” (Eccl. 3:5) the ISBE defines this word “embrace” as, “to clasp and hold fondly in the arms,” and it surely means at least that. It also, according to Merriam-Webster, “: to accept (something or someone) readily or gladly.”

It also carries with it the idea of approval or agreement. To embrace someone, either with a hug or a word, often means and is accepted as approval of their being present or the acceptance of their purpose and direction in life.

To refuse to embrace someone once embraced with warmth is a difficult thing and most folks are loathe to do that. However it could mean the “shunned” person would get a better idea of disapproval.

In New Testament times an embrace was a “holy kiss,” Romans 16:16 and other passages. In my youth the form of greeting was a handshake, and today it appears for many to be a hug. Sometimes it conveys a mere form of greeting and at other times it means strong approval.

Forms of greeting change with the times and sometimes it is easier with one kind than another. If a greeting is a handshake for instance, it might appear to be taken as an insult or disapproval, if one refuses to shake hands.

It is entirely up to the individual as to the type and sincerity of greeting shown to another. Solomon addresses that in the next phrase.