“and a time to refrain from embracing;” (Eccl. 3:5) Why would anyone want to “refrain” from embracing. There could be several reasons, most of them legitimate.

Some people just don’t like embracing, and we have no right to force it upon them. Some just want to hug, regardless. Not a good thing! Those people would do well if they asked the recipient. That’s the proper thing to do because some people just do not like hugs. We had a person in a church where I worked that did not like it. I never asked her why, because it was none of my business. I respected her wishes and privacy. Just because someone is a brother or sister it does not mean that we should know all their personal information.

Some folks are what we call “huggers” and they think they ought to hug everyone, whether it is wanted or not. That is ill mannered and inconsiderate at best. At worst, it is overbearing and unwelcome. We should be careful.

There are just some people that don’t like to embrace certain folks. Some “huggers” have a tendency to be “hangers on.” They just keep hanging on, even after the greeting. People who are close and happy to see each other can do that, but it should not be done, as a rule.

Some refraining is completely justified. At one church and old man, who was faithful in attendance, didn’t like to bathe. He would go for weeks and sometimes months at a time. It was a situation that everyone knew and most would not shake hands with him because he was filthy. The county Sheriff was a member of that congregation, so when it got completely unbearable, someone would tell the sheriff that brother………needed a bath. The sheriff would tell him and the next Sunday he would show up, bathed and in a clean suit.

Sometimes refraining is just for self preservation. And there are others.