



Reflections by the Lake Devotions for an Unordinary Time

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When We Can't Hug
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How often have you been asked over the last 3 months, “What have you missed the most?” Responses to this question vary but tend to have a common denominator. Interaction with people is almost always close to the top of everyone's list. Friends, family, co-workers, church, even going out to dinner all have this common theme. Top of my list (with all due respect to my children) is my grandchildren. Let's be honest, really hugs from grandchildren. Nothing compares to small ones running when they first see you with their arms wide open and a big grin on their faces.

My family has always been “huggers.” It is my firm belief that if you share a hug, you share a life. Joy, grief, and every emotion in between is transmitted by a hug. People tend to hug more often with friends and family at funerals. It's my experience that hugs share the grief and somehow lessen the pain. For those who have lost someone special during the last few months, I would like to offer a big “virtual hug.”

Birthdays, graduations, and other milestones are also big hugging opportunities. “Virtual hugs” for all those people too.

Hugs are just an easy and honest way to show someone you care.

So what can we do now that hugs are temporarily (I hope) no longer an acceptable behavior? Thank you tech world for text messaging and e-mails which are easy and quick. But they are not as good as a phone call. Something about hearing a voice makes communicating much better in my opinion. When was the last time you hit the wrong contact number and got an old friend that you had not talked to in a while? I did that not long ago and ended up with a delightful 20 minute catch up. Messaging and e-mail are fine for some things, but isn't it amazing how conversations can flow?

A hymn that speaks to me often is “What a friend I have in Jesus.”

What a friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
Oh, what needless pain we bear,
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer!

Joseph Scriven, 1855

We all have a friend in Jesus and that is wonderful, but sometimes we need a friend on earth, too. Give a friend a call.