

Every Human Being Has “*Skin Hunger*”!

Ecclesiastes 3:5 [Living Bible] “... *a time to hug, a time not to hug.*”

Touch is important for health and happiness as a human being.

This article is **not** an excuse for sexual experimentation. God designed marriage as a safe haven for caring, committed love, including sexual touch.

God designed sexual union within marriage to build from foreplay to a climax.

Yet too many people, outside of marriage, frustrate themselves by engaging in foreplay, while trying to avoid intercourse.

Even if society makes it seem acceptable, I suggest avoiding all sexual touch, until the marriage commitment is made.

Also touch is never appropriate when the person being touched feels uncomfortable.

Who we touch and how can it be a touchy subject?

Unspoken social rules regulate everything, from how close we stand to another person to how we kiss them.

These rules are different in different cultures and even in different families.

How can we know when it is time to touch another person?

To pat people on the back, give them a high-five, playfully punch them on the shoulder or hug them, and when it is **not** the time?

Skin hunger –

This subject would not be so important if touch was not necessary for life and health right from the moment we leave our mother’s womb.

Touch is something we are drawn towards but also pushed away from, by our confused culture making the right understanding and balance very important.

Many people go through life touch-starved, even as a baby, suffering malnutrition of the senses and rarely experiencing the glorious feeling of having our touch hunger fully satisfied.

Studies have shown that the physical closeness children feel plays a big part in their physical and mental health.

Social studies have shown that **lack** of kissing, hugs and cuddling at home is a factor in teen drug use and contributes to sexual promiscuity.

On the other hand, in homes where there is a lot of kissing, hugs and cuddling, most children grow up to have happy marriages, successful careers and close friends.

Even if a child knows that their parents love them, they need to be shown in a physical way.

Touch taboos –

The whole situation becomes difficult in the Western World because our media vividly portrays romantic love as when people touch, sparks fly and sexual tension is unleashed.

But often overlooked in the media are the affectionate pats and hugs that have nothing to do with sex, but everything to do with health and happiness.

Cultural and family differences –

When we travel in some areas of Africa, Europe and Asia we are surprised to find people hugging and holding hands, seemingly forever engaging in human contact.

People in the times of the Christian Bible, both Old Testament and New Testament, for example.

Genesis 33:4 [New King James] *“But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.”*

The expression of joy at a reunion.

Romans 16:16 [New King James] *“Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.”*

A sign of friendship and affection and Christian love that is presumably restricted to one’s own sex, Greek word is “*philēō*” denoting a personal affection for a person as a friend, a mark of tenderness for them, nothing sexual.

What you can do –

How can you safely enjoy the benefits of touch in our dangerously hyper-sexed society?

Start within the safety of family and understanding friends.

The family is designed to be a place of refuelling our emotions.

Though we grow in our independence the need for refuelling within the family, emotionally, never really disappears.

This can be hard to start if your family is not very physically expressive, it will seem unnatural.

But with time and patience, some of the awkwardness can be overcome.

It is probably better to start with a touch on the shoulder instead of a bear hug.

Teens are not the only ones suffering from touch deprivation.

The elderly, especially widows and widowers, are often starved of human contact, especially when in nursing homes.

You can meet someone else’s needs, and your own, by developing cross-generational friendships.

You will probably find yourself naturally patting or holding someone’s hand, putting your arm around someone’s shoulders or even getting kissed on the forehead or cheek.

Hug power –

Hugs are powerful, and even promote healing.

Quotation from former Director of UCLA Pain Control Unit, gave his patients a formal prescription:

“Four hugs a day without fail. He explained, don’t ever underestimate how powerful this therapy can be, and the role it can play in the healing process. Also it is a safe prescription, to my knowledge, no-one has ever died of an overdose of hugging. However as one of my patients told me, it is addictive, once you start hugging, it’s hard to break the habit.”

Showing affection without touch –

Since touch can be touchy, how can you show you care about your friends of the opposite sex without touch?

Smile –

Your facial expressions can show you enjoy their company.

Send a card –

Pick out a special one or make it yourself.

Give a small gift –

Food is always good but be creative.

Study God’s Word, the Christian Bible, together –

For example, study what it tells us about friendships, by using a concordance to find scriptures on friendships.

The relationships we create now in this physical life will help us to be prepared for an eternal life within the created family of God, the Kingdom of God, which is based on loving relationships with God and other created children of God.