***Lesson: From Hug to Holy***

***September 22, 2019***

**From Mike:**

A lot of things had to happen before you get to the point where you are standing before a minister who declares you husband and wife. Since we don’t have arranged marriages anymore, at least in our country, many things happened to build your relationship to the point of wanting to make a life-time commitment to one another. You followed that classic pattern of connecting, then caring, and reaching a point of committing to one another. Those steps also describe our spiritual journey with each other as a church family. That is why they are the steps of our church purpose. If you want to know where you are spiritually and relationally as a member of this church family, all you have to do is honestly consider whether you are connected to others, in a caring relationship with others, and committed to the family like God wants all of us to be.

 Having said that, we all know that the marriage ceremony only opens a whole new door of relationship building – one that you both have publicly committed yourselves to. The excitement of being newlyweds and entering into a new phase of your life somewhat overshadows what most are wondering down deep in their heart. It’s that simple but challenging question, “Okay! What now?” We are at a totally new place in our relationship and we need to know what that means!

 When the prodigal son came home and he was enveloped by his father’s hug, that hug represented love, forgiveness, and reconciliation! It represented a renewed relationship as father and son! They rejoiced, they feasted and partied, and everyone in the household understood that father and son were reunited! But..what now? Assuming that older brother learned what the Dad was teaching him, what did that returning son need to do once the party was over? Celebration was turning to responsibility!

 We examined the four elements of a relationship with God. Seek, serve, sense, and share. These are essential to having a personal relationship with God, and they are all progressive and ongoing. BUT—what does God expect from us because of that relationship? What do we expect from God? Is it a Sunday-only celebration?

 If we care about the relationship, we need to care about what it takes to maintain it and build it – just like any other relationship we have.

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