

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE REALLY

Your young people, each of them, walk through your door with a long list of pressing needs that are specific to their season in life. Here are some common “strivings” I’ve seen in the lives of older teenagers.

- They’re seeking a place to belong.
- Many come from dysfunctional families—they’re looking for a stable environment and people to love them.
- Many have experienced abuse, and all are aware of it. They’re looking for people who do not take advantage of them physically or sexually.
- They live with repressed emotions. They’re seeking a support group that understands their emotions and accepts them for who they are and who they want to become.
- They’re seeking a sexual identity. Young adults have witnessed the severe consequences of a twisted morality in their lives. With sexually transmitted diseases on the rise, they’re seeking ways to remain sexually pure.
- They demonstrate a lack of commitment—yet they’re willing to join most anything that will address the needs in their lives. They have no brand loyalty, and that includes their “church brand.”
- They want personal contact. They want to know the people they’re sitting next to in class or church. They want to know if these people can be friends.
- They experience more stress and need to learn how to relax and enjoy life.
- They’re looking for ways to live a traditional life in nontraditional ways. They may postpone marriage and children until they establish their careers. Being well-off financially is more important to them than developing a meaningful faith.
- They have a hunger for spiritual truth. They need to internalize their faith, but many are giving less energy to developing their spiritual lives than other pursuits.
- They’re highly skeptical but generally respond to people who are authentic with them.
- Their time is squeezed, therefore they spend their time more cautiously—they’ll quickly dump something that starts to feel like a time-waster.
- They want to discover their strengths and weaknesses—to get a clearer picture of who they are and how they relate to and affect their world.
- They’re creating a new family every day. ■