

## Coming Along Side the 20 Somethings

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“Oh my! To be young again.” How often have we said something like this? In actuality, being in our twenties again would be both good and not so good. The energy young adults have leaves me feeling tired and envious! Young adults in their 20's are facing many life challenges that I would rather not face again. Here are just a few:

1. Finding their spouses.
2. Establishing their careers.
3. Identifying how they leave their marks in the world.
4. Sorting through/fine-tuning their dreams.
5. Feeling confident in their social abilities.
6. Building confidence in managing their finances.
7. Spiritually cementing their relationships with God.
8. Solidifying who they are on their own.
9. Embracing their limitations.
10. Facing the intrinsic loneliness of their experiences.

Teaching young adults at my church has taught me a great deal about the vulnerability of young men and women. They often express to me the multitude of insecure emotions that threaten to overwhelm and stunt their forward progress. If you are living with or have contact with young men and women, here are a few things that you will find helpful to them.

1. Let your conversations with them be “... *gracious, seasoned with salt...*” (Colossians 4:6 ESV) Nothing opens the heart of someone more quickly than being approached with warmth and an attitude of favor. It is easy to become judgmental as adults in that we can see the pitfalls to avoid. Most young adults take pride in figuring things out on their own. How you respond to them if/when they do come to you will mean everything.
2. Keep sight of the positive in what they are doing. Pointing out what they are doing well is a confidence builder when they already feel inadequate in most things. Remember, any behavior has both a positive and a negative side. If they trust you, you will be able to lovingly help them see both sides.
3. Avoid telling them what to do. Brainstorming all the angles of a situation, noting both the pros and the cons, communicates to them you trust their ability to figure things out. They may not choose what you want them to, but they will know the choice was theirs, even if they don't admit it at first.

4. Young adults already know right from wrong. What they are most interested in is what it was like for you going through this phase. Share your experience and what you learned without expecting their experiences to be the same.
5. Pray with and for them. Young adults need adult confidants who are in their corner spiritually. I can think of a number of adults who were “for me” during those years of my life. Knowing they were there helped ease my loneliness in the physical and increased my confidence in the reality that God was with me as well.
6. Be unafraid to bless them with affirmations that are real. We can all tell if someone is faking, so honesty is crucial here. Most young adults need to hear affirmations of who they are and what they are doing. In our world of fierce competition for significance, they will sniff out a fake in an instant. A genuine blessing will calm, sooth, and encourage them to keep on keeping on.

Loving young adults into their place as full-fledged adults is no easy task. However, in the hands of the Lord and with His guidance, our commitment to coming along side them reveals vibrant, dedicated, and impressive men and women moving forward into all God has planned for them. We and the world need what they have to offer.

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