

Prepare the Way Through...Understanding

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It is important to understand the culture, community and context of our young people. How they think and tick. It is similarly important to commend those who have begun the work of trying to understand the complex nature and culture within which our youth now live and operate. How are we reaching out to and encountering our young people on the margins/on the periphery/not accepted/the disenfranchised/those in the trenches? And the complexities continue. To add to all these nuances is the fact that we are now called into ministry to the youth who are now the “most distrustful and compulsive generation ever.” They do not give themselves the ability to process between stimulus and response—no gap between the two. We must not match the compulsivity of theirs. We need to invest as much time understanding who we are and ourselves to understand them and their culture.

It is not easy to understand who we are. We often undervalue the complexity of who we are. Just be yourself, but...which one of my many contradicting selves to be?! We all have contradicting selves which makes it hard to know who we are.

We are grace and sin, light and darkness, blessing and brokenness. Acknowledging these dynamics/tensions within ourselves will allow us to spread and open ourselves up to better reach out to our young people. We mostly focus on what is insufficient in ourselves, and do not look long enough on what is our gift and our blessing. There is power in seeing the gift in another person. If we do not see the gift in ourselves because of who we are, how do we expect to see it, or even call it forth from the people we minister to/with?

Can we give one another permission to be broken?

Can we allow ourselves to just be broken, to be real with one another? Can we help ourselves to acknowledge and hold our brokenness and darkness; which opens us up to our blessedness?

Young people need us to minister to them as we stand in the middle, in the gap, holding up for them both the light and the darkness (making us more compassionate, we will more willingly seek out and recognize and go to the very brokenness in the field of our ministry).

We often undervalue empathy and our compassion and the important role this plays in our ministry.

The power of us understanding who we are, allows us to bring the totality of our presence to others, which is more valuable than just our word.

If you want to find God in prayer, go the place you are most ashamed of. When we are courageous enough to go there in our own hearts then we will be able to go there with our young people who are hurting. May we allow our prayer to be ***“Who are you O God? And who am I?”***

Remember: Lord it is good that we are here.