

POSTMODIMACY

POST-MODERN YOUNG ADULT INTIMACY AND SPIRITUALITY



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ARTICLE 1

INTIMACY | ISOLATION | CONTROL | WITHDRAWAL | FUSION

I have graduated from College; I have a degree; I have a career; I have a great life; so why do I not feel fulfilled? Why is my life not adding up to the life of the now disillusioned ideals of grandeur that it once pointed toward?

It seems that every young adult I speak to is looking for something *MORE*. It seems that most of us in this community are leading good lives: in good situations, in good jobs, but a little hazy as to how we got where we are, and what it all means.

In order to understand this “creature” we call *Young Adult* (or maybe just to try to understand myself as a young adult), I picked up a book called *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development & Christian Faith* by James W. Fowler. In this book, Fowler reminds me of my developmental psychology classes, and what it means to mature in our faith.

As Young Adults, we have progressed through the stages of life of childhood, and are moving into Adulthood. In *Adolescence*, we rebelled against our parents and authority to be able to stand on our own two feet. In *Young Adulthood* we then try to replant ourselves into a meaningful foundation of spiritual purpose, intimate relationships, and successful adult life. Understanding our perception of intimacy will shed light on our understandings of our faith, our spirituality, and the rest of our life.

Fowler draws on one of my favorite psychology gurus, Eric Erickson, for a summary of Erickson’s *Stages of Development*. To Erickson, *Intimacy* means, “a readiness to risk the self in relations of closeness with that which is ‘other’ or ‘opposite.’” Intimacy is more than dating- it is the life that God has placed within us.

This risk of presenting one’s self for another’s approval or disapproval is quite unnerving. This is what makes or breaks the

dating scene, friend groups, and even churches.

If we do not learn how to truly apply *Intimacy* we might fall into what Erickson terms as *Isolation*. Isolation is where “one must either control situations of potential intimacy or withdraw from them.”

I know we have all been in our fair share of “controlling relationships,” which are experienced on High School and College campuses alike. The difference between a teenage “controlling relationship,” and the “control” of *Isolation*, is that in *Isolation* we try to control every situation: every relationship. This way, we will not be rejected by anyone. One form of this “control” is withdrawing from any form of intimacy: any chance that someone might come in contact with our “self.” This may be from the dating scene, or even from a Church or community group we once enjoyed. There is a difference between being a smart date, and being a closed off cold soul that will not allow intimacy with anyone.

The other risk of *Isolation* is that of *Fusion*, “With fusion, there may be physical or spiritual closeness, but it is a closeness that dissolves boundaries and breaks down separateness (or prevents their development), thereby forestalling the kind of communion that constitutes true intimacy.”

When we say, “the man and woman shall leave their homes, and the two shall become one,” this does not mean that either cease to exist, but that their lives begin to merge together to complement each other’s strengths and passions.

The goal is to find “the virtue or strength that emerges with a balance toward intimacy is that of *love*.”

This understanding of *Intimacy*, which leads to true LOVE, will begin our Spiritual Journey.

This begins our Exploration into the Post-Modern Young Adult Intimacy and Spirituality: POSTMODIMACY.

BIBLE VERSE REFERENCES

1 John 4:8 *God is love.*
Romans 8:38-39 *For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our lord.*

BOOK REFERENCES

All Quotes in this article are taken from:
Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian. James W. Fowler. Josey-Bass. 2000. pg. 18

SAINTS QUOTES

St. Therese of Lisieux:
If the Church was a body composed of different members, it couldn’t lack the noblest of all; it *must have a Heart, and a Heart BURNING WITH LOVE.* And I realize that *this love alone* was the true motive force which enabled the other members of the Church to act; if it ceased to function, the Apostles would forget to preach the gospel, the Martyrs would refuse to shed their blood. LOVE, IN FACT, IS THE VOCATION WHICH INCLUDES ALL OTHERS; IT’S A UNIVERSE OF ITS OWN, COMPRISING ALL TIME AND SPACE-IT’S ETERNAL!
Catholic Catechism # 826

THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

Understanding our perception of intimacy will shed light on our understandings of our faith, our spirituality, and the rest of our life.

