



Before I answer the question, “Why are college students lonely?” it might be better to start off by asking, “Are College Students Lonely?” My answer for many of them is emphatically YES! Your next question might be, “Well Mr. Expert how do you know they are lonely?”

### Glad you asked...

Five or six years ago I was taking a group of college students through the PLACE process. As part of the **PLACE process** I sat down with a college student at the end of our teaching time in front of her peers and coached her one-on-one through her **PLACE profile**. The young lady I sat down with to coach was in college, but was also a professional model. From all outward appearances in her interactions with others and how she carried herself she seemed to be on top of the world. We discussed our personality, spiritual gifts, and abilities. Then we came to the “C” in PLACE (Connecting passion to ministry) and the group she listed as her number one people group (Jeremiah can you have the PLACE profile section of only “C” come up and put in it at #1 – lonely individuals) was “lonely individuals”. I asked her why lonely individuals. She floored me when she said, “Because I am lonely.” Naturally we begin to discuss the “E” (Experiences in Life) in PLACE as to why she was lonely.

## From One to Many

Since that day several years ago I begin noticing a trend with individuals under 30 that I rarely see in individuals that are over 30. I begin noticing the college student I sat down with several years ago with a passion for lonely individuals because she was lonely is common among younger adults. I have seen countless young adults in their 20’s put as one of their top people groups “lonely individuals” on their PLACE profile. In July I had the privilege to take nine young ladies my wife disciples through PLACE in a weekend retreat. The young ladies are all three years out of college and were in the same sorority while in college. These young ladies are some of the sharpest young people I have ever been around at their age. While I should not have been shocked after several years of seeing a trend in this age group for “lonely individuals” I was when 4 out of the 9 girls listed as a top passion group “lonely individuals”.

## Why This Generation

I asked “Why?” this generation because this generation is supposedly the most socially connected generation the world has ever known. Most of them don’t know life without Facebook, Twitter, Texting, Facetime, and Instagram, much less cell phones and email. While I am a fan of social media and use Facebook, Twitter, Texting I have come to realize Facetime and Facebook do not replace face-to-face time when it comes to building lasting relationships. You may learn what your “friend” likes to eat on Facebook or what places your “friend” is going through Facebook or Instagram, but you will not know WHO your “friend” is deep down inside by all the social media outlets available to us in the world we live in today.

## PLACE and College Students

I regularly ask myself why do I still have a passion after almost 16 years to promote PLACE to high school students, college students, young adults and people of all ages. I continually come back to the ability within the PLACE process to not only help an individual discover who they are, but what God has created for them to do in His Kingdom agenda. As much as knowing who and why God created them I have seen over and over the power of others developing relationships with each other by hearing and knowing how God created them in the teaching time within PLACE.

I am writing this article the morning after teaching PLACE to a group at my church that ranged in ages from 20 to 73 (what a cool experience). When I asked the group who they listed on the PLACE profile they had passion for and why the young lady who was 20 and had been very quiet the entire time immediately spoke first. She has a passion for the handicapped because her younger sister was handicapped. She said, “our church doesn’t have a ministry to the handicapped and I want to be a part of developing one.” Up until this point in our time together this young lady had not only been very quiet, but somewhat disengaged. But when it came time to talk about her passion for the handicapped she came alive with excitement and energy. Not only will this young lady hopefully find her PLACE in ministry at our church, but she will have a connection with every person from various ages within our church that have been a part of the PLACE experience with her for several weeks. I know that from now on when I see her I will have a connection with her because I not only heard, but saw her passion and heart for a group that I would never have known she had except for the small group experience we shared through PLACE.

Again, I not trashing social media, it has its place (no pun intended), but there are social media will never replace face-to-face media and people processing life together in the same room. If you are already using PLACE with your college students and young adults I hope you will continue giving them the experience that PLACE provides through teaching and the small group interaction built into the teaching. If you have never experienced PLACE I hope you will consider first going through PLACE yourself with a group and then introducing it to college students and young adults in your ministry sphere.