

3 Things You Need to Know About the Christian Millennial Mind

Understanding millennials is all the rage these days. Advertisers, publishers, authors and church-growth experts all clamor to figure out the minds of those between the ages of 18 and 33.

There's no shortage of research. A quick perusal on for the word *millennial* produces 3,355 book results. The Barna Research Group ([http://www.barna.com](#)) offers hundreds of articles attempting to make sense of the demographic.

The hype is understandable—millennials account for roughly 73 million people, or about 23 percent of the U.S. population. These are the up-and-coming leaders, moms and dads, consumers. It's therefore economically critical to figure out what makes them tick.

The majority of what's written on the subject comes from those outside the demographic—often well outside it. As one squarely within the definition of millennial (at 29), it can all seem a bit desperate to me. But not all of the information is that way. In fact, I recently had the opportunity to interview a Christian author who really gets it.

Perhaps you've heard of Pat Schatzline. He's a leading voice in youth and young adult ministry today. His new book, *I Am Remnant*, profoundly ministers to those of us everybody else is still struggling to figure out. Pat has cracked the millennial code not through extensive research but through relationship—he actually spends time with us! And refreshingly, he's not interested in how he can better market to our demographic but in how people can better mentor this next generation who will run our churches and set our laws.

If you're a millennial like I am, you'll find that *I Am Remnant* offers real solutions to stand for truth in a culture of noise. If you're not a millennial, it provides great insight into how to reach us.

Allow me now to speak a bit through Pat's words and offer some thoughts of my own.

1. A Millennial's Greatest Fear Is Living a Life That Doesn't Make a Difference

It's a social media age. We're inundated with viral tweets, Facebook posts and YouTube videos concocted by common people. There's no reason why our voices can't be heard. And that's what millennials crave. We long to be world-changers and life-givers. Our greatest fear isn't death or finances, but living a life that doesn't make a difference.

This is what makes Pat's concept of "remnant" so effective. Biblically, a remnant is a unique group of individuals "chosen by grace" (Rom. 11:5, NIV)—that is, a group of people called by God for a specific purpose. *Chosen* and *purpose* are the buzzwords here—precisely what makes the remnant idea so appealing to millennials.

Pat knows what we want, and he speaks our language. With every chapter, he calls out this remnant in an open letter: "Do you realize you're not here by chance? God planned you out! He has written the chapters of your life. He has created a voice in you that must be used."

We are a purpose-driven generation. Whatever it is that you want us to do, show us how it will help us make a difference and you'll have our attention.

2. Millennials Are a Wounded Generation

Millennials possess the technology to reach the ends of the earth and the drive to get there. Perhaps we're on the verge

of a perfect storm to see the realization of the Great Commission. And Satan is scared stiff.

Like he did in the days of Moses and of Jesus, the devil has launched a vicious culture war to destroy our potential before it ever has a chance to flourish. I could go on and on about the specific ways Satan targets us, but suffice it to say we're overwhelmed with more junk and perversion—and thus more guilt—than generations before us.

Pat reveals that although we may have messed up in the greatest ways, we are never beyond God's forgiveness. He assures us that God wants to and will use us, in spite of our failures. "It's not about perfection, but pursuit," he says. To such a purpose-driven generation, this assurance is something that we covet.

3. Millennials Desperately Want Something Real

We're flooded with advertisements in every direction and on every device, which always offer a better way to do this or that. Therefore, as a mere survival instinct, we've had to develop an authenticity radar. It's doesn't take us long to discern whether or not someone or something is real.

One of the greatest reasons millennials cite for leaving the faith is a lack of authentic transformation. Often we're given merely light shows and concerts with a promise of life change. But eventually the new wears off and those things are exposed for the smoke and mirrors that they are.

We don't want more sensational gimmicks or methods. Coffee, three songs, and a sermon won't do it, either. Give us something with real transformational power—something that will truly heal our pain. Here's where Pat's genius really shines. He calls us away from pop Christianity and back to the old, rugged cross. "The cross is where life begins," he reveals.

Yes, there's no "method of healing" more tried and true than

the cross and blood of Jesus. If our preaching will return to these most authentic bedrocks of the faith, I believe we'll see a generation that's grounded, satisfied and not always in search of "the next best thing."

'I Am Remnant!'

By the end of the book, Pat dares us to declare, "I am remnant!" And I'll take his challenge. Pat understands the millennials' craving for purpose, their need for healing and their desire for something real. In a day when we're tempted to find our solutions upon the latest religious bandwagon, I'm thankful for someone like Pat Schatzline, who offers not the quick way but the sure way—the way of the cross and the resurrected life that ensues.

Watch my interview with Pat Schatzline to discover how to stand for truth in a changing culture.

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