

A Word to the Generations

Goal? To call out the beauty and the opportunity in each gen. There is kingdom power in each gen that needs to be channeled and accelerated. There are cultural blind spots in each gen that need to be exposed and healed.

1. Physical Changes and Health Concerns

- **Aging bodies:**
Noticeable declines in energy, stamina, vision, metabolism, and appearance.
- **Menopause/perimenopause** (for women) and **testosterone decline** (for men).
- **Increased health screenings:**
More tests for cancer, heart disease, and chronic conditions.
- **First encounters with mortality:**
Their own or through peers.

2. Career Plateau or Change

- **Stagnation or burnout:**

Feeling stuck in a long-term job or questioning its meaning.

- **Layoffs or restructuring:**

Midlife can bring job insecurity.

- **Desire for reinvention:**

Some pursue new careers, entrepreneurship, or passion projects.

3. Caring for Aging Parents

- **Role reversal:**

Becoming caretakers to their own parents.

- **Emotional strain and logistical stress:**

Managing healthcare, finances, and end-of-life decisions.

- ***“Sandwich generation”* stress:**

Caring for both children and elderly parents simultaneously.

4. Parenting Transitions

- **Empty nest syndrome:**
Adjusting as children leave home.
- **Teen/adult child challenges:**
Ongoing parenting during children's transition to adulthood.
- **Grandparenthood (early cases):**
Some become grandparents in late midlife.

5. Relationship Shifts

- **Marital reevaluation:**
Some face divorce, infidelity, or rekindling.
- **Friendship changes:**
Drift from old friends, make fewer but deeper connections.
- **Loneliness:**
A hidden issue, especially after children leave home or after divorce.

6. Financial Pressure and Planning

- **Retirement anxiety:**
Realization that saving time is running out.
- **College costs:**
Funding higher education for children.
- **Debt or economic insecurity:**
Midlife crises can include financial stress.

7. Loss and Grief

- **Death of parents or mentors**
- **End of certain dreams or possibilities**
(e.g., having more children, certain careers)
- **Grieving past selves:**
Mourning the person they once were or imagined they'd become.

8. Existential Questions

- **Midlife crisis or midlife reflection:**
"Is this all there is?" or "What legacy am I leaving?"
- **Spiritual searching:**
Increased focus on purpose, meaning, or religious/spiritual life.
- **Time awareness:**
Life feels finite—*"half over"* becomes real.

"The Midlife Crisis"

For millennia, human civilization has recognized there is a physiological shift from childhood to young adulthood (puberty). Then there is an emotional shift from young adulthood to midlife (midlife crisis).

Shakespeare's "Seven Ages of Man"

- **The Infant** - Crying and puking in nurse's arms
- **The Schoolboy** - Whining, reluctantly going to school, w/shining morning face and satchel
- **The Lover** - Sighing with passion, composing woeful ballads about his beloved
- **The Soldier** - Hot-headed and ambitious, seeking honor and reputation, even at risk of life
- **The Justice** - Mature and wise, with a well-fed belly and good beard
- **The Pantaloon** - Lean, slippered, wearing spectacles, with aging body
- **Second Childhood** - Senility and loss, "sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything"

Life Expectancies

1820 - 39 years old

1920 - 53 years old

2020 - 79 years old

“Prolonged Adolescence”

The five sociological markers for adulthood are being pushed later and later:

- 1. Completing school**
- 2. Moving out**
- 3. Financial Independence**
- 4. Getting married**
- 5. Having kid**

“When does midlife start?”

- Consensus today is that a midlife crisis can happen anywhere from 30 to 60yrs old.
- If you are 60 right now you have a 50% chance of reaching 90!

People of Midlife!

You need to have a proper midlife crisis,
the sooner the better.

(1) Devolve into depression, despair, and dread over loss of youth.

A. Think about your fading mortality

- “My body will never be the same.”
- “I’m done having kids.”
- “My kids are growing up, moving out, and leaving me behind.”
- “My parents are aging and dying. This role reversal is disturbing.”
- “My marriage is stale.”

B. Think about your underwhelming legacy

- “My career prospects are narrowing.”
- “My success is plateauing.”
- “I didn’t accomplish/earn/save as much as I hoped.”
- “I did accomplish/earn/save a lot, but I’m still empty.”
- “My life wasn’t worth all that much.”

1. Devolve into depression, despair, and dread over loss of youth.
2. Try to recreate the excitements of youth (... but this time you have money!)

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"Heroic Thinking" of Early Adulthood

- Have ambition and vision
- Willing to sacrifice
- Activist spirit
- Cognizant of previous gen's faults

This sort of thinking is good when it fills inexperienced young adults with the courage to take on adult life.

"Meaning and Wonder" of Midlife

- Honesty and sobriety about the difficulty of life
- Shift of focus to deeper more meaningful things like moral growth, relational health, generational empowerment, familial legacy, purposeful work

The second mountain is about shifting to deeper commitments.

1. **Vocation** – a calling rather than a job
2. **Relationship** – a lifelong marital commitment and/or deep friendship
3. **Faith** – a moral-spiritual framework
4. **Community** – a people you know and serve

Philippians 3:3-4:1

We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort, though I could have confidence in my own effort if anyone could. Indeed, if others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more! I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault.

Philippians 3:3-4:1

I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with Him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with Himself depends on faith. I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised Him from the dead. I want to suffer with Him, sharing in His death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!

Philippians 3:3-4:1

I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.

Philippians 3:3-4:1

Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things. If you disagree on some point, I believe God will make it plain to you. But we must hold on to the progress we have already made. Dear brothers and sisters, pattern your lives after mine, and learn from those who follow our example. For I have told you often before, and I say it again with tears in my eyes, that there are many whose conduct shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. They are headed for destruction. Their god is their appetite, they brag about shameful things, and they think only about this life here on earth.

Philippians 3:3-4:1

But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for Him to return as our Savior. He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like His own, using the same power with which He will bring everything under His control.

Therefore, My dear brothers and sisters, stay true to the Lord. I love you and long to see you, dear friends, for you are my joy and the crown I receive for my work.

A Proper Midlife Crisis

- Paul sees the “heroic” ambition of the “first mountain” for what it is on the second mountain ... skubala.
- A proper midlife crisis will involve a shift from a material motivation to a moral motivation.

What do we really want in life?

- Financial comfort
- An impressive job with maybe a little clout
- Epic children
- Good health
- Regular fun experiences
- Romantic fulfillment
- Public Recognition

Philippians 3:7-9

I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For His sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with Him.

A Proper Midlife Crisis

- Paul shifts his identity away from pedigree and prowess, toward Jesus.
- A proper midlife crisis will involve embracing your identity as a citizen of heaven.

Philippians 3:20

But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives.

A Proper Midlife Crisis

- Paul refocuses his vision off of careerism and legacy and onto the people God has given him to love.
- A proper midlife crisis will refocus on giving life to others.

Philippians 4:1 -

... for you are my joy and the crown I receive for my work.

Career Logic v. Gift Logic

“If career logic helps you conquer the world, gift logic helps you serve it. If career logic focuses on “how” questions—how to climb the career ladder, how to get things done efficiently—gift logic focuses on “why” questions, such as why are we here, and what good should we ultimately serve? If career logic is about building up the ego, gift logic is about relinquishing it and putting others first. A well-lived life, at any stage, is lived within the tension between these two logics. The problem is that we have managed to build a world in which utilitarian logic massively eclipses moral logic. The brutal meritocracy has become such an all-embracing cosmos, many of us have trouble thinking outside of it. From an early age, the pressure is always on to win gold stars, to advance, optimize, impress.”

-David Brooks

A proper midlife crisis will ...

- shift from a material motivation to a moral motivation
- embrace your identity as a citizen of heaven
- refocus on giving life to others

Philippians 3:10-15

I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised Him from the dead. I want to suffer with Him, sharing in His death, so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead! I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. Let all who are spiritually mature agree on these things.