

I'm 25.
Now What?



GILBERTA THOMPSON

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Published by:
Ellis & Ellis Consulting Group, LLC
954-439-0760

ISBN 13: 978-1546860891
ISBN 10: 1546860894

Printed in the United States of America.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my Heavenly Father, I bless You. Words will never describe how I feel about You. I thank You for the love you have shown toward me. I thank You for cleansing a wreck like me. From the moment, I let You in, my life has never been the same. You complete me in ways I never thought possible; without You I know this book would have never existed. Thank you for hearing my cries and sharing your wisdom with me. Thank you for meeting me every time I prayed and for not letting me give up, even when I wanted to. Thank you for trusting me to be used to write to your people.

To my husband Giovanni Thompson, thank you! You have been so supportive throughout this writing process. I have never met a man more understanding than you. Thank you for your words of encouragement and the laughter when I needed it the most. Thank you for being a listening ear, let me be real for a moment; when it comes to dealing with me, there is a lot of listening! Thank you for being my strength

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

on days when I did not feel so strong; you are so amazing and I love you!

To my mother Stephanie Aritis, thank you. Every accomplishment or milestone I have received in the duration of my life, I call it OURS. You have been a driving force behind me when I needed it most. Thank you for your prayers, love, and support. I like to think, God knew exactly what He was doing when He gave me you. I love you more than words can ever describe.

To my sister Marjory Mauge, you are such a ray of sunshine. I thank you for allowing me to be a part of you and Patience's life. You have such a beautiful heart and I am so grateful to have you as my close confidant.

To my family and friends, I appreciate the love and support you have always given to me. You guys are so awesome and you mean more to me than you know. Thank you for always standing in my corner.

To my prayer partner, midwife, and sister, Dayvan-Rebecca Carey, do I really need to tell you what a gem you are? Thank you for the late night prayers and pep talks. Thank you for being the watchman that would always stand guard on my behalf. You are simply the best and I cannot wait for the entire world to see what God is about to do in your life.

To every person that wrote a testimony in this book. May God greatly enlarge your territory as you continue to advance His kingdom. Thank you for your love and support.

To my Kingdom family at Life Changers Ministries International, thank you for your obedience. Your ministry was the instrument used by God to change my life. Your prayers and support always came when I needed it the most.

My Apostle Valentino and Pastor Cleopatra Williams, you have affected my life in more ways than you can imagine. I thank God for the day you both said yes to Him.

To the readers of this book – Eyes have not seen, nor have ears heard, nor entered the hearts of man what God will do for you. Some of the most beautiful things are birthed through adversity. I pray that you will truly seek and hear the Lord as you read this book. I love each and every one of you and cannot wait to see what is next in your lives as you follow Christ.

INTRODUCTION

Here you are—you are at this point in your life where you want to know precisely what's next. You find yourself feeling stuck, lost, confused, or even spooling in circles. The more you think about “it”, the more you become confused and you begin to question, “What is the point of this”? You want so badly to express these feelings to your friends and family but, let's face it; you know they will not get “it”. Besides your life is your problem and nobody else's.

Don't be alarmed! The feelings that you are stuck, lost, confused or even spooling, in circles happens to the best of us. My friend, you are not alone. As a matter of fact, between the ages of 20-30, “It” is the point of a young adult's life commonly known as the Quarter-Life Crisis. Yes, you read that correctly, the Quarter-Life Crisis! But, what if there was a way that those feelings could go away? Imagine yourself receiving the answers and clarity to your questions, concerns, and doubts that have been challenging your life's purpose for days, weeks, months, and/or even years. What a feeling of relief that would bring to finally sleep in bed at night knowing your future holds purpose!

How do I know this is possible? Well, for years I to was caught in the Quarter-Life crisis. And, unfortunately it was longer than I needed at that. Not only was I trapped, but I noticed so many of my friends and family were entangled as well. Although I recognized the trend, I had no idea how to get out, particularly out of that feeling of being completely lost. I was troubled on every side because I could not help them, nor myself. I didn't receive breakthrough until I truly surrendered my life to Jesus Christ. It was then I was able to find peace and overcome this "crisis". As I overcame, small feats, the Holy Spirit would instruct me to share with others the process I went through and how I overcame having found purpose, peace, and freedom in Him. This book is not some crystal ball; it zooms into three core areas which, once mastered and applied, will change your life and end this Quarter-Life Crisis once and for all. These areas are perception, hindrances, and the ability to overcome.

Perception is your outlook on life. Often times, the way you react to a situation is a direct result of the way you think about that situation. Shifting your thoughts, ideas and beliefs from negative to positive could permit you to react in such a way that would improve the situation rather than deteriorate it. Hindrances, on the other hand, are external. You and I are fighting a real battle. Yes, you and I! Because there is an enemy, an opponent, who cowardly places hindrances in our way, we must identify such hindrances and tactics so that we are fortified to strategically fight—and win! This satanic fight is simply an effort to stop our progression towards our purpose. Your ability to overcome is wrapped up in Jesus Christ. God's love, faith, knowledge of

who you are in Christ Jesus, and God driven purpose are critical tools that will propel you to overcome the Quarter-Life Crisis. You will find as you read each chapter of this book that my experiences along with the testimonies of other people share commonality, all overcame using a tried and proven solution that is Jesus.

As an avid Bible reader, I would be remiss if I did not include biblical references and stories. These references and stories serve an important purpose as they allow you to relate to several other biblical characters that experienced similar battles you are facing. Moreover, there are also several practical tips, principles, solutions, and exercises to ensure that you complete this book, equipped to overcome. It is my prayer and desire that this book changes your life and that you never be the same. As I wrote, I prayed and cried for your deliverance, freedom, purpose, and peace. I prayed that this book would reach the hands of those that needed it, therefore I recognize that it is not an accident you opened this book. This is not some random compilation of thoughts and manuscript, but it was birthed through prayer. These words come straight from the heart of God to yours. As you read this book, open your heart and let Jesus in. It is time for you to overcome, ONCE AND FOR ALL!

PART ONE



Perception

CHAPTER 1



The Quarter-Life Crisis

*So you are about 25 years old and you are experiencing “it”. You know, “it”! “It” is a topic that is virtually unknown. “It” is not commonly talked about, however “it” is commonly experienced. Parents, family, and friends are observing your life choices without recognizing “it”. Some may feel a bit worried, while others chalk it up to youthful bliss. They have no idea of the confusion you feel when you think about the direction your life should be going. The way one day you feel completely excited about the possibilities your life will bring and the next day this same uncertainty paralyzes you with fear. To be completely honest, you are not even sure what is going on in your life. All you know is that you refuse to fail. Problem is, the next step looks blurry. This blur makes failure begin to feel inevitable. I mean at this point, you have completed high school or college, you are working some job, paying bills, and you figure, **I’m 25, now what?** You say to yourself, “this cannot be it for the rest of my life”. You need clarity, and you need it now!*

Well, this unfamiliar experience, which more than likely was not taught in any educational school system, is the Quarter-Life Crisis. Yes, the Quarter-Life Crisis. Just as the name suggests, around a quarter century of age (25 years old), many people experience a mental crisis. It is a period of feeling doubtful and not so patiently awaiting when your life will begin to make sense. The time where the word independent can feel so liberating and terrifying at the same time. Since everyone is different, the Quarter-Life Crisis does not always happen exactly at the age of 25, but it can happen between the ages of twenty to thirty. While it is a very real experience, many are oblivious to its existence and therefore have no idea how to deal with such a phase of life. Several persons will feel the symptoms without being able to identify the cause. Nonetheless, there are many other young people just like you experiencing this plateau and trying to figure it all out. Yes I know, it sure does not look like it on social media. Everyone's snapping selfies displaying their "perfect" lives. On the outside looking in, it appears there is no way anyone else is feeling the way you are feeling right now. Right? Wrong! The reality is that the Quarter-Life Crisis is affecting countless young people around the world—In. This. Moment.

Midlife Crisis vs. Quarter-Life Crisis

Many have heard of a midlife crisis but the quarter-life crisis and its validity raises question marks. These two life cycles are anticipated to happen approximately 25 years apart but are polar opposite. When I think of the midlife crisis, I see an older male (possibly bald) spontaneously purchasing a red sports vehicle speeding down a highway. He has worked hard his entire life and is now in need of some fun at any cost. The man knows himself however wishes to escape himself if only for a moment. He is not concerned about his life or its direction because he feels so bound to his responsibilities. In this midlife crisis, he is in need of some type of release and anything thrilling will do.

The Quarter-Life Crisis is the exact reverse. There is a young man that more than likely may not be able to just purchase a car spontaneously. He is trying to gain some momentum and discover his passions and who he is as an individual. This young man is running towards his true identity. The idea of responsibilities does not scare him, but rather his ultimate desire is to become more responsible and in control. There is no need for a thrill or disorganized thoughts but rather direction. However there is one word standing between him and his peace of mind. **“How”**?

Notice these two crises are distinctively different. One crisis signifies climbing up a hill to its peak and the other crisis signifies coming down a hill from its peak. Both the midlife or quarter life crises are not limited to any gender and can happen to anyone. So now that you know what the Quarter-Life Crisis is, how do you know if you are experiencing it? There are specific symptoms associated with the

Quarter-Life Crisis. These indicators fall under the categories of uncertainty, stagnation, and comparisons.

Uncertainty

One of the major signs you are in a Quarter-Life Crisis is the perception of uncertainty all around you. In other words, you are experiencing a lack of stability in numerous areas of your life. You may have had several jobs in the past few years. You may have also moved several times. Perhaps, you are having instability in relationships and friendships. Everything around you seems to be crumbling. No matter how hard you try, your future is just not shaping up and this is leading you into frustration. You are trying to figure out what you could have possibly done wrong but you cannot seem to pinpoint it. You think to yourself, “certainly all of this cannot be a coincidence!”

Your frustrations are now building up to discouragement because you begin to feel like maybe this is only a glimpse to the rest of your life. The fear begins to creep in because you are not certain if your life will ever shape up. The cousin of fear known as worry is now your frequent companion because you are desperately feeling the need to understand how everything will work out. This companion known as worry frequently visits you in the wee hours of the night and now you are losing sleep, sometimes even crying out of frustration.

Stagnation

Your uncertainty now breeds a sense of stagnation. You feel like you are in quick sand, unable to move, and sinking quickly. Your job is completely dissatisfying and the excitement has left. You long to be in a more fulfilling environment daily. The finances are not adding up either and no matter how many budgeting plans you make, the money is just not enough. Your friendships are not progressing or moving in the direction you want and you are questioning it. To sum it up in one statement, you feel stuck. As a matter of fact you do not just feel stuck because it appears that as you take one step forward, you take two steps backwards. One of the most common occurrences at the age of 25 is the feeling of lagging behind.

Comparison

The comparison game is up next. Not only is your life in a rut, but as you go on Facebook, Instagram, or Snapchat, it looks as if everyone's life is fresh out of a magazine. Even your favorite Hollywood movie pales in comparison to the perfection you are witnessing. Friends and families are getting married and having children while you are contemplating whether you can afford to eat take out. While you absolutely adore your friends and family, you are impatiently waiting for your turn to “shine” and be successful. Ok, let's just admit it! SECRETLY, you are a little jealous because let's face it, everyone wants to be happy. Your number one question to yourself is, “When will I be happy?”

I vividly remember all of these symptoms and feelings. Just like you, I experienced the Quarter-Life Crisis but at

the time I did not recognize it. While I had no clue how to get out of the situation I was facing, I just knew I could not deal with those feelings much longer. The truth is, taking on the burden of trying to figure how life will work out is too heavy a load for any person. I just knew that if I decided to carry that weight any longer, I would break. At that point I had three options. I could go on trying to carry the burden until it broke me. I could act as if the burden does not exist and put on a facade. Or I could release the burden to someone who could actually carry it.

So I know you are dying to know, what did I decide and how did I do it? If and how did I come out of a place of worry to contentment? How in the world did I overcome the Quarter-Life Crisis? I wish I had some play book or some secret procedure, but instead my answer seems complicated but yet so simple. I called on Jesus! Throughout this entire book, He is the main character of this story. The testimonies found in these pages are just the voices of the supporting cast solidifying that there is truly liberation in Jesus.

The Effects of the Symptoms

Whether you want to admit it or not, the symptoms of the Quarter-Life Crisis have an effect on your daily life. Rather than living life to the fullest, you have entered a place of worry and doubt. The frequency that you over analyze and over think should be considered illegal in some cities. The main reason is because life has bought you to a place of trusting in your current situation rather than the One who is in control of all situations. You have misplaced your trust and now believe what is supposed to be temporary

will actually be permanent. Rather than trusting the Lord, you are trusting yourself. You believe that the solution to your future can be found in yourself when really this could not be further from the truth. There are three realizations I need you to come to that is necessary to begin to peel back the layers and eventually get to the core of all of these symptoms.

You Are Not the Driver

Realize you are not the author and finisher of your life. Even before you were born, the Lord had a set design for your life. When you are the driver of a vehicle, then knowing the direction the car must go in is necessary. However when you are just the passenger, you can fall asleep and still make it to your destination on time and in one piece. You were not designed to worry. The Lord wants you to relinquish control and allow Him to steer your life. As He drives, you can find comfort in knowing your Driver will get you to your destination safe and sound.

Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

—Matthew 6:25-27 (NIV)

Seasons Change

Our life goes through seasons. In other words, nothing ever stays the same. This Quarter-Life Crisis is just a season and these feelings will pass. The person that is in a Mid-life Crisis (the direct opposite of the Quarter-Life Crisis), once went through the Quarter-Life crisis. That person transitioned from one season to the next. Often times, a period of instability is really a period of restructure. Structure always comes before increase therefore before you can receive increase, your structure and foundation must be strong enough to facilitate the increase. As you leave one job, this leaves room for you to find another job that is more in alignment with the Lords plan for your life. As the restructuring is taking place in your career, the Lord can now increase your finances, passion, and overall peace. The prior job was not in vain because there were important lessons that you would have obtained that can assist in the next season of your life. It was all a part of the restructuring process. The same is true for relationships, ministries, and pretty much anything else. Always remember that seasons change.

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

–Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8 (KJV)

Your Journey is Your Journey

Say this out loud, “I am exactly where I am meant to be in this moment of time.” Repeat it, but this time say it louder! “I AM EXACTLY WHERE I AM MEANT TO BE IN THIS MOMENT OF TIME.” Just because you felt you should have completed certain tasks or achieved certain goals by a certain time means that it was destined to be so. Everyone’s path is unique. Your journey was designed for you and you alone. What you may be able to handle can absolutely destroy someone else and vice versa. This is why the comparison game is so dangerous. The marriage that brings one person so much happiness may be a train wreck to another. You may not last one full day in that person’s shoes. While I absolutely love social media, we must be careful not to read too much into these platforms. Social media only shows a glimpse into the lives of its users. These glimpses are the best moments.

A smiling couple, a new born baby, college graduation, and good days on the job. No one ever posts the arguments between spouses, when the baby pooped all over himself, the struggle to complete college, and the days when the boss has made them feel taken for granted. The truth is, you may be comparing your reality to another “reality” that does not even exist. You are basically trying to achieve

a façade of perfection which is unattainable. Your entire puzzle will fit together in the end. Steve Jobs said it best. “You can’t connect the dots looking forward; you can only connect them looking backwards.” Do not get caught up and distracted by one dot. You will see the big picture when it is completed. While you may not always like it, embrace it. Your journey is your journey and completely tailor made for you! The moment I came to this revelation and realized that my life was not a race; the more I was able to kick back and truly enjoy the journey. Life is a journey and not a destination.

Before you were born, the God of the Angel Armies knew you. He knows every single day of your life. He knows what every moment of your life looks like. In other words, your destiny is written. This exact moment that exists, He knew it would exist. Quit pressuring yourself because everything in your life will fall into place the way it is meant to.

Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails.

–Proverbs 19:21(NIV)

King David is a perfect illustration of what the Lord can do when anyone patiently trusts His plans. While David was a young boy tending sheep, The Lord sent the prophet Samuel to anoint him as king. Can you imagine at such a young age already being sure of your destiny? Imagine while being perhaps a teenager, being told by a prophet of the Lord that you would be the next king? I know, kind of a big deal, right? No doubt, anyone that got this revelation would be super excited and ready to be crowned right

away. However, before David could be king, he had to get through the journey. David also never rushed the process. Even while Saul was king and trying to kill David, David never lifted a finger to harm him. Instead David took it one day at a time, served, and waited on the Lords timing. Eventually, over a decade later, by the age of 30, David became king. Not just any king, but one of the greatest that ever lived. All throughout David's life, although the circumstances did not always look ideal, he was always where he was meant to be.

The Quarter-Life Crisis can be a trying time, but Thank God we are able to overcome through the Blood of Jesus!

Chapter 1 Checklist

- Recognize the Quarter-Life Crisis in your life
- Observe the difference between the Midlife Crisis and the Quarter-Life Crisis
- Identify the symptoms of the Quarter-Life Crisis
- Accept the 3 Realizations