What Is a Midlife Crisis?

- Midlife is considered to be the middle ages in life ranging anywhere from approximately thirty-five to sixty.

- A midlife crisis is an unstable, crucial time of life during middle age when a person feels the immediate necessity to reevaluate one’s identity, values and goals.

- A midlife crisis may occur at the time of transitional changes in a person’s life.

- The resulting change can be negative or positive, depending on the choices that are made.

  “Such a person is a double-minded and unstable in all they do.”
  (James 1:8)

Midlife Crisis Checklist

- I feel trapped in my circumstances.
- I wish I could disappear.
- I feel I am getting old too fast.
- I feel I’ve never had the chance to do what I really wanted to do.
- I regret past decisions.
- I feel like a failure.
- I don’t feel I’m really needed.
- I feel unappreciated.
- I don’t have any real purpose for living.
- I have grown spiritually numb to the Lord and the church.
- I daydream and fantasize.
- I find myself shirking my responsibilities.
- I have little interest in sex with my spouse.
- I am easily angered.
- I mistrust the motives of those close to me.
- I feel that now is my last chance for happiness.

Characteristics of Midlife Crisis

Emotional

- Sense of loss
- Self-pity
- Anger
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Fear of aging
- Self-doubt
- Burnout
- Feeling trapped
- “Now or never” mentality or sense of urgency

  “Hear my prayer, LORD; let my cry for help come to you. Do not hide your face from me when I am in distress. Turn your ear to me; when I call, answer me quickly.”
  (Psalm 102:1–2)

Behavioral

- Strong desire for change (marriage, job, appearance)
- Attempts to escape (TV, drugs, travel, sleep)
- Dressing in a youthful manner
- Preoccupation with physical body (appearance, health)
- Vulnerability to sexual attraction outside marriage
- Personality changes
- Lack of church attendance and spiritual growth
- Withdrawal from close relationships
- Negative outlook on life
- Seeking to complete unfulfilled goals (education, children, career)

  “I said, ‘Oh, that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. I would flee far away and stay in the desert; I would hurry to my place of shelter, far from the tempest and storm.’”
  (Psalm 55:6–8)
Causes of Midlife Crisis

Thoughts of one’s own mortality
Reassessment of lifelong goals and values
Achievement of goals but not finding fulfillment
Normal biological and physiological changes
Sexual drive (diminishes in the male, increases in the female)
Insufficient financial resources
Traumatic illness or death of parents, family, or close friends
Identity misplaced (in a person, a job, or social status)
Offspring at difficult age and/or leaving home
Narrowing of job opportunities
Social emphasis on youth

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.”
(Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Move from Crisis to Christ

• Who am I? (1 John 3:1)
• What is my purpose in life? (Romans 12:1–2)
• To whom do I really want to give myself? (Matthew 22:37–39)
• What do I want to do for the rest of my life? (Psalm 40:8)
• Where does God fit into my life? (Psalm 23:1–6)
• What does God do with my wrong choices? (Lamentations 3:22–23)
• Where does my hope ultimately lie? (Psalm 62:5–8)

Model a Positive Midlife Message

• I will focus on creatively communicating love to others. (John 13:34)
• I will determine to make the most of the time God gives me. (Psalm 90:12)
• I will listen for God’s direction in my life. (Proverbs 16:9)
• I will recognize God’s presence in my life. (Colossians 1:27)

“When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.”
(Isaiah 43:2)

Key Verse to Memorize

“Blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him.”
(Jeremiah 17:7)

Key Passage to Read

2 Samuel 11:1–26

Questions and Answers

“How can a husband help his wife through a difficult midlife crisis?”

• Be a strong but gentle leader, walking with God. There is no greater cause for wifely respect than for a husband to assume spiritual servant headship in his household.
• Try to understand what she is feeling. An empathetic response, even one that is inaccurate, demonstrates a desire for intimate communication and relationship.
• Encourage her to communicate anger. Anger that is suppressed, repressed, or denied is anger that will fester. It needs to be resolved, but in a manner that is constructive, not destructive.
• Give her space and room to grow. Realize that she is your “other half,” the complementary member of a “one flesh” relationship. Encourage her unique giftedness by supporting her efforts to grow.
• Build her self-image verbally. She cannot read your mind. Express out loud your appreciation of her physical appearance, her character traits, and her accomplishments.
• Encourage her in projects and activities. Seek to identify what recreation she especially enjoys. Participate with her in those activities.

• Be focused on building her emotional security. Tell her every day that you love her, that she is your lifelong companion.

  "Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself."  
  (Ephesians 5:28)

• Be in daily prayer and study of God’s Word. There is power in a praying wife who applies the truth and promises of God’s Word to her own family, especially her husband.

• Try to understand what he is battling emotionally. Commit to learning his unique needs and work toward meeting those needs.

• Be prepared for his anger to be directed toward you. Encourage a constructive expression of his frustrations.

• Everyone is unique and deserves special treatment, but not all men know how to express their appreciation in meaningful ways.

• Find ways to gently encourage him to discuss his feelings.

• Be as attractive physically, verbally, and morally as possible. Understand that a man is much more visually oriented than a woman. If you continue to make the most of your physical appearance, you will be just as pretty to him when you are eighty years old as when you were twenty. Understand that words can be powerful ... in either criticism or praise.

• Be focused on building his self-image. The average woman has no idea of the power she has over her mate. That power does not lie in criticism and correction, but it resides in praise.

  "Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives."  
  (1 Peter 3:1)

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