



Lost in the Middle

Paul David Tripp

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The Bible never discusses midlife, just like it never discusses teenagers. Yet the Bible is able to address any of life's experiences because it was written by the One who made them all. Life on this side of glory is hard. This world is a broken place. You will face things in midlife that beat at the borders of your faith, but you do not have to be lost in the middle of your story.

Although this book is directed at those who are facing the issues of midlife, it has a much broader net than that. Lost in the Middle can help all who are confronted with life in this broken world and have lost their way. The God who seems so distant to you in this moment is actually near and active. Lost in the Middle is written to give you eyes to see him, to see yourself more clearly, and to find the real hope that you need to carry on.

You do not have to be paralyzed by regret, defeated by aging, and discouraged by the passing of your dreams. This time of life, which can seem like the end of many things, can actually welcome you to a brand new way of living. As is so often the case in your walk with the Lord, this moment of pain is also a moment of grace. Because of this, we all need to occasionally step back, slow down, and consider where we are going. Lost in the Middle will help you to do just that.

Lost in the Middle Details

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From Reader Review Lost in the Middle for online ebook

Cathy says

Best. Book. Ever. This book should be required reading for all believers in their forties and fifties. Really gives a Christ-centered view of life, aging, empty nest.

Jennifer says

Mid-life took me completely by surprise. I have never wanted to be anywhere else than I was (SAHM living in suburbia) in the house, town, church, community right where I lived. Then suddenly the walls were closing in... the illusion of control started to fade away... and even though the relationships remained intact, I found myself dreaming of "escape!" Not from my husband, but maybe from civilization? From responsibility? From children who kept me hopping and driving and buying and cooking and cleaning? lol This book nailed me so perfectly - just when you think you are so unique, it's eye-opening to discover that this is all fairly normal and part of being human. Why should we imagine that we will remain the same from age 21 until death? We recognize adolescence as a period of intense change and rediscovery, and it is validated and applauded as necessary to maturity. And yet when we face similar feelings in mid-life, the attitude becomes one of shame... It all feels like something that ought to be ignored, put down, set aside, denied, covered up. Instead, Tripp proposes that we think of this time of life as a "new start," an opportunity to discover new things about ourselves, to grow and change in positive ways with HOPE and dignity, as we move into the next stage of life.

I read this along with the following books, and found that they all seemed to travel similar routes:
A Daughter's a Daughter (fiction) A Daughter's a Daughter
Absent in the Spring (fiction) Absent In The Spring
Gift from the Sea (memoir) Gift from the Sea
The Gift of an Ordinary Day (memoir, see my review) The Gift of an Ordinary Day: A Mother's Memoir

Taken altogether, these books were good medicine during a period of discomfiting change in my life. Mid-life can feel stressful, but it can also be productive and interesting! Finding others who understand how it feels is a comfort, providing great help along the way. Good fiction provides the beauty and inspiration that we sometimes need to continue the journey with grace.

Mark Lindahl says

Timely in my life. I had read the first third then set it aside. I thought it was interesting and well written, but it didn't pull me along. Then something I couldn't understand happened in my life. I needed counsel and picked up this book again. It helped me begin to understand the formidable grace of God at work in me and around me.

Andy Anderson says

Are living with regret or disappointments as you enter the midlife? This is a book for middle age to older people who are facing their legacy in life. Great book and thoughtful in its approach of how God is using everything in our lives to get our attention to depend and worship him fully even in the midst of regret and disappointment.

Eddie Taylor says

My pastor loaned me this book after a discussion we had at lunch one day. I have often joked about having midlife crisis and knowing that I did not or could not have one. The reason being this usually involved buying a sports car, finding a cute 20 something, face lifts, etc. none of which interest me.

I am married to my best friend and not interested in changing. Sports cars are a waste of money and useless as they can't hold much fishing gear or get to the good spots on the beach or in the woods. Face lifts are an even bigger waste of money. No. No midlife stuff going on here.

But as my pastor pointed out, and the book does an excellent job delving into this subject, there is more to it than just sports cars and other things. It is trying to fill a void that can only be filled by God. Whether that void is caused by regret, disillusion, anxiousness, failings (real or perceived), loneliness, etc. it is an outward sign of what is going on in the inside.

Midlife is a time of reflection and looking to the future. The author does a great job of putting this time of life in a biblical context and perspective. Highly recommend this book to anyone - male or female - who might need some insight or guidance on this subject.

Stephanie says

Excellent.

Kelly Belvis says

A Christian perspective on midlife. This was a real eye-opener regarding the idols we create in our lives and then tend to lose or at least lose control of during mid-life. Often our dissatisfaction with this time of life is because we have invested our identity in things other than God whether that be career, vitality, youth, or even family. We are free to enjoy the gifts God has given us but none were meant to be idols. When we return our worship to Christ where it belongs the possibilities are endless even in mid-life. Now I must go color my hair, get some botox, buy a red sports car and take a mid-life nap!! (just kidding - better to pick up my Bible and read!)

Donna Craig says

My husband and I were reading this book together. We finally gave up on page 209/346. It was just too boring. He could have said the things he said (some of which WERE interesting) in 100 pages. And I think he should have.

Rebecca says

I literally turned the book face down when I was reading in public because... ahem... I'm not really ready to discuss my midlife crisis with the world. (And yet here I am, right?) This book is EXCELLENT. I cannot underestimate how helpful it is. Tripp has such a compassionate, pastorly way of writing. He gently leads readers into understanding how our own misaligned thought processes can lead to devastating and hurtful periods of life in this midlife time. Spoiler alert: aligning our hearts to God's is the antidote.

Havebooks Willread says

This is going to make my list of best books read in 2017, for sure. It's one of those books that makes me want to buy it by the case to pass out to people. If you are at, over, or quickly approaching that 40-year mark, I highly recommend it.

My parents divorced as they hit 25 years of marriage. I have learned, just in the last week, of two couples I know with serious marriage problems. I look around me and I see people in this mid-season of life struggling. . .mourning the loss of youth and fearing the process of aging. I see people struggling in this season as their idols of beauty, health, material success, marriage, children, etc. are insufficient. I see people struggle with their identities as the passing years rage at the foundations upon which they have staked their identities.

I enjoyed a slow trip through this book as I read it with a group of friends and we met periodically to discuss a couple chapters at a time. I think this is one I will definitely revisit and I feel confident I will gain something beneficial upon each re-reading as the seasons continue to go by. I very much appreciate Tripp's biblical-based worldview on this subject and think if more people kept this perspective before them, we would have fewer crises in mid-life.

Mrs. Nesbitt says

I loved this book. It spoke to me at a time in my life of much confusion. The minute I finished the Kindle version, I ordered a paperback copy to re-read. This was the exact book I needed to read at this exact time of my life. Highly recommend for anyone in these midlife years.

Julie Biles says

Tripp nails the feeling of discontent and the elusiveness of satisfaction that every human being experiences at all phases of life: this sense of disappointment is often heightened in mid-life, hence the title. But, this book is a wonderful read for any person who has ever said, "Surely there is more to life!"

Denise says

Once again, Paul David Tripp is dead on! This book caused me to really think about what am I putting my energy, treasures, and time into...as well as my zeal and affection. You can't read it and live like you never ingested these truths. So good!

Paul says

I've been reading a few books on "midlife" lately, trying to catch up on what I missed ;-) This book was pretty helpful to me in an unexpected way. One problem I had with it is that it's very wordy and repetitive. I almost didn't make it through the introduction, but I'm fairly persistent about finishing a book once I've started it. Aside from that, I'm not sure I agree with the degree to which he says that God exercises his sovereignty over our individual lives, but that's a minor quibble.

Reading though the book I came across more than a few sections that deeply touched me. Tripp encourages a thorough review, a personal archaeology, of the values and goals that have taken the place of a devotion to God. Midlife is the time when the things we have worked for and planned on for most of our lives fall into question. It's a chance to be honest with ourselves about how much we have been devoted to God himself rather than what we think he can do for us. It's a time to realize that many of the things about our lives that we thought were under our control are not. It becomes more and more obvious that some of our strongest hopes and dreams in life will not be realized or, if they have been, don't seem to be worth the price we paid to achieve them. Here's where the repetitiveness of the author's words becomes beneficial. If we're to be completely honest with ourselves, much of what Paul Tripp has to say in this book needs to be rubbed in.

This is a good book for those who find, or have found, themselves to be seriously stuck in the midlife years. It would be hard to take it seriously if you haven't experienced some serious setbacks or problems that typically come with growing older, past the "prime" of life. For me, it has been a great help and encouragement in making sense of a deep personal crisis that I experienced in my 40's. It was encouraging to see how that experience has been used to bring significant transformation and blessing into my life. It's an ongoing process, but I can see the value in experiences that I thought were completely hopeless at the time. The grace of God pervades and can powerfully transform the life's difficult circumstances. That is the kind of change of mind and heart that the author is trying to encourage in his readers to get them through the difficulties of midlife on the premise that we are made for more than what the world we live in claims to offer. This book is good medicine.

Sally Ewan says

This book was a great encouragement to me, as I have often felt discouraged and defeated over the past year. The author did a great job of pointing out why we may find ourselves adrift in our middle years. I am thankful for the reminder that God is all-sufficient and all that I need, and He loves me too much to let me

put my hope in anything but Him. May I remember that truth and live joyfully in light of it!
