

“Is this it?’ is a question most of us have asked ourselves at some point. In a truthful, personal and humorous way, this book answers that question. Rachel masterfully communicates the joys and challenges we face in our twenties, and intertwines reminders of biblical truths, which we can stake our lives upon. If you are in your twenties or know someone who is, read this book.”

SHAR WALKER, Author; Speaker

“An extremely helpful and timely book for younger Christians who are trying to make sense of life and faith. As a pastor of a congregation filled with young folks going through the ‘quarter-life crisis’, I now have a resource to give to these young believers. *Is This It?* is rooted in the Bible, saturated with a gospel worldview and a real pleasure to read. I wholeheartedly recommend it.”

TONY MERIDA, Pastor, Imago Dei Church, Raleigh, North Carolina

“For many of us, our twenties bring a swirl of change. Jobs, cities, relationships and ambitions all change. It’s little wonder that such an overwhelming decade rakes up disappointment, rootlessness and questions of just where we fit in. Rachel empathetically shares how looking to Jesus comforts us and frees us to make the most of these years of flux.”

PETER DRAY, Head of Creative Evangelism, UCCF

“Fantastic at demonstrating the relevance of the Bible to the ‘quarter-life crisis’, Rachel Jones widens our vision and gives us an eternal perspective.”

JAGO WYNNE, Rector, Holy Trinity Clapham, London

“Rachel deftly articulates the discontent many feel when they find life as an adult hasn’t turned out the way they expect, and she applies the Bible to that struggle. I am eager to use this book with those about to graduate.”

RACHEL SLOAN, Women’s Ministry Coordinator, Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh

“Life in young adulthood can seem pretty disorienting—this book gets how that feels, and helps you find your feet and walk with confidence. And for anyone who, like me, is well beyond being anywhere near young adulthood, Rachel will help you get inside how it feels to be a millennial or Gen-Z-er—to understand the tensions, hopes and fears, and how the Christian faith speaks compellingly to them.”

RICO TICE, Senior Minister, All Souls Langham Place, London; Founder, Christianity Explored

“Rachel Jones is the friend who just gets you. In *Is This It?*, she covers profoundly deep and impactful issues for twentysomethings with relatability, honesty, and a healthy dose of humor. This book will address some of your deepest longings, fears and insecurities while meeting you with a firehouse of gospel grace and practical insight. I wish everyone my age could read this book!”

JAQUELLE CROWE, Author, *This Changes Everything*; Founder, The Young Writer

“Rachel Jones can put timeless truth into very timely words. Her voice is both current and weighty. I can’t recommend this book highly enough.”

STEF LISTON, Pastor, Revelation Church, London; Spoken Word Artist

“In an age of Instagram comparisons and Fear Of Missing Out, Rachel does an amazing job of pointing the dissatisfied back to Jesus and the satisfying truth of the Scriptures.”

JERRAD LOPES, Founder of DadTired.Com

“This is a witty, engaging book that not only describes some of the challenges of modern Western life but in a fresh way articulates how the gospel of Jesus Christ meets us in our deepest desires and needs.”

PAUL REES, Lead Pastor, Charlotte Chapel, Edinburgh

“When it comes to this generation in the grip of the ‘quarter-life crisis’, too often cynics roll their eyes while others merely reinforce their blindspots. By contrast, this book engages brilliantly with compassion, clarity, wit and, most importantly, much-needed, Christ-centred, grace-filled truth. This book is a gem—read it, share it with others and realise the difference Jesus makes!”

PETE NICHOLAS, Senior Minister, Inspire London; Author, *Virtually Human*

“I totally love this book! It’s witty, honest and painfully real—a gem. I laughed out loud; I cried; I felt like Rachel could see into my head and she understood. Better still, she showed me the difference Jesus makes to life’s questions. This book is so packed full of wisdom, I’ll have to buy in bulk as I know I’ll keep giving it away!”

LINDA ALLCOCK, Globe Church, London

“Here’s some smart, solid, durable and proven wisdom—the kind of wisdom that’s getting harder to find. So my advice for 20-somethings who love Jesus is this: get it and read it.”

JOEL VIRGO, Senior Pastor, Emmanuel Church, Brighton, UK



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Is This It?

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# 31 REASONS YOU MIGHT NEED THIS BOOK

True or false? Score 1 point for every true answer.

1. You frequently find yourself asking, “What should I do with my life?”
2. Watching sitcoms from your adolescence on Netflix makes everything feel better.
3. You still keep loads of stuff in the house you grew up in.
4. You still keep loads of stuff in the house you grew up in because you still live there.
5. You wonder whether you’ve really got any friends anymore.
6. You feel out of place at church because everyone else seems to have kids, a perm or a teddy bear (because they’re either a parent, a pensioner or four years old).
7. You dread family occasions because relatives will ask you what you’re doing with your life.
8. Life was definitely better when you were a teenager.
9. You suspect that quitting everything and going travelling might just solve all your problems.

10. Social media leaves you with the miserable suspicion that most of your friends have more fun/a better relationship/more money/a better house/more friends than you do (1 point for each).
11. You've ended up in a job that has absolutely nothing to do with what you dreamed of doing when you were six (or eleven, or sixteen).
12. You don't know how to do grown-up things like defrosting a freezer or paying your bills without looking it up on the internet or calling a real adult.
13. You suspect your mother is a little bit sad that you're not married by now.
14. You're a bit sad that you're not married by now.
15. You are married and you're still a bit sad right now.
16. You're worried that everyone at work will find out that you're secretly terrible at it.
17. "Buy a house? WITH WHAT MONEY?"
18. You worry that you've got God's plan for your life wrong.
19. You worry that God's got his plan for your life wrong.
20. Looking closely in the mirror is an increasingly distressing experience.
21. You'd really like a job that you'd find more fulfilling... but you've got no idea what that would be.
22. You sometimes quietly wonder if you should give up on God.
23. You're just... a bit bored of life.



24. The way you wander aimlessly around Aldi or Walmart wondering what to have for dinner is a metaphor for your complete inability to make decisions. About anything.
25. Everyone else seems to be having babies, and you wonder how you got to this stage of life so quickly.
26. You didn't expect that being an adult would involve this much life admin.
27. Your back hurts.
28. Your bank account is like a black hole: no matter how much you earn, or how little you spend, there's never much left at the end of the month.
29. You catch yourself talking about the pros and cons of various household appliances with your friends and then saying, "WHEN DID WE GET THIS OLD?"
30. You find yourself asking, "Is this it?"
31. You're a parent to someone who would answer "true" to a lot of those questions, and you thought they'd have grown up by now—and you're not sure quite where things got stuck. (Add 5 points.)

## 20+ POINTS: YOU REALLY NEED THIS BOOK

You've reached the age that you thought you'd have life figured out by—and you're disappointed to find that you don't. Welcome to the club. This book is aimed right at you.

## 10-20 POINTS: YOU NEED THIS BOOK

You're doing an OK job at keeping it together as a fully-functioning grown-up. Some days you even do your own laundry

and eat the recommended number of fruit and vegetable portions. Other days you lie in your bed with your duvet over your head when the alarm goes, asking “Why?” You need to read this book.

### 1-9 POINTS: YOU KIND OF NEED THIS BOOK

Well, OK, you seem to be more or less keeping it together—but now you’ve got this far you might as well carry on reading. Or maybe you’re a student and you still have most of this ahead of you. In which case, read this book to prepare you for the day you find yourself wailing down the phone to an unsuspecting friend or relative, “WHAT AM I MEANT TO BE DOING WITH MY LIFE?”

### WHEN DID BEING GROWN-UP GET THIS HARD?

“Why did no one ever warn me that being an adult was going to be this... *difficult*?”

I was 24 years old, I was sitting on my bed, and I was feeling thoroughly sorry for myself.

It’s not that life had fallen apart—it was more that it hadn’t quite come together.

On one level, things looked OK. My job was secure, my rent was cheap and church life was busy.

And yet... I was desperately bored at work, secretly lonely at church—and don’t even get me started on how weird my housemates were.

Nothing was *really wrong*, but none of it felt *quite right*. Whatever I had imagined adult life would be like, it wasn’t this. I couldn’t help but ask myself, “Is this it?”

It turns out that my experience was so unoriginal that there's even a name for it: the Quarter-Life Crisis. It can strike at pretty much any time in our 20s or early 30s. The networking website LinkedIn found that 75% of us report having one.

Unlike its older brother, the Midlife Crisis, the Quarter-Life Crisis has nothing to do with buying an expensive sports car (because, let's face it, we don't have that kind of money). Instead, it's that dawning realisation that you've reached the age by which you had always assumed that you'd have got it all (or at least some of it) figured out, only to find that you haven't at all. You're still incompetent at doing all the things that grown-ups are meant to be able to do—like keeping a house-plant alive, or topping up the rinse-aid in a dishwasher, or eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. And worse, you're overwhelmed by all the feelings and decisions that grown-ups are meant to be able to deal with.

You feel a little bit lost, a little bit lonely, a little bit like you're looking for something, but you're not even sure what.

The Quarter-Life Crisis creeps up on birthdays and New Year's Eves, and it rears its head any time you see on social media that someone you went to school with has had a baby, got a promotion, or simply had the audacity to look happy in a photo. It's that desire to change something about your life, but being overwhelmed by the options. It's the uneasy feeling that comes when you take stock of everything around you—the people, the places and the relentless routines of work and washing up—and find yourself asking, "Is this it?"

When I hit my personal "Is this it?" moment, and started to talk to my friends about how I was feeling, I discovered that they were having their own Quarter-Life Crisis too. One friend told me about how he was resigned to hating his job for ever.

Another said he was worried he'd made the wrong choices and got in the way of God's plan for his life. A third described how she had always imagined she'd be married with kids by the time she was 30, and how that was looking increasingly unlikely: "I feel like I'm grieving something I never had".

"Well," said a friend with a particularly dry sense of humour, "I think the Quarter-Life Crisis is when you've been out of education for a while and you start to realise that this is for ever. The next big life event is retiring or dying."

## THE MEASURE OF ADULTING RIGHT

So what on earth is wrong with us all? Maybe you're a bit older than the typical QLC-sufferer, and you'd like nothing more than to shake me by the shoulders and give me a reality check. Maybe you have identified the problem: I'm a self-absorbed 20-something who needs to just grow up and snap out of it.

And believe me, I'd love to.

First, because I know that there are Bigger Problems in the world than these. After all, if I'm feeling crippled by indecision about what to do with my life, that's because I'm privileged enough to have choices at all. Maybe you know what it feels like to have those kinds of Bigger Problems. Maybe adult life for you has so far been marked by bereavement, depression or chronic ill-health. Perhaps you're living with scars inflicted by someone else, or under the weight of a mistake you made years ago.

Second—and more importantly—because I know that the Christian life is not meant to feel like this. The Bible doesn't use the phrase "Quarter-Life Crisis", but it does use the word "trials". And this is what it says about them:

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. (James 1 v 2-4)*

People my parents' age tend to think that my generation just needs to grow up. God thinks something different: that we need to grow like Jesus.

These verses (and, for that matter, this book) are talking to people who are Christians—people who recognise who Jesus is and why that matters, and who try to live their lives in a way that honours him as King (and yet still enjoy his forgiveness when they mess that up). And being a Christian ought to turn our expectations of adulthood on their head. If we're following Christ, life's big adventure is not climbing the career ladder or meeting milestones—it's about becoming "mature and complete" in our faith. So the measure of whether we're adulthood right is not whether we've got our own place with a pet, but whether our character looks like Christ's.

That's what "maturity" means—becoming like Jesus, the most courageous, compassionate, convictional, kind grown-up of all time. How do we grow into that maturity? Through trials. What I love about this verse in James is that there isn't any difficult season that isn't covered by that catch-all phrase, "trials of many kinds". There isn't any problem that is too small to count—God sees it all, cares about it all, and wants to use it all. It's all these things that put our faith to the test and turn it into something tougher, wiser and more beautiful.

It's this truth that means that facing up to the question "Is this it?" can be "pure joy" too—even in the moments when we're sitting on our beds feeling sorry for ourselves. The indecision,

the self-doubt, the rootlessness and the discontent can all be considered 100% pure joy—because they’re an opportunity to appreciate more fully what Jesus gives, and to understand more clearly where real life is found.

Which sounds great.

The trouble is, I don’t believe it.

Or at least, I don’t really believe it—not in a way that grips my heart and my head and eclipses all the other things I secretly long for.

But I want to believe it—I want to taste that “pure joy” James talks about. Hence this book. I’m talking to myself really, but you’re more than welcome to listen in. I’ll warn you now that some of this may not be new to you—but sometimes, when we can’t see the wood for the trees, we just need reminding of what we already know all over again. So over the next twelve chapters, we’ll look at some of the challenges and emotions that grown-up life brings. You can read them in any order, depending on what you’re feeling like. By the end of this book, it’s my hope that you’ll be that little bit closer not to being a proper grown-up, but to being “mature and complete” in Christ. Because persevering in following Jesus offers us something truer and better than chasing anything else in our 20s and 30s can.

Is this it?

No, it’s not. There’s more to this life, and there’s more than this life.

Trust me. Or rather, trust Jesus. Everything is going to be OK.