



40/40 *Vision: Clarifying Your Mission in Midlife*

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*“The stereotypes and stories tell us that midlife is an unpredictable and mysterious time, full of temptation and ruin – but what Greg and Peter offer is a clear picture of how unpredictability and mystery are actually opportunities to bring renewed faith and fresh encounters with Christ. Read this book and be equipped to live for what matters most.”*

– **Mark Batterson**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Circle Maker*, lead pastor, National Community Church, Washington, DC

## Meaningless, meaningless, everything is meaningless?

When I (Peter) travel, my airplane seat becomes my mobile desk and a haven of productivity. After quickly greeting my neighbor, I pop in my earbuds – effectively closing the door to my “office” – and get to work. Much of my writing for this book took place above the clouds.

On a recent flight to Ukraine, I sat next to a very tall man with a Northern European accent, which I soon learned was Dutch. He began talking before I could place my earbuds. After pleasant introductions and some chatter about our travel destination, he asked the inevitable question: “So, what do you do?”

After describing microfinance, I began to describe how HOPE is a Christian organization seeking to address both physical and spiritual poverty. Clearly done with small talk, his eyes flashed as he firmly said, “I used to be a Christian, but then my son got sick. I begged God to save him every single day and offered God anything he wanted if he would just intervene and heal my boy. But there was no miracle. Watching my boy suffer and then die was the most gut-wrenching experience of my life. No parent should have to bury their child.”

As I listened to more details of this father’s anguish, my heart ached. He eventually concluded, “That was the last time I ever prayed.”

Perhaps others wiser than I would have had a response, but hearing his excruciating story left my heart hurting and my tongue tied.

After a few more minutes of more conversation and then silence, I followed his lead and opened up the US Airways travel magazine from the seat pocket in front of me. Just inside the cover, a smiling pair of perfectly retouched swimsuit models stared back at me. A few pages later, I saw a ranking of the best plastic surgeons in America, three of which worked within driving distance of my home. An advertisement promised to freeze my love handles away. A little further on I found the cure for male pattern baldness. Then came a multipage spread detailing “5 Tips for Modern Dating,” with an adjacent ad promising lonely travelers hope if we’ll just dive into their pool of 200,000 potential matches. It’s comforting to know they’re as committed as I am to finding a soulmate.

In the wake of talking about death, this all seemed absurdly trivial. Seriously, what’s the point of all that self-improvement when it so inevitably ends?

It wasn’t just the pain of the man sitting next to me. By midlife, pain, death and loss have

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# BOOK EXCERPT

*“Greg and Peter are the friends you want to have as you enter midlife. They remind you of age-old warnings, guide you to healthy practices of flourishing and have you laughing along the way. This is an important book about an important decade, no matter what your age.”*

— **Jena Lee Nardella**,  
cofounder of Blood:Water,  
author of *One Thousand Wells*

impacted us all. Grandparents are gone, and parents are showing signs of aging. We know we’re not far behind as we see the toll of maturing on our own bodies and minds. Our dreams begin graying as much as our hair. Life feels shorter than ever. The entertainments that used to keep us happy and distracted no longer produce the same thrill.

By midlife, our rose-colored glasses are cracked and foggy. Are we brave enough to take them off and squint into reality?

— *Excerpt taken from chapter two, “Meaning(less)”*



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*"I turned forty this year, and I'm happy to report I'm still the same person I was last year . . . but not without a bit of existential angst about the brevity of life. In this timely book, Peter and Greg guide us to reflect on the gifts of growing older, inviting us to learn from past mistakes and refocus on what matters most. This is a book everyone in the midst of midlife needs to read."*

— Kristen Howerton, founder of Rage Against the Minivan

## Finding Vision Beyond a Midlife Crisis

*In their new book, 40/40 Vision: Clarifying Your Mission in Midlife, Peter Greer and Greg Lafferty take stock of their own personal journeys as leaders in midlife and realize that there is an excellent opportunity to recalibrate a vision that may have become clouded. Uniquely positioned to offer insight for navigating midlife with fresh clarity and purpose, they draw on the wisdom of the book of Ecclesiastes, showing how we can come to grips with the realities of who we are and what we should become in the years ahead.*

### Why is forty considered such a pivotal age?

**Peter Greer & Greg Lafferty:** In 1965, Canadian psychologist Elliott Jaques created the moniker "midlife crisis" with the belief that a crisis occurs as a person is forced to look mortality in the eye. Midlife is a critical point at which we are forced to confront the reality that our lives have an expiration date. It's the old age of youth and the youth of old age.

Somewhere around age forty, we also begin wondering if we will ever climb a higher mountain, close a bigger deal or truly make a difference. Reflecting on the first half of life, we ask, is this all there is? All this work, does it even matter?

### Is it even worth considering your impact and vision for the rest of your life by the time you hit midlife?

**Peter & Greg:** Opening our eyes to our mortality and limitations can allow us to live more fully. Midlife is an opportunity to leave some of our youthful folly behind, to look back at our first forty and refocus on what matters most for our next forty—or however long we have. It's a time to prepare for our second act, to get our second wind.

### Why are you two uniquely gifted to write a book about reframing your life vision?

**Peter:** I recently turned forty, and statistically, that means I am about to enter the decade that derails many leaders. Thankfully, my friend Greg has just passed fifty and managed to thrive through this decade of transition.

**Peter & Greg:** Over the past several years, we (Greg and Peter) have discussed complex questions raised by modern life and often returned to the ancient wisdom in Ecclesiastes that our guide, Qoheleth, explored regarding the key questions of life and death centuries ago. Through the wisdom of Qoheleth, *40/40 Vision* examines the timeless struggle to find meaning and equips a new generation to be "all in" for a lifetime of faithful living.



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## Providing a “Midlife Opportunity”

*“40/40 Vision is not just a book; it’s also a mirror helping us reflect on the trajectory of our lives,” writes J.R. Briggs, pastor, author of Fail and coauthor of Eldership and the Mission of God. “As the psalmist tells us to number our days in order to gain wisdom, see this as a tool to help count. Through the lens of Ecclesiastes, Greer and Lafferty show us it’s not a midlife crisis but a midlife opportunity. If you’re hungry to learn from the wisdom of others who have traveled – and who are currently traveling – life’s path, this book is for you.”*

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**Peter Greer** is president and CEO of HOPE International, a global, Christ-centered microfinance organization serving throughout Africa, Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

Internationally, Peter served as microfinance adviser in Cambodia, technical adviser for Self-Help Development Foundation in Zimbabwe and managing director for Urwego in Rwanda. As an advocate for the church’s role in missions and alleviating extreme poverty, Peter has been a featured speaker at conferences such as Catalyst, Passion, Jubilee and Harvest International’s Development Conference. He has also been featured in *Christianity Today*, *World*, *Forbes*, *Relevant* and *Outcomes* magazines and on CNN.

Peter is the author or coauthor of *The Poor Will Be Glad*, *The Spiritual Danger of Doing Good*, *Mission Drift*, *Entrepreneurship for Human Flourishing*, *Stop Helping Us* and *Watching Seeds Grow*. Peter and his wife, Laurel, live in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, with their three children.

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**Greg Lafferty** is the senior pastor of Willowdale Chapel, a church with campuses in Kennett Square and Jennersville, Pennsylvania. A graduate of Wheaton College, he cut his ministry teeth working with junior high students for ten years before transitioning into adult ministry.

Previously Greg served at both Wheaton Bible Church and Christ Community Church in suburban Chicago and Saddleback Church in Southern California. He has served the church his entire vocational career alongside his wife of over thirty years, Deane, with whom he has three children.