# Q4 Calling Workbook

A workbook for your next faithful step at ages 16 to 25

**What kind of person do you want to become?**

You don't have to figure out your whole future today. Let's talk through who matters to you, what you care about, what you have to work with, and the next step you can take.



FOUR QUESTIONS / ONE DIRECTION TO EXPLORE / A 90 DAY TEST

Name or initials

Started on

Review on

YOUR WORKBOOK MAP

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Build your answers one section at a time

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## How the exercises connect

Start by picturing a meaningful year. Then name your people and priorities, look at what you have to work with, and choose a win worth pursuing. Each page helps you take the next step.

## What you will leave with

You'll have a clearer picture of your people, priorities, resources, and win. You'll put a possible calling into your own words. You'll choose a small test, schedule it, and plan how to review what you learn.

## Using the fillable PDF

Download your copy and open it in Adobe Acrobat Reader. Type in the pale response areas, press Tab to move between them, and save as you go. Keep your answers within the visible space so they print in full.

**A note about the name** Q4 refers to the four-question process, not the fourth quarter of the calendar year.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

# Start here

For wherever you are between 16 and 25

Maybe you're choosing classes, applying for work, taking a gap year, or wondering whether to start again. When someone asks, “What are you doing with your life?” you may hear a question you can't answer yet. You can take a breath here.

Calling is a growing sense of how to use your life and abilities in service of what matters. Your work belongs in that picture, alongside faith, relationships, responsibilities, and the person you're becoming. These pages are for young women and young men, with room for your own story.

**Q1**
Who matters most?

**Q2**
What matters most?

**Q3**
What do we have to work with?

**Q4**
How do we play to win?

## Take this at your own pace

- Give yourself two or three unrushed sittings. Invite a trusted mentor, parent, pastor, or friend if talking helps you think.
- Write what you really think. You can say, “I don't know yet,” then name one way you could find out.
- Keep your earlier pages nearby. You'll use what you learn in one exercise to help you with the next.
- Share only what you choose. You can name practical limits without writing private family, health, or financial details.

## A word from my heart

I want you to have room to ask honest questions without feeling like a disappointment. Your worth doesn't begin when someone hires you. Bring God the hope, the pressure, and even the question you're embarrassed to say aloud. You can be loved and still be learning what comes next.

**Optional prayer** “God, help me listen honestly, receive wise counsel, and take the next faithful step.”

The short stories are fictional illustrations, not accounts of real people. Follow Jordan's example through the four questions, then let your answers reflect your own life.

**Before you begin, what would you really like help figuring out?**

SECTION 01 / LOOK BACK

# Picture a meaningful year

Picture progress that would matter to you



Imagine we're sitting down one year from today, looking back together. What would need to have happened for you to say, “I've made meaningful progress” in your life, relationships, faith, and work or learning? This is the look-back question: picture the future first, then look back at what made it worthwhile.

Before you name a job, think about what you'd like to learn, contribute, or become. You'll revisit this picture after working through the four questions.

## Look for progress you can see

- What would you like to learn by actually trying it?
- Which responsibility would you like to handle more steadily?
- Who would you like to care for, and what useful skill would you like to practice?

## Make the picture concrete

“I'll have everything figured out” is a lot to ask of one year. Try: “I'll try two kinds of work, check what training involves, and choose my next step.”

## A fictional story about Jordan

Jordan, 19, has eleven career tabs open and has applied for exactly nothing. He laughs: “Apparently researching my future is my full-time job.” He works part time and is curious about electrical work and IT support. Looking ahead a year, he wants real experience in both and enough information to choose a next step.

**Take a breath** If everyone else's plans seem settled, that can hurt. You don't have to turn that feeling into a rushed commitment. Give yourself a small, honest way to begin.

## Get ready to write

What has brought you to this question today? What have you already tried? Bring that experience to the next page.

SECTION 01 / EXERCISE 1

# Write your one year picture

Your starting point for every exercise that follows

**1 Why are you thinking about your future now? What have you tried or learned?**

**2 A year from today, what three things would you be glad you'd done?**

A

B

C

**3 What kind of person would you be becoming? What would others notice?**

**4 What would you regret never giving yourself a chance to explore?**

**5 Choose the hope that matters most to you. Why does it matter?**

**NEXT STEP** Keep this page open as you begin Q1. Think about who would be affected if you pursued this hope.

SECTION 02 / Q1

# Who matters most

Think about the people your choices touch



Before you choose a direction, think about the people who share your life. Who do you care for? Who shows up for you? Who might your work help? Include yourself. Your life matters now, while your direction is still taking shape.

## Listen without losing your own voice

You can learn a lot from people who love you. You can also disagree with them respectfully. Name the responsibilities that really are yours and the boundaries you need. You don't have to choose someone else's life to show that you care.

- Who depends on you in a practical way?
- Who will be honest with you and still respect your decision?
- Who might you help through the work you're curious about?

**Jordan tries Q1** Jordan wants to be dependable at home, stay close to a good friend, and grow more independent. Those relationships belong in his plan, alongside his career questions.

**A fictional story about Maya** Maya, 16, asks her family for career advice. By dessert, she has been assigned four careers and a backup career. Later she asks one trusted adult, “What have you actually seen me do well?” That question opens a better conversation. You can listen with love and still have a voice.

**Optional Scripture reflection** If you'd like, read Mark 12:29-31. How could your love for God and your neighbor shape the way you approach work and responsibility?

SECTION 02 / EXERCISE 2

# Build your people map

Use your one year picture from page 5

**1 Who would your hoped-for progress affect? Write their names or groups, including yourself.**

| Person or group | How your lives affect each other | What you want to honor |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

**2 Whose expectations have you taken on? What do you honestly want?**

**3 Who could help you think wisely without deciding for you?**

**4 Who could benefit from the work you want to explore?**

**5 What relationship, responsibility, or boundary does your next step need to respect?**

**NEXT STEP** Bring your last answer into Q2. As you choose your priorities, make room for the people and responsibilities you've named.

SECTION 03 / Q2

# What matters most

Choose what matters in the season you're in



What do you want your work to make room for? What do you want to contribute? Look back at your people map. Then choose three priorities that deserve your attention in the season you're in now.

Choose three priorities for this season. Describe what each would look like in an ordinary week, including when you're tired or your plans change.

### LIFE

Relationships, faithfulness, independence, flexibility

### WORK

Useful skills, dependable income, creativity, service

## Notice what draws you in

- When have you felt useful or caught up in what you were doing? What were you actually doing?
- What problem do you care enough about to keep working on, even when it gets difficult?
- Which priority feels true to you? Which one mostly sounds impressive to someone else?

## Make an honest tradeoff

Even work you enjoy has tedious parts. More pay may mean extra training, a move, or hours you don't want. Picture an ordinary week and consider the tradeoffs you could accept.

**Jordan tries Q2** Jordan chooses useful work, learning a skill, and steady income. A prestigious title matters less to him. He is willing to start small while honoring his current commitments.

**Optional Scripture reflection** If you'd like, read Ephesians 2:10. What good work could you do now, before you have a title or a long-term plan?

**A fictional story about Nia** Nia, 22, thinks she wants event work because she loves a good celebration. Helping at one, she discovers she also likes schedules and solving last-minute problems. Carrying chairs is less glamorous. She asks, “Would I still want this on a Tuesday?” You can ask that about your own interests.

SECTION 03 / EXERCISE 3

# Choose your three priorities

Build on the people and responsibilities from page 7

**1 Choose your three priorities. What would each one look like in your everyday life?**

| Your priority | Why it matters to you | What it looks like in your week |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

**2 What problem matters to you? When have you felt useful working on it?**

**3 Finish these sentences about a tradeoff you could accept**

**For this season, I would accept**

**To protect**

**4 What boundary or value do you want to protect?**

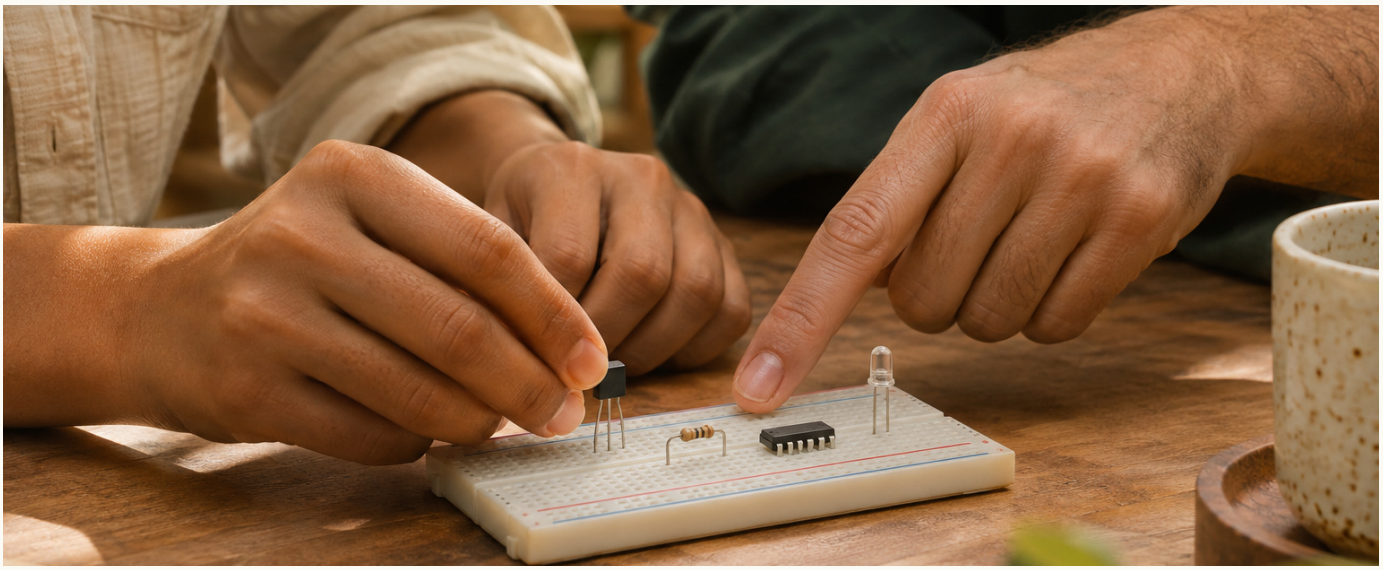
**5 How do your priorities honor the people you named in Q1?**

**NEXT STEP** Keep these three priorities beside you for Q3. You'll look for the resources and support that could help you put them into practice.

SECTION 04 / Q3

# What do we have to work with

Take an honest look at where you're starting



You have more to work with than a résumé can show. Think about time, energy, curiosity, relationships, experience, and skills. Name your limits, too, so your next step fits the life you have.

## Notice the small things you do well

In another fictional moment, Maya fixes the youth group's sound problem: the microphone was muted. Everyone cheers. She laughs, then notices she enjoys patient troubleshooting. A small success gives her a skill to explore. What have you explained, organized, repaired, or followed through on?

### USE

What can you already do?

### GROW

What could you practice?

### ASK

Who or what could help you?

## Work with the limits you have today

- How much time can you reliably set aside around work or school?
- What do your transport, location, energy, and responsibilities at home allow?
- What could you afford to spend, and what income do you need to protect?

Rough amounts are enough to help you judge what's workable. You can keep private financial, health, and family details to yourself.

## Jordan takes stock with Q3

Jordan has customer-service experience, basic computer skills, and four hours a week to explore. He needs to check transport, costs, schedules, and entry requirements. Each unknown becomes a question he can investigate.

**Optional Scripture reflection** If you'd like, read 1 Peter 4:10. What ability or opportunity could you use to help someone this week?

Needing help doesn't disqualify you. Include the people and support that could help you grow.

SECTION 04 / EXERCISE 4

# Name your resources and gaps

Look for resources that support your Q2 priorities

**1 Think of things you've actually done. Small examples count.**

| Resource or strength | Evidence you've seen | What you need to develop or verify |
|---|---|---|
| A skill you use | | |
| A way you help people | | |
| Something you learn readily | | |

**2 Who could let you ask questions, observe the work, or try a small project?**

**3 Set limits you can realistically keep for your first test**

**Time each week**

**Maximum cost**

**What responsibilities, transport needs, or other limits should you plan around?**

**4 What skill or fact do you most need? How could you learn it?**

**5 Which resource could help you care for your people and practice a top priority?**

**NEXT STEP** Take your people, priorities, available time, and biggest unknown into Q4. You'll use them to define a win that fits your life.

SECTION 05 / Q4

# How do we play to win

Decide what meaningful progress would look like for you



Go back to the one-year picture you wrote. You now know more about the people you care for, the priorities you want to live out, and what you have to work with. Use those answers to make your picture of progress clearer.

You get to define a meaningful win for this season. Finding out that a path doesn't fit can help you move forward, too. Focus on actions you can take and things you can learn, even when the final outcome isn't entirely in your hands.

## How will you recognize your progress

- What will you have done, learned, made, or practiced?
- What could you point to as evidence of your progress?
- How would that progress serve your people and priorities?

## Work backward from the result

| ONE YEAR | 90 DAYS | THIS WEEK |
|---|---|---|
| A direction worth pursuing | Evidence from real experience | One manageable action |

Before you choose a degree, spend significant money, move, or leave a job, ask what you still need to learn. A conversation, an approved observation visit, or a work sample may help you make a wiser commitment.

## Picture a win you can work toward

Jordan's one-year win is to explore electrical work and IT support, understand the training requirements, and choose his next step. He can work toward an informed choice without promising himself a particular job.

**Take a breath** You may wish progress looked more impressive. God is not waiting for a polished résumé before you can bring him your life. An honest conversation or a promise kept matters in the person you're becoming.

SECTION 05 / EXERCISE 5

# Define your win

Revise your page 5 picture using Q1 through Q3

### 1 A year from now, what would you be glad you'd done?

### 2 What would show you that you're making progress?

### 3 Which people and priorities would this progress serve?

### 4 Work backward from your one-year win

| By this point | What needs to be true or what you need to learn |
|---|---|
| One year from now | |
| After the next 90 days | |
| After the first 30 days | |
| This week | |

### 5 What do you need to learn before making a larger commitment?

**NEXT STEP** Keep this win in view as you compare possible directions. More than one path may help you move toward it.

SECTION 06 / OPTIONS

# Compare possible directions

Explore what fits you before you commit



Consider two or three realistic paths: a trade apprenticeship, college, paid work, or a small project alongside school or work. Include a way to explore while keeping your current responsibilities steady.

You don't need to rank every possible future. You're looking for a useful first test. Check each promising path against the people, priorities, resources, and win you've already named.

## Keep facts and guesses separate

- Write “unknown” when you need more information. That gives you a place to start asking.
- Check the costs, schedule, entry requirements, and transport you'd actually need.
- If a path conflicts with an important responsibility, name it. What would need to change for it to work?
- Keep your guesses visible. A numerical score won't make an uncertain answer more reliable.

## Jordan compares three possible paths

| Possible direction | What you'd need to learn |
|---|---|
| Electrical apprenticeship | Daily work, local entry requirements, schedules, transport, and training costs |
| IT support program | Daily work, requirements, schedules, costs, and whether you enjoy practical troubleshooting |
| Keep working while exploring | Whether projects and conversations could help you learn within four hours a week |

**A fictional story about Eli** Eli, 25, has changed direction and worries he's behind. He has made another spreadsheet called FINAL PLAN, which makes him smile. This time he asks someone about a normal workday before enrolling. If you've changed course, your experience still belongs in the next decision.

Choose a small test that brings you closer to real work. You're allowed to be curious about more than one future.

SECTION 06 / EXERCISE 6

# Choose a direction to test

Keep your people priorities resources and win in view

1 Compare up to three paths. Use short phrases. If two are enough, leave Path C blank.

| Question | Path A | Path B | Path C |
|---|---|---|---|
| What path could you try? | | | |
| Who could you serve? | | | |
| Which priority would it support? | | | |
| Which strength could you use or grow? | | | |
| What time, money, or opportunities would it cost? | | | |
| What might conflict with your Q4? | | | |
| What do you still need to check? | | | |
| What small test could you try? | | | |

**2 Which path would you like to test first?**

**3 Why does it fit you? What concern do you need to address before you start?**

**NEXT STEP** Bring your first direction to the next page. You'll work backward through Q4 to see how your answers fit together.

SECTION 07 / ALIGNMENT

# Put your Q4 together in reverse

See how your next step fits the life you want to build



The look-back question helped you picture a worthwhile future. Now reverse the four questions: Q4, Q3, Q2, then Q1. Start with your win, connect it to your resources and priorities, and end with the people it serves. This checks alignment: whether your answers fit together in real life.

| Q4 | Q3 | Q2 | Q1 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Move toward this win | Use these resources | Pursue these priorities | Care for these people |

## Try saying your answers out loud

Ask yourself: “If I could move toward this win, using and developing these resources, to pursue what matters most, while caring for these people and responsibilities, would this be a worthwhile next step?”

Listen for anything that doesn't fit. Are you overlooking a responsibility? Does the step need more time or money than you have? You can adjust it. Keep working until you can explain why it makes sense for you.

## Hear Jordan put it together

“If I could choose a work or training path after trying the real work, using my four weekly hours and help from people in both fields, to build a useful skill and steady income, while staying dependable at home, that would be a worthwhile next step.”

## Put your possible calling into words

Who would you like to help? What work or problem do you want to explore? Which abilities could you use and develop? Write a statement that sounds like you. You can revise it as your experience grows and your responsibilities become clearer.

**Keep this in mind** Bring your hopes to God and listen to wise counsel. This process can help you make a responsible choice; it can't certify God's calling or guarantee a career. You can keep learning without treating every uncertainty as a failure of faith.

SECTION 07 / EXERCISE 7

# Write your alignment statement

Use your chosen direction from page 15

1 Finish these sentences in your own voice. Then read them together as one thought.

**Q4 If I could move toward this win**

**Q3 using and developing these resources**

**Q2 to pursue what matters most**

**Q1 while caring for these people and responsibilities**

**2 Does this feel worthwhile to you? What needs to change before you can say yes?**

**3 Finish these lines to describe the calling you'd like to explore**

For this season, I want to explore helping

With

By using and developing

I will test that direction through

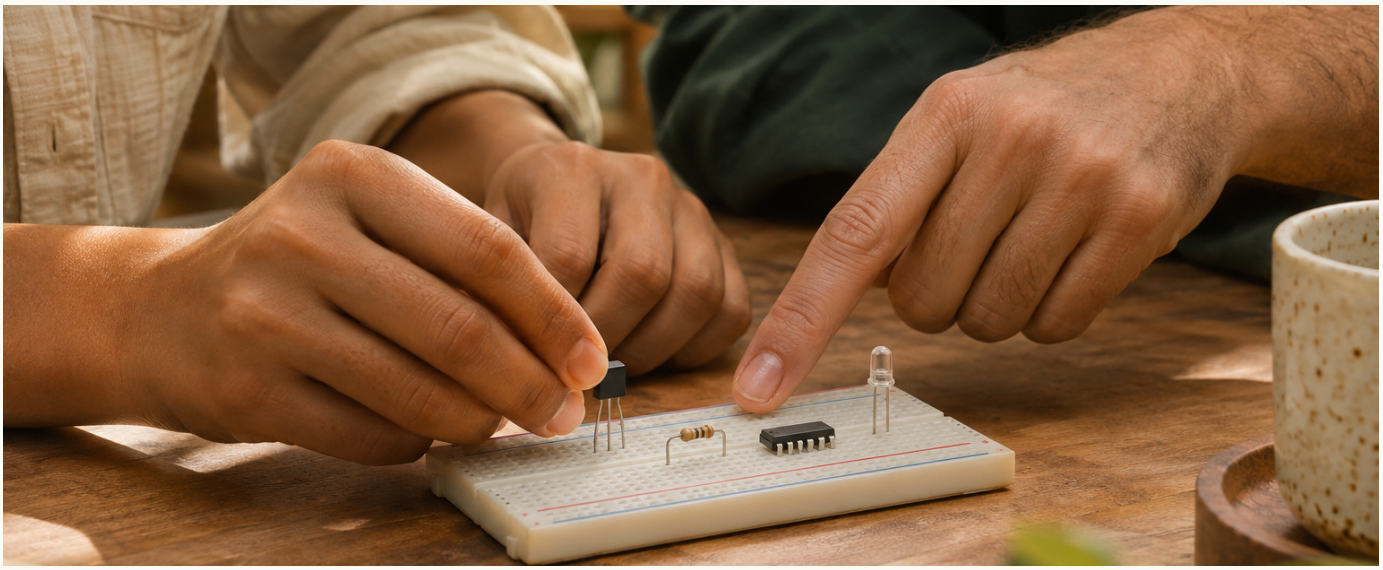
And review what I learn on

**NEXT STEP** Use your statement to plan a 90 day test. Choose something small enough to begin and concrete enough to teach you something.

SECTION 08 / ACTION

# Choose your first 90 day test

Give yourself a chance to learn by doing



You've done some honest thinking. Now give yourself a chance to learn from the work itself. Choose one question you want to answer, plan a manageable test, and set a date to look back at what you've learned.

## Choose a way to try the work

- Talk with someone who does the work and ask about an ordinary day.
- Arrange an approved observation visit or a supervised service role.
- Try a short course where you'll make or do something you can review.
- Take on a small project and ask someone experienced for useful feedback.

Check costs, permissions, supervision, safety, and entry requirements first. If you're under 18, involve a trusted adult and check any parent or guardian consent rules. Make the test small enough to fit your responsibilities.

## Jordan takes his first steps

Jordan asks someone in each field for a short conversation within seven days. He asks about ordinary days, beginner mistakes, and local entry routes. By day 30, he aims to arrange an approved visit or beginner project and check costs and schedules.

He keeps his work commitments and reviews what he learns at 90 days. One great project or one awkward visit doesn't have to decide his future. Your first attempt can be useful without being impressive.

## Let someone encourage you

Ask someone you trust to review your experience with you. Let them celebrate your effort and notice what you may have missed. You don't have to carry every question alone, and you still have a voice in your decision.

**Take a breath** If you're afraid of getting this wrong, begin with a step you can safely learn from. Pray for wisdom. Ask for help. Give yourself room to grow.

SECTION 08 / EXERCISE 8A

# Plan your 90 day test

Turn your page 17 statement into actions and evidence

### 1 What will you try, and what question will it help you answer?

### 2 Set practical boundaries for your test

**Start date**

**Review date**

**Time each week**

**Maximum cost**

**What responsibilities will you protect, and what permissions do you need?**

### 3 Put your next steps on a realistic schedule

| When | Your action or evidence | How you'll know it's done |
|---|---|---|
| Within 7 days | | |
| By day 30 | | |
| By day 60 | | |
| By day 90 | | |

### 4 Who will you ask to review what you learn with you?

### 5 What will you do first, and on what date?

**NEXT STEP** Put your first action and review date on your calendar. At your review, turn to the next page with your notes and work samples beside you.

SECTION 08 / EXERCISE 8B

# Review and choose again

Come back here when it's time to review your experience

**Review date**

**Test completed**

**1 What was the work really like, including the routine or difficult parts?**

**2 What shows you that you've helped, learned, or improved?**

**3 How did your test fit your people, priorities, resources, and practical limits?**

**4 Choose your next move and explain why it makes sense to you**

- Continue this direction
- Change the test
- Explore another path

**5 What is your next faithful step, and when will you take it?**

**6 What would you like to thank God for? Where can you see your own growth?**

**NEXT STEP** Return to pages 5, 13, and 17. Update your one-year picture, your win, and your calling statement with what you've learned. You're building on your experience, even if you choose a different direction.

FOUNDATION AND REFERENCES

# The heart and roots of Q4

A word from Chris Cahill and notes on the method

## Why I want to share this with you

My Q4 process brings together Scripture, consulting, counseling, and pastoring over roughly 30 years. My mentor handed me a process he had developed through nearly 20 years of study. I carry that gift into the work of helping people bring their decisions into alignment with what matters most.

As you work through these pages, I want you to feel free to tell the truth about your life. Maybe you're hopeful. Maybe you're afraid of disappointing someone you love. Maybe you have tried hard and a door still closed. You don't have to hide any of that to begin. Your questions deserve patient attention, and your next step deserves care.

My hope is that you leave with a clearer direction and the courage to take one faithful step. Keep God, the people you love, and the person you're becoming in the conversation. You don't have to carry the whole future today.

## How the method fits together

The look-back question imagines meeting a year from now and naming meaningful progress. Q1 asks who matters most. Q2 asks what matters most. Q3 asks what we have to work with. Q4 asks how we play to win. Reverse questioning then links Q4 back through Q3 and Q2 to Q1, testing whether the proposed win serves your resources, priorities, and people.

## Source foundation

Chris Cahill's account of the history and method; The Retirement X-Ray manuscript, “The Q4 Model” and Q1-Q4 sections, printed pages 91-114. The one-year look-back exercise appears on printed page 113. This edition develops Your Q4 Calling Exercise for readers ages 16-25.

Jordan, Maya, Nia, and Eli are fictional illustrations created for this workbook. Their stories are not historical accounts or career recommendations. The exercises, 90 day test, and Scripture reflections adapt the framework for exploring a potential calling.

## Scripture and responsible next steps

Read Mark 12:29-31, Ephesians 2:10, and 1 Peter 4:10 in your usual Bible translation. Reflect on love, good work, and service without treating a passage as a prediction of a particular career. Choose what to share, seek qualified advice when needed, and verify costs, requirements, and consequences before major commitments.