



Best Connections

05

Unconnected?

>>> THE CONNECTION GATEWAY<<<

You've come this far on the journey, so how do you see yourself:

- Searching for a new network?*
- Acquiring a network address?*
- Looking for the best connection?*

If you are one of these or something else, you will find this section useful – if not, you know where to throw the apple!

*"Wherever you go, there are three icons that everyone knows:
Jesus Christ, Pele and Coca-Cola"* – **Pele, Brazilian Footballer (born 1940)**

Which one do you think is going to last the longest?! Why are they so well known?

"Jesus was the first socialist, the first to seek a better life for mankind"
– **Mikhail Gorbachev, Soviet General Secretary (b. 1931)**

**Why do you think Gorbachev said this?
Can politics solve the deepest problems of mankind?**

“Being noticed can be a burden. Jesus got himself crucified because he got himself noticed. So I disappear a lot”

– **Bob Dylan, American Singer-songwriter (b. 1941)**

So what did Jesus get noticed for? Why did so many people love him and so many hate him?

“Many people mistake our work for our vocation. Our vocation is the love of Jesus” – **Mother Teresa, Missionary of Charity**

(b. in Macedonia 1910)

How can Jesus still have such an effect on people? Have you see self-giving love that inspired you?

“There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus” – **Blaise Pascal, French Physicist (b. 1623)**

Is this the first time you’ve heard this? How much do you know about Jesus and his claims?

“The truth sets you free! It’s a very liberating thing, when you say this is who I am warts and all and then you can just get on with life. It’s amazing!” – **Geri Halliwell, English Singer-songwriter (b. 1972)**

Do you think spirituality can be this powerful? Does the possibility attract or repel you?

JESUS CHRIST HAS A UNIQUE BACKGROUND AND MAKES AMAZING CLAIMS – what do you know about him and his claims?

Consider each one and give a score on a sliding scale 1 – 10

1 = ‘I’ve never heard that!’, 5 = ‘I might have heard that’, 10 = ‘I knew that’

JESUS' BACKGROUND OR CLAIM!	Score 1-10
<i>The evidence for his birth and existence as a human being is accepted by genuine historians and academics</i>	
<i>His birth into shame and poverty was predicted 750 years before – so was the nature and reason for his death</i>	
<i>He did not support dead religion but challenged hypocrisy wherever he saw it – the authorities hated him</i>	
<i>His teaching is still upheld as thoroughly logical and completely moral – neither mad nor bad</i>	
<i>Large numbers followed him and still do – his kindness, integrity and goodness are without match</i>	
<i>Due to his authority and actions, many believed him to be the long-promised son of God</i>	
<p><i>His purpose and greatest claim was that he would connect people to God – He would be a gateway for them</i></p> <p><i>He claimed to bring freedom and fulfilment of IVP and SHM to everyone who took him at his word</i></p> <p><i>After a criminal's death, his resurrection was reported by over 500 people. This included 'doubting Thomas', Peter the 'denier' and Saul his accuser. Even the Roman Officer who crucified him exclaimed, 'Surely this man was the son of God!' The authorities could not produce a dead body from the tomb to deny it!</i></p> <p><i>His promise is to remove the power of guilt and death for all who trust him for spiritual life and forgiveness</i></p>	
Total	
10 – 20:	At least you know more about the claims of Jesus Christ than perhaps you did! Here's a question for you: there are three possibilities – Jesus was mad, bad OR who he said he was, the Son of God! Which one do you think it is and on what basis? Keep an open mind and stay on the journey. There's more evidence to sift and people from history to hear.
20 – 60:	There are some things that you have recalled here from people you've known, perhaps from relatives long gone and maybe from experiences you've had. As you think about the many quotes in the third section of Life Foundations on Spirit, consider whether there's a longing in you for that best connection Jesus Christ offers. Perhaps a new spiritual life awaits!

60 – 100: It looks like you are coming close to finding that best connection to the new life in Christ. There's more to read through but if you want to fast-track to make that connection, click ...[\(to unconnected video and pdf\)](#). You may still be coming towards that point, so why not talk to God with your questions and ask for his help – it's called praying!

*"God asks no man whether he will accept life.
That is not the choice. You must take it. The only question is how"*
– **Henry Ward Beecher, American Social Reformer (b. 1813)**

How have you taken life to this point? What are the options?

*"Look up at the stars and not down at your feet. Try to make sense of what you see, and wonder about what makes the universe exist.
Be curious"* – **Stephen Hawking, English Physicist (b. 1942)**

How curious are you? What sense have you made of what you see as to why we exist?

"It's all make believe, isn't it?"
– **Marilyn Monroe, American Actress (b. 1926)**

Have you ever struggled to distinguish between reality and fantasy? Why is escapism a route than many choose?

"There are very few human beings who receive the truth, complete and staggering, by instant illumination. Most of them acquire it fragment by fragment, on a small scale, by successive developments, cellularly, like a laborious mosaic" – **Anaïs Nin, Author (b. to Cuban parents in France 1903)**

Have you known people who have had a 'eureka' moment? How do you sift between truth and error?

"If you die you're completely happy and your soul somewhere lives on. I'm not afraid of dying. Total peace after death, becoming someone else is the best hope I've got" – **Kurt Cobain, American Singer-songwriter (b. 1967)**

Is this the sort of thinking that may have led to Kurt's suicide aged 27? What does the outcome say about the thinking?

"Man – a being in search of meaning"
– **Plato, Greek Philosopher (b. 427 BC)**

Can you think of other 'creatures' that spend such time seeking meaning? Why do we do it?

Edmond Dantes: *"I don't believe in God"*
Abbe Faria: *"It doesn't matter. He believes in you"*
– **From 'The Count of Monte Cristo' 2002**

What is belief? How is reality affected by what we think?

"There is an orderliness in the universe, there is an unalterable law governing everything and every being that exists or lives. It is no blind law; for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings"
– **Mahatma Gandhi, Indian Leader and Philosopher (b. 1869)**

What sorts of 'orderliness' you see in the world? How do you explain the clear evidence of widespread 'design'?

"Life has its own hidden forces which you can only discover by living"
– **Søren Kierkegaard, Danish Philosopher (b. 1813)**

Why can it take so long to make the connection? How do you know which path is right?

“An error does not become truth by reason of multiplied propagation, nor does truth become error because nobody sees it”

– **Mahatma Gandhi, Indian Leader and Philosopher (b. 1869)**

In what way is the truth like light? When the sun rises, what can be seen as the darkness goes?

“Let children learn about different faiths, let them notice their incompatibility, and let them draw their own conclusions about the consequences of that incompatibility. As for whether they are ‘valid,’ let them make up their own minds when they are old enough to do so.”

– **Richard Dawkins, British Scientist (b. in Kenya 1941)**

**Have religion and people disappointed you?
Have you made your mind up about Jesus Christ?**

“Science can purify religion from error and superstition. Religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes”

– **Pope John Paul II, (b. in Poland 1920)**

If ‘dead’ religion is superstitious, what does an ‘alive’ faith look like? How is a ‘false absolute’ different to a true one?

“Search for the truth is the noblest occupation of man; its publication is a duty” – **Madame de Stael,**

Swiss Writer (b. in France 1766)

**Supposing you found the cure for cancer,
would you have a duty to mankind?
Is telling the truth a ‘duty’?**

“Faith is not a leap in the dark; it’s the exact opposite. It’s a commitment based on evidence... It is irrational to reduce all faith to blind faith and then subject it to ridicule. That provides a very anti-intellectual and convenient way of avoiding intelligent discussion.”

– **John C. Lennox, Philosopher and Mathematician, (b. 1945)**

If as many brilliant minds have accepted Jesus Christ as have rejected him, what does that mean? What is faith to you?

“Everything that occurs in your life is part of God’s plan to wake you up” – Leonard Jacobson, contemporary mystic

Have you experienced things that seem to be God’s way of getting your attention? Does he have it now?

“It is while you are patiently toiling at the little tasks of life that the meaning and shape of the great whole of life dawn on you”
– Phillips Brooks, American Writer of ‘O little town of Bethlehem’
(b. in 1835)

What are the hopes and fears of all your years? How silently has God been working in your life?

“He hears and sees everything. How can anyone deny Him?”
– Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Indian Guru (b. in 1666)

With the evidence for God being compelling, why do some deny him? Who was the first cause, before any big bang?

“He who learns but does not think, is lost! He who thinks but does not learn is in great danger. Heaven means to be one with God”
– Confucius, Chinese Philosopher (b. 551 BC)

What does ‘heaven’ mean to you? If true connection is being one with God, would you want this?

“However many holy words you read, however many you speak, what good will they do you if you do not act on upon them? A jug fills drop by drop” – Buddha, also known as Siddhartha Gautama (b. in Nepal in Sixth Century BC)

How has the accumulation of words affected you? Is your ‘jug’ filling up?

“Although the life of a person is in a land full of thorns and weeds, there is always a space in which the good seed can grow. You have to trust God” – Pope Francis, (b. in Argentina 1936)

Is there space for good seed to land in your life? What can thorns and weeds do to little seedlings from good seed?

*“Man is not born to atheism. He is born to believe”
– Billy Graham, American Preacher (b. 1918)*

Are you surprised that the vast majority of people believe in God? Why do so many millions also put faith in Jesus Christ?

*“I struggle with low self-esteem all the time! I think everyone does. I have so much wrong with me, it’s unbelievable!”
– Angelina Jolie, American Actress (b. 1975)*

Have you ever suffered with self-doubts? Is doubt or disbelief the opposite of faith?

*“I’ve only been in love with a beer bottle and a mirror. I’ll die before I’m 25, and when I do I’ll have lived the way I wanted to”
– Sid Vicious, English Vocalist and Bass Guitarist of Punk Band (b. 1957)*

Do you take a long term view or a short term view like Sid? What might have made the difference for Sid?

"I've never claimed to have the answers to life. I only put out songs and answer questions as honestly as I can... but I still believe in peace, love and understanding. The more I see, the less I know for sure"

– **John Lennon, English Singer-songwriter (b. 1940)**

**What certainties do you think there are?
Have you decided what you believe in?**

"I want to die with my blue jeans on. I always wished I had died, and I still wish that, because I could have gotten the whole thing over with"

– **Andy Warhol, American Artist (b. 1928)**

**It comes to us all, so why are some people in
such a rush? Would you like a secure
connection with God?**

"Beyond a doubt, truth bears the same relation to falsehood as light to darkness" – **Leonardo da Vinci, Italian Polymath Genius (b. 1452)**

**What does light do to darkness?
What might truth do for you?**

"In all humility, I'm seeking answers ..."

– **Michael Palin, English Actor and member of Monty Python, (b. 1943)**

**Is there another way to truly seek answers?
When truth is found, what question might it
ask of you?**

*"Jesus said: 'I am the way, and the truth and the life.
No-one comes to the Father except through me'"*

– **Jesus Christ, (b. 00 AD!)**

**What is your reaction to thinking of God as
'Father'? Did you realise that Jesus' has a
connecting mission?**

“Why don’t the names of Buddha, Mohammed and Confucius offend people? The reason is that these others didn’t claim to be God, but Jesus did” – Josh McDowell, American Theologian (b. 1939)

Did you know Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and one with God? How could he make this unique claim?

“There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth; not going all the way, and not starting”

**– Buddha, also known as Siddhartha Gautama
(b. in Nepal in Sixth Century BC)**

How far are you on the journey to finding truth? Are you committed to going all the way?

“I want to know why the universe exists, why there is something greater than nothing” – Stephen Hawking, English Physicist (b. 1942)

**What prevents so many continuing the journey before finding a satisfactory answer?
What if there is one?**

“My premise is that the popular aphorism that ‘all religions are fundamentally the same and only superficially different’ simply is not true. It is more correct to say that all religions are, at best, superficially similar but fundamentally different”

– Ravi Zacharias, Canadian Philosopher (b. in India 1948)

Do you think it’s possible that just one could be true? Which one?

There was surprise when Prof Dawkins acknowledged that he was less than 100 per cent certain of his conviction that there is no creator ...

“I think the probability of a supernatural creator existing is very very low” – Daily Telegraph 24.2.2012 reporting on Professor Richard

Dawkins, English Scientist (b. 1941)

Why is Dawkins now only 6.9 out of seven sure of his beliefs? Does that make him still atheist or agnostic?

"Don't be misled by those who claim God doesn't exist, because He does"
– **Billy Graham, American Preacher (b. 1918)**

**How can Graham be so sure?
Many think that evidence for the existence of God is overwhelming – do you?**

"If you're walking down the right path and you're willing to keep walking, eventually you'll make progress"
– **Barack Obama, American President (b. 1961)**

What signs might indicate if you're on the right path? Do you feel you are making progress?

"He is lost who is possessed by carnal desire"
– **Mahatma Gandhi, Indian Leader and Philosopher (b. 1869)**

Are there things that could stop you finding your way? What signposts and lights might help you?

"Love is the answer for at least for most of the questions of my heart, Like, Why are we here? And where do we go? And how come it's so hard?" – **'In between Dreams' by Jack Johnson, American Singer-songwriter (b. 1975)**

What do you think of Jesus' claim that God loves you? What evidence would you need to see of that love?

"Rare, very rare, is that friend who comes and says, O my Beloved, take me into Your Embrace! O my Lord, please save me!"
– **Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Indian Guru (b. in 1666)**

**Did you know Jesus said the greatest possible love is to lay down a life for a friend?
Do you agree?**

“Outside of the cross of Jesus Christ, there is no hope in this world. That cross and resurrection at the core of the Gospel is the only hope for humanity. Wherever you go, ask God for wisdom on how to get that Gospel in, even in the toughest situations of life”

– Ravi Zacharias, Canadian Philosopher (b. in India 1948)

Why did Jesus come to die on a cross? How do you react to someone choosing to take the blame for you?

HIGH FIVE FROM C.S. LEWIS! Academic, Intellectual, Writer and Philosopher born in Belfast 1898

The Lewis Litmus Test! Give yourself a score of 1 – 10 for each quote from Lewis where 10 is high in agreement

C.S. LEWIS LITMUS TEST	Score 1-10
<i>“There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, ‘All right, then, have it your way”</i>	
<i>“We all want progress, but if you’re on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right road; in that case, the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive”</i>	
<i>“I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else”</i>	
<i>“Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.”</i>	
<i>“I gave in, and admitted that God was God”</i>	
Total	

5 – 10:	Well done for sticking with Best Connections App this far! Hopefully, there's much that you have found of use or interest in the different sections. As you've nearly completed this, why not see it through to the end then at least you can say you've checked out fully the possibility of a Connected Life?
11 – 25:	This has been an intriguing journey for you! How far do you think you have come and how far will you go in taking Jesus Christ seriously in his offer to connect you to God? Lewis' fourth comment here is very pertinent in helping you to assess the claims of Christ. Lewis also said that Jesus was either bad, mad or who he said he is!
26 – 50:	Hopefully the light is getting brighter and things are becoming clearer! Making the Best Connection is about discovering your Identity, Value and Purpose so you can live life to the full because Jesus can bridge the gap from you to God and from darkness to light. As the sun rises, so dark shadows take shape and we see the light of day.

"Jesus said: 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life'"

– **Jesus Christ, (b. 00 AD!)**

**As connection brings light and power for life,
how could this change things? Ready to plug in
and switch on?**

"Spiritual identity means we are not what we do or what people say about us. And we are not what we have. We are the beloved daughters and sons of God" – **Henri Nouwen, Dutch Psychologist and Thinker (b. 1932)**

**Can you see that connection with God affects
who you truly are? And that with this comes
total security?**

"A sign of wisdom and maturity is when you come to terms with the realization that your decisions cause your rewards and consequences. You are responsible for your life, and your ultimate success depends on the choices you make" – **Denis Waitley, American Motivational Speaker (b. 1933)**

What’s the best choice for you at this point in your life? Do you accept or reject Christ’s offer of life?

“You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless, until they can find rest in you” – St Augustine, Philosopher (b. in Algeria 354 AD)

Augustine’s early life was soaked in sensual pleasures but it came to feel empty and he was restless – why? Do you ever feel restless, as if something is missing?

*“I am totally convinced the Christian faith is the most coherent worldview around”
– Ravi Zacharias, Canadian Philosopher (b. in India 1948)*

Many millions from every intellectual level are convinced, what about you? Is it to do with rank or intellect?

CONNECTION – THE FINAL FRONTIER! Give yourself a score of 1 – 10 where 10 is highest positive reaction

CONNECTION – THE FINAL FRONTIER!	Score 1-10
<p><i>The person who follows Christ is truly connected to God – this is what fulfils their IVP and SHM*</i></p> <p><i>* IVP = Identity, Value and Purpose; SHM = Security, Happiness and Motivation</i></p>	
<p><i>Humans’ rejection of God caused all the mess but Jesus came to put that right for all who accept him</i></p>	
<p><i>Jesus was human and divine so was uniquely able to take our punishment – he gave himself to cruel death</i></p>	
<p><i>Those who trust Him need no longer fear death, guilt or punishment – he took this on the cross</i></p>	
<p><i>Because he had never sinned, death could not hold him – his resurrection proved that</i></p>	

When the spirit leaves a connected person, it goes to God and will be given a 'resurrection body' like Jesus

To be connected is to be a true Christian – now living to enjoy God and to bring joy to him

This means a new lasting Identity as Child of God – completely Secure

It means being completely Valued – with a happiness that is deep and lasting

There is now a Purpose that matters – goals and drive lead to a Motivation of the highest kind

Total

10 – 15: It looks like this isn't your time! As a 'last-chance-saloon', try watching the short video and reading the pdf on the link below. If the light still doesn't go on, why not keep the app on the phone and go over notes you've made in My Journal? Maybe then you might find value in revisiting the app in a few weeks?

16 – 50: You've come to a good place – a springboard into The Connected Life. There's probably a few more 'i's to dot and 't's to cross, but you might want to find a helpful local course run by a church that will help you – two that are well known and popular are Alpha (<http://www.alpha.org/try>) and Christianity Explored (<http://www.christianityexplored.org/course/find>)

51 – 100: Are you ready for this? The most exciting and thrilling connection you'll ever make and one that will completely fulfil and transform your life from disappointing mediocrity – it will put you into a new orbit with an ending that is a truly happy landing! To make the Best Connection, visit this link and use the prayer to help you – it will also be useful for you to consider Alpha or Christianity Explored as shown for those scoring 16 – 50.

THE FINAL VISIT FOR CONNECTION - <http://connect4life.org.uk/unconnected/unconnected-introduction>

Stories from others who've made the connection - <http://iamredemption.org/stories>