

*Life to the full is seeing
and making the connections!*

Wherever you look,

there is a principle at work that both makes sense of life and gives life – the principle of connection. From the beginnings of time, the stars, planets and galaxies have been connected and we are connected to them on planet Earth. Those connections are vital for our heat, light, gravity and very survival.

Replace the telescope with a microscope and you'll see patterns, structures and connections in every blood cell and slice of life.

Empty a box of matches on the floor 1000 times and how many times will anything like a three bed house be the result?! Clearly ridiculous to scientists, architects and to you and me. No designer, no design.

If in doubt, consider humans, the most highly designed beings that we know. On the large scale, connected to planet Earth for food, shelter and clothing. At the micro level, every bone, organ, muscle, tendon and cell is highly connected, and all governed by electrical nerve systems served by the wonder of a human brain. Human beings are designed for connection – physically, emotionally and spiritually.

When we were young we first learnt of how we came to exist – a connection between a man and a woman! Humans are designed for relationships in families, communities and nations, all somehow connected to one another.

The idea of a Designer is inescapable, that is unless you dispense with the brain! Let's call the Designer what He calls Himself, God. How does His story start? 'In the beginning God' – there could be no other beginning. This God reveals His purpose for all things to be connected to Himself and to each other in healthy connections.

The pattern of life, just like everything else we've considered, can only make sense as the connections remain intact. Break the connection and all hell can break loose. Come to that, this is what God tells us happened and led to the tragic disconnection suffered by people He had made to be one with Him.

The ripples of disconnection have been felt through the ages and have affected every part of life on Earth. Global warming now affects the seasons and crops, animals are becoming extinct, people kill each other, societies break down, depression increases, prisons run out of space and suicides multiply. A disconnected society is a sick society.

Christians know the good news!

In the heart of God our Designer is a desire to restore connection, for the consequences of disconnection are just too painful. Connection comes through Jesus Christ who bridges the gap.

Every electrical appliance and internet-dependent gadget

relies on connection for their IVP to make sense. Take a laptop: its Identity (I), Value (V) and Purpose (P) is only fulfilled through connection – the correct wiring is essential and without this connection, it does not fulfil the IVP for which it is designed. A human being is also designed to fulfil IVP through connection, not to a mere electrical power source but to God Himself.

This theme of connection to God is throughout the Bible. Jesus speaks of it as being 'one' (with Him) or being 'in me'. Paul refers to this as the human need to be 'in Christ'. Mostly, humans search for connection to satisfy the need for IVP in places that cannot supply it, other than perhaps briefly, such as careers, sports, money and human relationships. Jesus has joined churches, leaders and Christians to His Mission, which is to help people make their connection with God. Discovering this brings SHM (Security, Happiness and Motivation)!

Connect4Life applies this metaphor

to resources for discipleship and outreach. Every **Connected** person (Christian disciple) is given a 21 Day Personal Study Guide to help check that their on-going IVP is in Christ and fruitful (John 15:8). They are also given two booklets for friends – one for those who may be **Unconnected** and one for those who may be **Disconnected** (either from God or from church). These can lead on to two short events to help people on their journeys: The Connected Life is a two week event for those exploring a first time connection and A Better Connection is for **Reconnectors** considering reconnection. For those who want to reconnect in some way, there is a sensitively-written booklet to help them on that path. Those who have made a first time connection or are thinking about it are given a Personal Study Guide for First Time Connectors (suitable to be used in conjunction with other outreach courses, eg Alpha).

Details of all these resources can be found and ordered on the website
<http://connect4life.org.uk/>