



CONSIDER

**PAUSING FROM EVERYDAY LIFE
TO THINK ABOUT THE BIG PICTURE**



Welcome to *Consider*.

Our minds are relentlessly active, producing more than 6000 thoughts every day. But how many of these are about the big questions of God, the universe and eternity?

Once, on holiday in a French market town, I spent all my time on the few same old streets. It was only towards the end of the trip that I realised most of the town was on the other side of the river... Might we be doing the same with our lives?

This little guide attempts to help its users 'cross the bridge' into spiritual matters by raising and responding to a number of big-picture questions. Each comes with a reading, a short video, and some mini-questions to reflect on.

While *Consider* presents a Christian outlook, it's been put together for anyone to use. It's quite likely there'll be some ideas presented that not everyone will feel able to readily agree with; certainly some of the questions are too big to be fully answered by a two-minute video. Hopefully, at the very least, the material will help you engage with the topics in question.

The booklet and videos can be looked at with others or by yourself, whatever you prefer. However, in order to get the most out of *Consider*, it's recommended that you discuss your thoughts with someone at least a few times along the way.

This resource has been made in Plymouth, UK, but I hope it might be interesting and helpful wherever you are.

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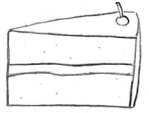
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Q1 SOURCE

Where did the world come from?



What's the best thing you've ever made?

Bible Reading - Psalm 96:1,3-5

Oh sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth!

³Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvellous works among all the peoples!

⁴For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
he is to be feared above all gods.

⁵For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-1

For Reflection

Who do you speak highly of & why?

What do you like about the natural world?

How do you feel about there being someone behind it?

Something to take away :

Further reading: Genesis 1:1-2:3



Q2 PRESENCE

How can we know God exists?

How might an invisible person make themselves known?

Bible Reading - Romans 1:19-20

What can be known about God is plain... because God has shown it ...²⁰For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-2

For Reflection

What point was the video trying to make?

Why might some people like the idea of a godless universe?

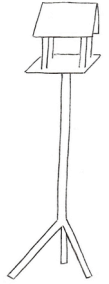
If you were God, how would you feel about being ignored?

Something to take away :

Further reading: Psalm 104

Q3 REASON

Why did God create the world?



What sort of presents do you like to give / receive?

Bible Reading - Colossians 1:15-16

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
¹⁶For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things were created through him and for him.

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-3

For Reflection

According to this reading, why does the universe exist?

Do you think it matters whether or not the universe belongs to someone? Why / why not?

How do you feel about the idea that you're part of a gift?

Something to take away :

Further reading: Proverbs 8:22-31



Q4 CHARACTER

What is God like?

How would you describe yourself in three words?

Bible Reading - Psalm 139:15-16

My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
¹⁶Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-4

For Reflection

What do you think it would be like to be a character in a book?

While many of us may find such an idea restrictive, the writer of this Psalm seems to be glad about it. Why might this be?

What hopes do you currently have for your future?

Something to take away :

Further reading: Psalm 90

Q5 LIFE

How significant are we?



In what ways are you like your parents / children?

Bible Reading - Genesis 1:26-28,31

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-5

For Reflection

According to the video how are God & human beings alike?

How is this message good news for those of us who don't feel significant?

Do you think some lives are more valuable than others?
Why / why not?

Something to take away :

Further reading: Luke 15:11-32



Q6 DIRECTION

How can we know how to live?

Have you ever had any imperfect D.I.Y. experiences?

Bible Reading - 2 Timothy 3:14,16-17

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it.
¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,
¹⁷that the man of God may be... equipped for every good work.

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-6

For Reflection

How much do you bother with manuals?

Life is complex and difficult, yet it's easy to think we can find our way through it without much guidance. Why so?

How could someone who doesn't enjoy reading still learn from the Bible?

Something to take away :

Further reading: Proverbs 2:1-19

Q7 SIN

Who's a good person?



What substances or products are hard to wash off?

Bible Reading - Mark 7:14-15,18-23

Jesus called the people to him again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him. ¹⁸ Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹ since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.)

²⁰ And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him.

²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-7

For Reflection

Suppose an app was developed that could measure moral goodness, on a scale of 1-10. What score do you think you'd get?

What's Jesus' assessment of the human race?

What evidence is there in history / the world today that we human beings are not quite as great as we might like to think?

Something to take away :

Further reading: Psalm 14



Q8 DANGER

Does anything really matter?

What dangerous situations have you been in?

Bible Reading - Matthew 13:40-43

“Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴²and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³... He who has ears, let him hear.”

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-8

For Reflection

How much have you thought about what happens after death?

Jesus used the term ‘the Son of Man’ to speak about himself.
How do you feel about the idea of standing before him?

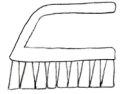
How seriously do you think we need to take this reading?
(Doesn’t the Bible teach elsewhere that God is love?)

Something to take away :

Further reading: Psalm 73

Q9 HOPE

Is there any hope for wrong-doers?



What's your favourite / least favourite household chore?

Bible Reading - Mark 15:6-15

Now at the feast he used to release for them one prisoner for whom they asked. ⁷And among the rebels in prison, who had committed murder in the insurrection, there was a man called Barabbas. ⁸And the crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do as he usually did for them.

⁹And he answered them, saying,

“Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?”

¹⁰For he perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered him up. ¹¹But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release for them Barabbas instead. ¹²And Pilate again said to them, “Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?”

¹³And they cried out again, “Crucify him.”

¹⁴And Pilate said to them, “Why, what evil has he done?”

But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him.”

¹⁵So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-9

For Reflection

How do you feel when other people do things for you?

How was Barabbas able to go free?

What does the phrase ‘Jesus died for me’ mean?

Something to take away :

Further reading: Mark 15:33-16:8 & Isaiah 53



Q10 ACCESS

What should we say at heaven's gates?

Can you think of any good movie quotes?

Bible Reading - Ephesians 2:8-9

... by grace you have been saved through faith.
And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,
⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-10

For Reflection

What different things might people say when they're standing outside the pearly gates of heaven, hoping to be let in?

How successful do you think such approaches will be?

What are you planning on saying when your time comes?

Something to take away :

Further reading: Psalm 32

Q11 FAITHS

Do all religions lead to God?



What's the most impressive thing you could put on your CV?

Bible Reading - Luke 18:10-14

- “Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-11

For Reflection

What do you make of the two characters in this story?

How can doing good be spiritually dangerous?

Do you think Christians should try to reach out to followers of other religious faiths? Why / why not?

Something to take away :

Further reading: Acts 4:1-12



Q12 DARKNESS

Is Satan real?

Who would you say is the greatest supervillain of all time?

Bible Reading - 2 Corinthians 4:3-4,6

And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁶For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness”, has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God...

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-12

For Reflection

What do you make of all this talk of the devil? Could it be true?

Why might Christians pray for those who don't share their beliefs?

If you believe the devil to be real would you consider taking part in Halloween celebrations? Why / why not?

Something to take away :

Further reading: Luke 4:1-13

Q13 CHANGE

What does the Holy Spirit do?



What fruit do you think makes the best crumble?

Bible Reading - Galatians 5:16-17,22-23

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do...

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-13

For Reflection

Which of the fruit listed here would you say is most needed in the world today?

‘Well that New Year’s Resolution didn’t last very long.’ Why does simply trying harder to be a better person often prove unsuccessful?

To what extent do you think it’s possible to be a spiritual person without living alone on the top of a ice-cold mountain?

Something to take away :

Further reading: John 14:15-27



Q14 COMMUNICATION

What should we make of the Bible?

How do you decide whether or not to reply to a message?

Bible Reading - Exodus 20:1-6

And God spoke all these words, saying,

²“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-14

For Reflection

Who do you give instructions to?

How do you find receiving instructions?

Suppose Andy believes that God is a real person, whereas Benny believes God to be more like a force of nature. Why might they treat the Bible differently?

Something to take away :

Further reading: 2 Peter 3:13-18

Q15 SUFFERING

Why do bad things happen?



*Has anything unfortunate happened to you
in the past week or so?*

Bible Reading - Luke 13:1-5

There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. ²And he answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? ³No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. ⁴Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? ⁵No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.”

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-15

For Reflection

If you were God, how would you run the world?

What do you think about karma, the idea that what happens to someone is a consequence of their past actions?

The events in this reading are awful and hard to comprehend. Nevertheless, what good comes from them?

Something to take away :

Further reading: Job 1-42



Q16 COMMUNITY

What does the Christian life look like?

How do you get on with your wider family?

Bible Reading - Matthew 12:46,48-50

While Jesus was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. ⁴⁸ But he replied to the man who told him, “Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?” ⁴⁹ And stretching out his hand towards his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.”

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-16

For Reflection

What are the marks of a healthy family?

What might the idea of ‘church = family’ mean for Christians who:

- like to play sport on Sundays?
- have non-Christian families?
- are single?
- live busy lives?

Something to take away :

Further reading: Hebrews 10:19-25

Q17 FINALE

How will this world end?



Have you ever been caught unprepared for something?

Bible Reading - Matthew 24:36-44

“But concerning that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only. ³⁷For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they were unaware until the flood came and swept them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

⁴⁰Then two men will be in the field; one will be taken and one left.

⁴¹Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and one left.

⁴²Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-17

For Reflection

What would you do if you only had one day left to live?

The idea that Jesus will return to bring the world to an end is no longer widely believed in the Western world. But suppose he was to return, tonight – how ready would you be?

The sequel to *Consider* is called *Prepare* and is about getting ready for eternity. Might you be interested in having a look at it?

Something to take away :

Further reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-24



Q18 ETERNITY

Are heaven and hell real places?

What can you think of that never ends?

Bible Reading - Matthew 25:31-34,41,46

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³²Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. ³⁴Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ⁴¹“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Video

elburtonchurch.com/consider-18

For Reflection

What do you make of this final message?

Where would you say you’re at with regards to what’s been covered in *Consider*?

What are you going to do next for your own spiritual well-being?

Something to take away :

Further reading: Revelation 21-22

CONCLUSION

Thank you for engaging with *Consider*.
We do hope you've found it interesting and useful.

To conclude please watch the final video at:
elburtonchurch.com/consider-conclusion

Information about how to acquire further copies of this booklet
can be found at elburtonchurch.com/consider

If you have any comments about *Consider* (for better or worse)
we would love to hear them. Please email:
consider.elburtonchurch@gmail.com

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costs of producing *Consider*, please use our bank details as found
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'St Matthew's Church' to the address as below.
Many thanks indeed.

The Church Administrator
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