

## Some thoughts on watching films

Stories are the stuff of life. They allow us to reflect on all sorts of issues at a safe distance as we engage with the characters, cry with them, laugh with them, get cross with them and generally share their experience. How they deal with the issues they come across may frustrate us, or give us new insights; cause us to laugh or cry; result in us hurling abuse at the screen or willing there to be a happy ending. And through it all we can encounter God in all sorts of unexpected places if we only take time to look.

### Questions to ask yourself

What did you think of the film? What do you like most? Least?

Which incidents made you *think* or *feel* most strongly? How well did you think the film treated those incidents?

What issues did the film raise for you?

What character(s) do you most identify with and why?

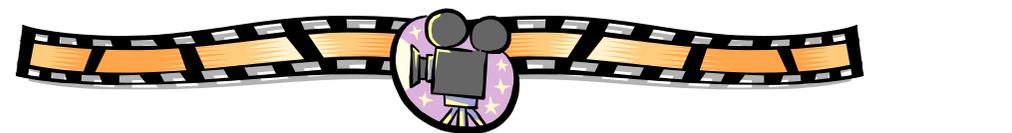
Does the film have any echoes of Christian beliefs or stories from the Bible? Does it support or challenge Christian values?

### Some trivia about the film

Renée Zellweger gained a reported 25 lbs to play Bridget Jones. She also worked in a publishing company for a month in preparation for the role. She adopted an alias and her posh accent and was apparently not recognized.

When Helen Fielding wrote the novel, she based the character of Mark Darcy on Colin Firth's depiction of Mr Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice* (1995). In addition to the inside joke of casting Colin Firth in the role of Mark Darcy, there are also other allusions to *Pride and Prejudice*. Mark disparages Bridget to his mother within Bridget's earshot (cf. Mr Darcy disparaging Elizabeth to his friend in Elizabeth's hearing). Daniel Cleaver lies to Bridget about a dispute between him and Mark, claiming Mark stole his fiancée when it was the other way round. In *Pride and Prejudice*, it's a dispute between Mr Darcy and Mr Wickham, and Wickham lies about who is at fault. The Darcy in both stories fails to disabuse the heroine's misinformed notion until it is almost too late. Bridget works at Pemberley Press; Mr Darcy lives at Pemberley estate. When Bridget stops at a mall to see her mother, the scene begins with the voiceover: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that as soon as one part of your life starts looking up, another part falls to pieces." This is an update of Jane Austen's opening lines: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife."

Bridget always quotes her weight in pounds, something a British person would never do unless they had lived in the States for a very long time!



**A chance to watch films together.  
An opportunity to discuss the issues raised.  
A time of friendship, food and fun.**

<b>2nd Jul</b>	<b>Life Of Brian</b>
<b>6th Aug</b>	<b>Crash</b>
<b>3rd Sep</b>	<b><u>Bridget Jones' Diary</u></b>
<b>1st Oct</b>	<b>Dogville</b>
<b>5th Nov</b>	<b>The Man Who Sued God</b>
<b>3rd Dec</b>	<b>Cool Hand Luke</b>

**Films start at 5:30pm  
Followed by food, coffee and conversation**

**10 Bletchingdon Road  
Islip**

**Further details from Jonathan (Ox 842214)  
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## Bridget Jones's Diary

Bridget Jones is an average woman struggling against her age, her weight, her job, her lack of a man, and her many imperfections. As a New Year's resolution, Bridget decides to take control of her life, starting by keeping a diary in which she will always tell the complete truth. However, it is not long before she is having an affair with her boss (Daniel Cleaver) and there ensues a rather turbulent relationship, not helped by the presence of a rather reserved barrister (Mark Darcy) who has been a family friend since the two of them were children together.

### **Some key issues**

#### *Social stereotypes*

Bridget is obsessed with her weight and her single status due to the pressure she feels society places upon people in relation to such things. Others, too, feel the pressure of contemporary society moulding them. Take time to identify some of the social stereotypes at work in the film. How do these impact on Bridget? What sort of pressures are exerted upon women and men in contemporary society?

#### *The question of identity and the need for self-acceptance*

Throughout Bridget struggles with her status of being in her thirties and single. This is not helped by family and friends making repeated mention of "time ticking away". The implicit assumption is that being single is somehow deficient. Such things continually undermine Bridget's self-confidence. Nonetheless, there are other events which encourage Bridget in relation to her own sense of identity and self-worth, particularly through the supportive comments of others (notably Mark liking her "just as she is").

Think about your own life. How has your own personal development been shaped by society stereotypes and pressures? What have been the positives and what have been the negatives? Remind yourself of your status in the eyes of God as beloved and precious.

#### *Relaxed sexual morality*

For Bridget and the characters around her, sex is fairly casual and not necessarily related to commitment. This is portrayed as the norm. How do you respond to this? In what ways do such values impact on Bridget? Are you challenged by them?

### God's story

Identity is a vital component of being human. It is that sense of who we are in relation to each other and to God which defines us and gives us our sense of self-worth. Loss of identity can easily result in a sense of despair, as we end up feeling like nothing more than cogs in a machine. The Bible, however, provides us with constant reminders that each and every one of us matters to God and is loved and valued by him in a unique way. And if we take the Bible seriously, it will profoundly deepen and enrich our sense of intrinsic worth as unique individuals created in the image and likeness of God.

### Memorable quotes

*(Bridget glimpses Mark for the first time)*

**Bridget:** Perhaps this is the mysterious Mr Right I have been waiting my whole life to meet.

*(Sees reindeer sweater)*

**Bridget:** Maybe not.

**Bridget:** It is a truth universally acknowledged that when one part of your life starts going okay, another falls spectacularly to pieces.

**Interviewer:** What do you think about the El Nino phenomenon?

**Bridget:** It's a blip. Latin music's on its way out.

**Richard Finch:** Why do you wanna work on television?

**Bridget:** I've got to leave my job because I shagged my boss.

**Richard Finch:** Fair enough. Start on Monday.

**Darcy:** I don't think you're an idiot at all. I mean, there are elements of the ridiculous about you. Your mother's pretty interesting. And you really are an appallingly bad public speaker. And, um, you tend to let whatever's in your head come out of your mouth without much consideration of the consequences ... But the thing is, um, what I'm trying to say, very inarticulately, is that, um, in fact, perhaps despite appearances, I like you, very much.

**Bridget:** Ah, apart from the smoking and the drinking, the vulgar mother and ... ah, the verbal diarrhoea.

**Darcy:** No, I like you very much. Just as you are.

**Bridget:** You once said you like me just as I am and I just wanted to say likewise. I mean there are stupid things your mum buys you, tonight's another ... classic. You're haughty, and you always say the wrong things in every situation and I seriously believe that you should rethink the length of your sideburns. But, you're a nice man and I like you. If you wanted to pop by sometime that might be nice ... more than nice.

**Darcy:** Right. Crikey!

#### *Psalm 139*

A psalm which reminds us of God's complete knowledge and care for us.

#### *Matthew 10: 29—31*

Jesus offers us a wonderful reminder of God's amazing love for us.

#### *Romans 8: 14—17*

Paul highlights our dignity as children of God.

#### *Galatians 5: 13—25*

A lifestyle challenge!