

## Forever Grateful

Walt,

I received your e-mail the other day asking if there were any words I could share about Alpha. It has taken me a while to feel confident enough to send anything because I wasn't sure I could put into words how strongly I have been touched by the experience.

When I began attending Southlake back in June I was, to say the least, broken. I had been living on self will for 15 years which landed me in the depths of alcohol and drug addiction. I didn't even feel worthy to be in church. Nevertheless, I found Southlake to be a place where for the first time in many years I felt a glimpse of happiness.

I became a Christian at the age of nine when my family began going to a small First Baptist church. Unfortunately, I didn't know what being a Christian even meant and it didn't take long for me to feel like I didn't belong or fit in there. So at the age of 18 I was all too happy not to have to go anymore.

Though I enjoyed Southlake, I realized that I didn't know anything about a Christian life. Even the basics like why did people say God sometimes and Jesus other times. I had no clue. Shortly there after, an insert was included in the weekly bulletin regarding Alpha . I knew this is what I needed.

The first evening was quite uncomfortable for me when I realized that small groups were involved. Keep in mind that I was still at a point of being very ashamed of who I had become and I was sure that everyone would know, just by looking at me, how miserable I was feeling inside. Very luckily I found the courage to go back the next week.

Alpha has helped change my life. I have a new understanding now of who God is and why he sent Jesus to earth. I know the indescribable sacrifice Jesus made for me by dying on that cross. I know without a doubt that my past is forgiven and I know and feel the incredible love that my Father in heaven has for me. I have begun reading the bible for the first time in

my life and understand it. As far as my scary small group....well today I consider them my brothers and sisters in Christ whom I love very much. Friendships that will last forever.

Alpha has been a powerful experience in my life. The personal relationship I have with God today is a blessing that I know I will never be worthy of. I know that whatever life throws my way I will be able to walk through it because I am never alone. I realize that words can't begin to describe how grateful and joyous I feel in the confidence that I am walking, for the first time, down the path that God has laid down for my life.

Thank you Walt and Kim for the amazing service you do with Alpha. I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of it.

Remember....ALPHA ROCKS!!

T.L.

### **Freedom from Torment**

I can say so much, where to start? My pain and confusion was great, the idea of ending my life was tormenting me. I loved Jesus so much and yet I was in disbelief; how could I failed him in such a degree, a divorce from a Christian husband, remarriage with an unbeliever (at that time of course) and letting my morals and beliefs go at the a blink of an eye, and on top of all this mess letting racism nest in my heart. All of these things were destroying me, the remorse, the blame, the anger and the sad moments, too much to bear. I truly believed God was angry at me and I was not going to make it to heaven, a torment I wish nobody will go through in their lifetime.

I was attending the church services every Sunday and even so, I must admit, it kept me moving ahead, but I felt it was not enough. Alpha was the path to the liberation of these horrible feelings. God merciful, as always, guided me to this class and gave me so much hope, forgiveness and peace; once again I felt like a child of God. Now I understand that we all can fall really hard but also get up, and now I can help my sisters and brothers in the Lord in an area that otherwise would have been foreign to me.

Alpha comes truly from God, and for that reason I recommended this course to friends and my two children 18 and 15, will be attending the next session. God is good and you are his instruments. Love you soooo much and forever grateful.

G.S.

### **Looking for a Father Figure**

Alpha means a great deal for me. For most of my life I keep looking for a Father figure and role model in my life, or sometimes denying the need for one. And through Alpha I realized that my Father has always been and will be there always for me. My faith has gained much needed strength over the last year, and Alpha played a big part in it.

R.G.

### **Lessons Learned**

“The weekend away was very fulfilling for both KJ and I. We believe that it helped us apply the lessons we had learned in the previous weeks. It was also a wonderful way to get to know people from the other groups and we now feel more a part of the church body.

We both felt that The Holy Spirit was ever-present and moved us both very deeply. The following Thursday night, we came back to our small group and shared our experiences of the weekend. It was very rewarding to have the opportunity to relate our experiences to them and I'm sure they could feel and see the positive changes in us.

The activities from start to finish were terrific. We seldom get away from our work and the retreat was personally wonderful as well. We will forever cherish our Alpha weekend and we left Twin Rocks with happy hearts.

You may quote anything I've written. I know that anyone who is looking for answers, purpose or love, will find it at Alpha.”

KJ & Linda

### **Soaring in My Life**

Hi Walt! The Holy Spirit has soared in my life since attending Alpha. I absolutely loved my group "The Alpha Chicks" and we are still meeting for post-Alpha. It amazed me to think that I could have gone through life with a big hole in my heart, but Alpha and of course Jesus himself changed all that. I thank God daily for what he is doing in my life. As a stay at home mom, I have found peace in those everyday tasks and challenges like childcare, conflicts, worries and even house work! It is amazing what Alpha opened my eyes and heart too. My husband, children, parents, friends and cousins have all taken note. I have a cousin that is interested in attending and I will check with her. I'd love to go to the dinner and share my enthusiasm too. As far as volunteering, I'd like to do something to help. I'm not sure how much I can do week to week -- my husband's work schedule changes and he would need to help put the kids to bed, they are 2 and 4 years old so 9 pm gets a little late for them. Looking forward to your reminders. Thanks again for all you and Kim have done for me! You guys ROCK!!

L.S.

I would like to give back to the Alpha program. It has changed my world for the better.  
C.T.

Walt,

Thank you for the e-mail. "B" and I are doing very well thanks in large to the amazing path we are on. We are learning how to love each other in ways that were not available to us before. Sobriety and living for God are two things that we are so grateful for each and every day.

I am so excited for the new Alpha to begin. We have several people we want to invite. Actually, September can't get here soon enough. We have been able to introduce Southlake to a few people who are new to sobriety but still feeling "lost". I know that attending Alpha will be paramount in their development in a relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I would love for you to share my story with anyone you would like. Do you still have what I sent you after my Alpha experience? If not, I'd be happy to send a new one. I love what Alpha has done for me and would be honored to be there again in any way that I am needed.

I pray that all is well in you life and look forward to seeing you very soon!

ALPHA ROCKS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

T.L.

### **What We Were Missing**

Participating in Alpha was a very pleasant informative experience. After a number of years of not attending church, we were beginning to be motivated in that direction again and Alpha certainly increased that motivation. Since then we have joined a church and started participating in its activities. We appreciate having gone through the Alpha course as it reminded us of what we were missing. Best wishes for another inspiring Alpha session.

A&N.B. 70's

## Alpha Rocks

1. What did you think about the course content as presented by Nicky Gumbel?

I came in without much knowledge about Christianity. The course content was perfect--not too much to scare me away, just enough to feed my soul and want to learn more.

2. What did you think of the food/desserts that were offered?

WOW!

3. What about your small group?

Small group was great. I felt anything could be said or asked and that we would not be judged by how much/little we knew about the subject and/or how much we felt comfortable about speaking up in the group. We all felt connected. My group leaders were awesome, and I love 'em to pieces.

4. Care to comment on the music? (everyone has an opinion or two)

The music at Soutlake is always fabulous.

5. The over-all evening, are there ways to improve?

It was nice knowing exactly what would happen each week and when. The Alpha meetings always flew by.

6. If you went on the Weekend Away, do you have any thoughts?

The camp/lodge was cool. I positively love the beach, so you score big points from me on that! Not everyone attending the retreat was able to make it on Friday night and enjoy the fun, so another small icebreaker on Saturday morning would have been nice. A 15 vs. 5 minute break between the morning Alpha videos would have made my hind end more comfortable. A live performer for the music would be great! Had I known what would happen at the retreat Saturday evening, I would have been afraid to attend, so I'm glad I was clueless about that until... :)

7. Childcare, if your child attended, how were things?

N/a.

8. Are there a few comments that you would allow me to share about your Alpha experience that would help others want to attend or make a change in their life?

You can shout it out for me that ALPHA ROCKS!

S.T.