



Everyone Has Questions

We believe that everyone should have the chance to explore the Christian faith, ask questions and share their point of view; wherever they are in the world.

ALPHA @ TOD CONTINUES...

Commenced from 16 April 2016, continues to 9 July 2016 for 13 Saturdays, 3.30pm to 5.30pm.

16 April 2016: Episode 1 Is there more to life than this?

23 April 2016: Episode 2 Who is Jesus?

30 April 2016: Episode 3 Why did Jesus die?

"Alpha is a place where we are able to ask questions, explore further and learn from one another" - Lydia Seoh

"Alpha helps us ask the questions we have deep inside us but we have been too embarrassed to bring up" - Tony Yao

"It's a platform for intellectual discussion"

"A way to share views in understanding"

"Alpha really brings me back on track"



Extracts from alphausa.org

"Alpha allowed us to be open, honest, and trust everyone in the group."

"This course introduced me to new friends and experiences I had not expected."

"I joined Alpha to go deeper in my relationship with God."

"No question was treated as stupid or irrelevant. It was a safe place to explore and learn."

"So appreciative of the authenticity."

"It answered a lot of my questions and has made me more certain."

"I learned that faith is there if you reach out ..."

"What's for dessert at your Alpha?"

"I would highly recommend this to anyone at any level of their faith."

"What keeps you going back to Alpha each week? Friendly people? Good food? Even better conversation?"

Ask Rain from the Lord

"...in the season of the spring rain, from the Lord who makes the storm clouds, who gives showers of rain to you, the vegetation in the field to everyone"

Zechariah 10:1

Jesus in Matthew 7:7 encourages us to "Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you". (The acronym for ASK is A for ask, S for search, K for knock). After asking the Lord, you will get one of 3 responses:-

(1)'**Yes**', you usually feel a sense of freedom, you feel a push to go ahead, you feel encouragement to move forward, like a green 'Go' light from the traffic lights. You'll feel an undisturbed peace (Phil 4:7 "...peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your heart and mind through Christ Jesus"), you feel faith come into your soul and you feel confidence rise up in you which you did not have before.

(2)'**No**', you usually have like a blocked path type feeling, like a stop sign, like a red 'Stop' light at the traffic lights, usually accompanied by restlessness, lack of peace and a sense you are being held back.

(3)'**Wait**', you usually feel peace, you feel rest comes upon you and faith rises inside you that you can wait and things will be ok if you just wait, like the amber 'Wait' light at the traffic lights, you sort of relax in your soul and you have a sense of no need to rush the matter.

One very important help in expecting a YES, NO or WAIT answer from God is your personal depth of knowledge of the Bible, the Word of God. The Word of God reveals God's will for us, His plans and purposes for our lives. If you know the Bible well, you can ask and already know how God will respond to you in your prayers.

A **YES** answer from God if it is according to God's will for you. "If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of Him" 1 John 5:14,15.

A **NO** answer from God if it is NOT according to God's will for you. James 4:3 "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures". Also is your request a need or a want? God provides for your needs, "Indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things" (Matt 6:32). All our wants, which are more than our needs, are requests asked amiss. When wrong things are to be done or contemplated, the answer will be No.

A **WAIT** answer from God is not a NO; it's a matter of His timing for you. "For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven" Eccl 3:1.

MAY BIBLE READING: HAGGAI

Haggai, together with exiles, returned to Jerusalem in 536 BC to rebuild the temple. The rebuilding started well; the altar was built, sacrifices were offered and the foundation of the temple laid. However, enemies mocked the builders' effort and the rebuilding ceased for almost 16 years. In 520 BC, Haggai rose to his call and began encouraging and rallying the people to resume building the temple. As a result of the encouragement, rebuilding of the temple resumed and was completed and dedicated in 5 years.

Haggai addressed 3 problems common to all people of all times (including us) and he gave 3 God-inspired solutions to these problems:

1. Disinterest (1:1-15) — The purpose of their return was to rebuild the temple but they were sidetracked and became more interested in building their own houses. **God's response:** They have turned from building God's house to their own houses. Their 'house' will not last. God will withhold His blessing. The appeal is to go and build God's house **first** (1:8).

2. Discouragement (2:1-9) — Amongst some of those who returned were older people who have seen Solomon's Temple in its glory while they were children. The discouragement of this group of older people quickly influenced and affected the rest and once again, the rebuilding ceased after only less than a month it started. **God's response:** Be strong, be strong, be strong... My Spirit remains among you. And, key to overcoming discouragement is for them to know that they are building for the day when God will so fill His house with glory that it will surpass the glory of Solomon's Temple.

3. Dissatisfaction (2:10-23) — The people expected an immediate reversal from years of inactivity, which was not the case. Work of three months cannot reverse the neglect of 16 years... uncleanness is infectious while holiness is not (vs 12-13). **God's response:** God promised them blessing. The people had to understand that it was not because of their work that earned the blessing, but rather because of His grace and gift.

Personal Application

Haggai issues a clear call to all that we should set ourselves to the task assigned to us by God. We should not allow difficulties, enemies or selfish pursuits to turn us aside from our divinely given responsibilities. Our calling, the promised presence of God, and the Holy Spirit encourage us to fulfill our commission.

Different roles were mentioned in this book: prophet, priest, governor (ruler/leader), and the people. Haggai demonstrates the necessity of teamwork in carrying out God's purposes on Earth.