

# Mark Astill

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I was born in to a family that believed in God, but didn't go to church or live an overtly Christian life. As I grew up, I never really gave a thought to God and Jesus, aside from the times I was in church for a wedding, christening or funeral. If I was asked whether I believed or not my answer was 'Probably not!'. It was easier to sit on the fence than commit either way.

Despite being quite successful at school, college, professional qualifications and my chosen career, I was haunted by low self-esteem and self-doubt. I was very critical of myself and assumed everyone looked at me in the same way. A failed marriage did nothing to improve this and, although I met and married a wonderful woman, Jayne, I was still plagued by the same issues. At my very lowest point, I broke the trust of Jayne and we separated. I was broken and had no idea how to fix myself.

Even though I'd given up all hope of Jayne and I having a future together, she took me back. I started to pull myself back together but was by no means fixed. Jayne said I should give church a try. So I went along to Trent Vineyard where she was going.

The moment I set foot in Trent I knew there was something different. Slowly but surely as I spent more and more time at church I started to feel the hole in my life shrinking and the self-doubt evaporating. Jayne and I signed up for the Alpha course. We had questions and doubts, and the course more than answered those, but the amazing thing about Alpha was the way in which it helped us to communicate. We had more self-confidence and more confidence in each other. Jesus had entered our lives and was making big changes.

We both gave our lives to Jesus and from not knowing Jesus only a short time ago; we now need him in our everyday lives. Our days and weeks are not complete if we don't get the opportunity to worship, pray or meet with our tremendous small group.

