

# TRINITY

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“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Matthew 28:19

My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one.” John 10:29-30

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” 2 Corinthians 13:14

The Bible may never actually describe God as “three-in-one,” but it does speak of him that way. Throughout the Bible, we read that God is ONE, there is only ONE, and we should have no other gods apart from Him. And we also read passages where Jesus claims to be sent from the Father, to be ONE with the Father, and to be, himself, God. And then we read about Jesus ascending into the heavens and his promise to his disciples that God would send a new helper, the Holy Spirit, who would accompany them just as Jesus had done. As there has been a Bible, it has been a challenge for readers of the Bible to harmonize these different ideas. Still, while the specific details remain a very grand mystery, the doctrine of the Trinity, in broad form, has been a staple of Christian orthodoxy almost since the beginning of the Christian church.

Many conversations about the Trinity, or triune God, immediately, or in short order, move to the complicated matter of understanding its nature. How can God be only one God when he is three persons? How can you identify three persons and not be advocating for the idea of three gods? And then shortly after those questions come the attempts to explain by analogies: God is like an egg, a tree, a person in relationships, water, a three-leaf clover, or a host of other comparisons. The factors that are often missing in these academic and philosophical discussions are the practical ones. How can I, or do I, relate to God who is three persons? How does this stated reality affect the worship of God? Or how does this doctrine inform how we live the Christian life?

From a relationship perspective, the three persons of the Trinity exercise different roles. The Father is the Creator and Sustainer, of our world and of our lives. The Son is the human incarnation of God who illustrated for us how God would have us live in this world. He is also the sacrificial lamb who has made it possible for us to be reunited with God even though our sin has separated us from him. The Holy Spirit is the spiritual essence that embodies and empowers all children of God, teaching them how to serve and worship God, convicting them of sin, showing them how to pray, and equipping them to serve God’s Kingdom.

Spend a few moments considering how each of these roles connects with you and your personal experience of God.

On the matter of worship, we should be reminded that worshipping God is something we can do all the time. Worship is not solely confined to the church worship service, and worship is not only comprised of singing and preaching. We give God praise anywhere in our lives that we are struck by his awesome character or his incredible works on behalf of humanity. Therefore, the worship of God can look like a simple pause during your day to acknowledge and thank the Father for his creations in our world: a gorgeous sunset, a striking flower, the vastness of the ocean, the grandeur of the mountains, the smile of a friend. The worship of God can look like our seeking to emulate the Son in our daily lives and interactions, as we seek to love our neighbor as ourselves (or even to love our enemies as ourselves), to serve somebody in need, or to act in a way that advances justice, peace, and kindness in our world. The worship of God can look like our engaging with the Holy Spirit, in song, in thoughtful consideration of God's word, in self-analysis and repentance, and in the pursuit of God's plan in our world and in our individual lives.

Spend a few moments considering how all three persons of the Trinity come into play during the church worship service. Then do the same as you consider what it means to live a life of worship and how that connects with all three persons of the Trinity.

In each of our quests to follow the Son, we should be reminded that the Son lived his life in the way that he did in order to serve and worship the Father. While he may have set an example that is very challenging for us to follow, the Father gave us the Spirit to enable us to do that very thing. The character of the Father has been communicated and illustrated to us throughout the pages of the Old Testament. We can easily see his desire for his people to embody those same qualities of love, justice, peace, and righteousness in their own lives. Both God's actions and God's laws serve to provide examples both broad and specific. In the Son, the very example becomes personal. Jesus showed us how we should live a life of worship and service to our heavenly Father. And then through his death and resurrection, made it possible for us to be united directly to the Father through himself. We should look to both Father and Son for teachings and examples on how life should best be lived, and we must approach God through the Son if we hope to be identified as one of God's children.

The Holy Spirit is the daily partner in this exercise of Christian living. And in the lives of many Christians, the Spirit is also the most neglected, least considered person of the Trinity God. We are fascinated with the examples, and exceedingly appreciative of the salvation that has come through the Son. But our responsibility to live out those examples in our world, as already adopted children of God, can often take a back seat to those other paths of thought, or we can pursue following God without considering the Spirit's help.

Spend these last few moments meditating on where in your life you really need the Holy Spirit's guidance, power, or help. And then close in a prayer of worship, as you ask for the Spirit's help in these things.