



Introduction

“There is one and only one living and true God. He is an _____, _____ and _____ Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is _____ in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.”

- BF&M 2000

“We may summarize the actual content of the doctrine of the Trinity with four statements: God is _____, God is _____, God is a _____, and God is a _____.”

- Stanley Grenz, **Theology for the Community of God**

Notes:

The Trinity

“God is a mystery, but not in the alien abduction, things that go bump in the night sense. Certainly not in the “who can know? Why bother?” sense. God is a mystery in that who he is and what he is like are secrets, things we would NEVER have worked out by ourselves. But this Triune God has revealed himself to us. Thus the Trinity is not some piece of inexplicable nonsense, like a square circle or an interesting theologian. Rather, because the Triune God has revealed himself, we can understand the Trinity. That is not to say we can exhaust our knowledge of God, comprehend and wrap our brains around him, simply cramming in a few bits of knowledge before moving on to some other doctrine. To know the Trinity is to know God, an eternal and personal God of infinite beauty, interest, and fascination. The Trinity is a God we CAN know, and forever grow to know better.”

- Michael Reeves, **Delighting in the Trinity**

Genesis 1:26a (ESV)

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

John 1:1–3 NIV

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was with God in the beginning.

³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

2 Corinthians 13:14 ESV

¹⁴ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

“While the mystery of the dispensation is still guarded, which distributes the Unity (of God) into a Trinity, placing in their order the three Persons— the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: three, however, not in _____, but in _____; not in _____, but in _____; not in _____, but in _____; yet of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power, inasmuch as He is one God, from whom these degrees and forms and aspects are reckoned, under the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

- Tertullian, **Against Praxeas**, Chapter 1

Notes:

Discussion:

What about the idea of the Trinity is most confusing to you?

Does it encourage you that God reveals himself to us that we might understand Him rightly and know Him personally? Why or why not? How have you (or how haven't you) seen this reality of knowing God personally in your life?

God the Father

“God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all - _____, all - _____, all- _____, and all- _____. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.”

- BF&M 2000

Matthew 6:9–13 ESV

⁹ Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,

¹² and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

“All sorts of people are fond of repeating the Christian statement that “God is Love.” But they seem not to notice that the words “God is love” have no real meaning unless God contains at least two persons. If God was a single person, then before the world was made, He was not love.”

- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

John 17:24 ESV

²⁴ Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Psalm 103:13 ESV

¹³ As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.

Jeremiah 3:19 ESV

¹⁹ “ ‘I said, How I would set you among my sons, and give you a pleasant land, a heritage most beautiful of all nations. And I thought you would call me, My Father, and would not turn from following me.

God the Son

“Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His _____ as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus _____ revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He _____ into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One _____, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.”

- BF&M 2000

“The Word of God took a body and used a human instrument, in order to give life to the body and in order that, just as he is known in creation by his works, so also he might act in a human being, and show himself everywhere, leaving nothing barren of his divinity and knowledge.”

- Athanasius, **On the Incarnation**

Philippians 2:5–11 ESV

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,
⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

“The _____ is to be understood as _____ really become _____. Jesus Christ is not just man participating in God but is himself essential Deity. The Word of God did not just descend upon Jesus as upon one of the prophets, for in Him ‘the Lord became man and did not just come into man.’ That is to say, in Jesus Christ God came to dwell among us *as himself man.*”

- Thomas F. Torrance, **The Trinitarian Faith**

Notes:

God the Holy Spirit

“The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully _____. He _____ holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He _____ Christ. He _____ men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects _____. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He _____ the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.”

- BF&M 2000

“Do not be worried if or surprised if you find (Him) rather vaguer or more shadowy in your mind than the other two. I think there is a reason why that must be so. In the Christian life you are not usually looking at him. He is always acting through you.”

- C.S. Lewis, **Mere Christianity**

“As the sun gives of itself - its own light and warmth - in shining on us, so God gives us himself and the blessedness he has always enjoyed. He does so in giving us His Son, and He does so in giving us His Spirit.”

- Michael Reeves, **Delighting in the Trinity**

John 15:26–27 ESV

²⁶ “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.

²⁷ And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

Notes:

Conclusion

Matthew 3:16–17 ESV

¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him;

¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Notes:

Discussion:

What is one thing you learned today about who God is and what He is like?

How (if at all) does what you’ve learned today change the way you want to talk about what God is like with others (both Christians and those far from God)?