



and



IMPORTANT STUFF ABOUT GOD (no. 2)

Three-In-One

(prologue)

The tri-unity of God is a foundational doctrine of Christianity. (Don't be afraid of the word "doctrine." It simply means "true things we believe." Without doctrine, following Jesus would be a free-for-all that everyone could define however they wanted. Jesus taught that truth does exist, that we can know it, and that his followers must align with it.) God's tri-unity is also one of the most mysterious things about him. As the video says, thinking about it "hurts my brain" because how can *one* thing also be *three* things while still remaining just *one* thing?

Some things are made of three parts (e.g. the shell, white, and yolk of an egg), but none of the parts alone equals the whole. Some things can exist in three different aspects (e.g. H₂O can be liquid, solid, or gas), but it can't be those things all at the same time. People can have three different roles or identities (e.g. you can be a sibling, a cousin, and a son or daughter), but you can't be all those things to all the same people.

God defies all the ordinary ways of being three-things-in-one. We will never be able to fully understand God's triune nature. That's okay. The main thing is that we can know the triune God himself. And as we get to know him more and more — as our Father, as Jesus our Savior, and as the Spirit who fills our hearts — the more we will begin to understand and celebrate his three-in-one-ness.

*In this video:

- *Hebrew Scriptures* refers to the Old Testament
- Vision of the Son of Man (Daniel 7)
- God's wisdom personified (Proverbs 3:19-20 and 8:22-35)
- God's glory personified (Exodus 33:17-23)
- *transcendent* (adj.) refers to God as being exalted above and distinct from the universe

WARM-UP

- What have you heard or learned about the Trinity up to this point? Has it made sense?
- What are some ways you think God, Jesus, and the Spirit are different? The same?
- How do you think God can be both transcendent (see the definition above) and also present here with us?

WATCH

"God" [8:09]

READ

Matthew 3:13-17
Ephesians 1:1-14
Romans 4:25-5:11

RESPOND

How do God (the Father), Jesus (the Son), and the Spirit seem different in these verses? How do they seem similar?

Do these verses change how you understand the tri-unity of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit? How?

ENGAGE

Read the passages again. Make three lists of everything the verses say about (1) God, (2) Jesus, (3) the Spirit. Look over your lists. Alone or as a group, summarize each list with a single phrase or statement.

One way to think about the triune purpose of God is this:

the Father *plans* our salvation (from the very beginning of time)

the Son *accomplishes* our salvation (through his life, death, and resurrection)

the Spirit *perfects* our salvation (by living in us, guiding us, transforming us)

What other ways could you simply describe the three-fold character or actions of Father - Son - Spirit?

ERGO

As you think about and spend time with God this week, be intentional about engaging with him as your Father, your Savior, and his indwelling Spirit. They are all God. But they are each unique.

Pray to the Father (who made and loves you), in the name of the Son (who saved you and brings you into the Father's presence), through the power of the Spirit (who raised Christ from the dead and who helps us when we don't know what to pray for).

(postscript)

- Early in the 400s AD, St. Augustine wrote *On the Trinity*. He described God as "one essence, three persons." You might recognize that phrase from the traditional hymn *Holy, Holy, Holy*. (Check out Audrey Assad's version [here](#).)
- These 12 statements are all true about God:

The Father is not the Son.

The Father is not the Spirit.

The Father is God.

God is the Father.

The Son is not the Father.

The Son is not the Spirit.

The Son is God.

God is the Son.

The Spirit is not the Father.

The Spirit is not the Son.

The Spirit is God.

God is the Spirit.

You can find all of these in images called "The Shield of the Trinity" or "The Shield of Faith." Some [here](#) and [here](#). BTW: *Deus*=God; *Pater*=Father; *Filius*=Son; *Sanctus Spiritus*=Holy Spirit; *est*=is; *non est*=is not.

- Listen to "Three in One" (free streaming [here](#)) for some powerful doctrine (fear not — doctrine is just "true things we believe," remember?)