

God As One; God As Three; God As Three in One

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[0 : 0 0] Prayer. Our Father in heaven, grant us precisions of word and thought, Father, in true faith. Give us the light of understanding by your Holy Spirit. Enable us to believe what you have spoken in your word, that you are one and the only true God, existing in Father, Son, and Spirit.

Humble us, Lord, by the complexity of the matter at hand. In the present Jesus' name, amen. Good morning. So today we begin a series on the attributes of God. I'm glad we have this time together.

A.W. Tozer in his book, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, says the most important thing about you is what comes into your mind when you think about God. Not what you say or do or what you say about yourself, but what you deeply in your heart conceive God to be like. Your knowledge of God.

In a way, our salvation depends on our knowledge of God. Jesus said, This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God in Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

We must know God. Not carnal knowledge about him, but true knowledge based upon the word and spirit. So, not just knowing about diamonds, where it's found underneath the earth and made of carbon atoms, its value in the marketplace. But the knowledge we gain when we gaze upon a beautiful, sparkling diamond, beholding it within its splendor. That's the kind of first-hand knowledge of God that we must have.

[1 : 5 1] And a high view of God sees God as holy, high, and lifted up. Helping us to see ourselves rightly as sinful, in a need of grace. A low view of God is idolatry, and a mere figment of our imagination.

A high view of God leads to humility and reverence. A low view of God leads to shallow worship and pride. What you think about God affects your politics. It affects your view of history. It affects your marriage.

It affects how you endure trials. How you understand persecution. It affects everything. And in fact, your whole life is being driven by how you conceive God to be like.

Everyone is a theologian. Everyone has this view of God in their minds. So, in this class, my prayer is that we remove the blurriness of God's character, and that it comes into sharper view, so that our whole lives would be to live for God's honor and praise.

Jeremiah 4, verse 23 says, Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom. Let not the mighty man boast in his might. Let not the rich man boast in his riches.

[3 : 0 1] But let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me. And so to that end, we're going to begin today with the doctrine of the Trinity. And this is somewhat unusual.

Normally, if you read a book about the attributes of God, it begins with things like God is a spirit, God is omniscient, God is holy, God is loving. And Lord willing, we will get to those things.

But I chose this topic first because when we discuss the attributes of God, they are the attributes of the triune God, applying equally to the Father, Son, and Spirit. So the Trinity will help us to understand how can God be the kind of God he is.

Now, what is the Trinity? Where is that chapter and verse where the Bible defines the Trinity? Well, as you probably know, the word Trinity is not in the Bible.

You don't find a point-by-point exposition of the Trinity. Does that mean it's not in the Bible? Well, we'll see. The word Trinity comes from the Latin trinitas, which means threeness.

[4 : 05] So even though the word is not in the Bible, it captures an essential truth. So let's begin with a definition. Wayne Grudem helpfully has defined the Trinity as this.

God eternally exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and each person is fully God, and there is one God. So each person is fully God, and there is one God.

And to understand the importance of the Trinity, I want to tell you a story of a heroic man in the early church, a man from Africa of great courage and faithfulness.

And this man defended the truth of Christ's deity against the raging assault of Satan. And this man was named Athanasius. In Athanasius' day, many inside the church actually excommunicated those who confessed that Jesus is Lord.

In fact, Athanasius himself was exiled five times, thrown out of his church, and then called back, always standing up for the truth. And during that time, many older people in the church were allowing wolves to ravage Christ's flock.

[5 : 18] And by the year 300, the orthodoxy that Jesus is Lord was threatened with lies and heresy by a man named Arius. And Athanasius was only in his 20s, remarkably, when he entered into the public arena.

And one of the examples in history where the younger generation was calling the older generation back to biblical faithfulness, and associated with Athanasius came the Latin phrase, Athanasius Contramundum, Athanasius against the world, a man who stood against the world in defense of the truth.

So may God raise up more men and women who are more concerned with being faithful to God's word than receiving the world's applause. And it was indeed a dark moment. The false doctrine from Arius spread rapidly during the early church.

And what was Arianism? Well, Arius rightly said that there was only one God. But then disastrously, he wrongly reasoned that if Jesus was the Son of God, then he must have had a beginning.

He's the Son. He must have had a beginning. Right? And therefore, there must have been a time where Jesus did not exist, and only the Father was eternal. And this came to be known as Arianism, which denies the full deity of Christ.

[6 : 35] And we see these ancient heresy in modern times. Oneness Pentecostals, who were kicked out of the assemblies of God many years ago. Mormons, Jehovah Witnesses. There's nothing new under the sun.

But by God's grace, in a moment of great triumph, in 315 AD, the church sent representatives to the city of Nicaea to wrestle with the Scripture and to clarify their position.

And the rest is history. There they formulated the Nicene Creed, which contains these important lines. And when you read the Nicene Creed, think of begotten as meaning as the same essence as, and essence as the same godness as.

So these are important lines. We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten, so of the same essence as, the Father before all ages, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of the same essence as the Father, of the same godness as the Father.

And later in 381, a statement was added about the deity of the Spirit, which forms the modern Nicene Creed. And there, in the three great ecumenical creeds, the Apostles, the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creed, are all structured around this threeness and oneness.

[7 : 54] And these creeds are like letters from our spiritual ancestors, warning us against dangerous theological mistakes that have threatened the church in the past. But sadly, many in our modern day have not saw fit to have that humble listening of the past.

Matt referenced last week that Ligonier study on the state of theology done for Americans. And it is clear that even in our own day, the doctrine of the Trinity is outright rejected by those who claim to be Christians.

So the question was this, Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God. In 2020, 30% of American evangelicals agreed that Jesus is not God.

In 2022, that jumped to 43%. That's amazing and saddening, a travesty. Before we begin, let's ask the question, why does this even matter?

Someone might object, I worship God, we don't need these distinctions. It's so abstract and vague. People throwing around terms like essence and begotten, co-this and co-that, it just seems so irrelevant.

[8 : 58] We don't need these distinctions as long as someone worships God. However they conceive him to be, that's what's most important, right? We worship God. Well, to the contrary, Jesus disagrees with that.

Remember in Jesus' last discourse, on the night of his betrayal, before going to the cross, before the darkness of the crucifixion, Jesus prays for his disciples in his high priestly prayer.

And you can imagine the importance of these words. In his hour of crisis, before you go away, what will you say to the frightened disciples? What would you say? Stop being so anxious.

You're always so anxious. Or I'll be right back. You know, BRB. He doesn't say those things. Instead, to get through the crisis, Jesus is saying, I need you to have a deeper understanding of God.

And he begins teaching them about the Trinity and the sweet fellowship between the Father, Son, and Spirit. In John 17, Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, and they may be one, even as we are one.

[10 : 01] Or verse 22, The glory that you have given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and you in me, that they may become perfectly one.

And the high priestly prayer underlines the glorious mystery of the Trinity. And so for the Lord Jesus, this isn't a speculative topic. It's entirely practical. It helps us in times of suffering and persecution.

And likewise, early Christians were passionate about this topic, not because they were interested in speculative philosophy or scholastic theology. No, because they wanted to worship the Lord rightly. And I would venture to say that preserving this truth in the Nicene Creed helped the church persevere through years of severe persecution.

And if that is so, friends, the church must remove this blurriness and provide clarity on this important topic. And many Roman Catholic apologists will actually say, well, see, that's why you need the Roman Catholic Church, the big C.

Because you cannot prove the Trinity from the Scripture. You need the councils and the creeds, but we must disagree with them there. because ultimately, we prove not our case, not from the church fathers, however helpful they may be as a humble listening of the past, but ultimately to the Scriptures.

[11 : 15] We must look to the Scriptures as the foundation of our faith. And so our goal in our time together is to expound scripturally of the Trinity. God is one, and God is in three persons, and discuss why this matters.

And so to do this, we have to do three things to prove the Trinity from the Scripture. First, we must show that God is one. Second, three in one. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all God.

Each person is fully God. And third, these three persons are not identical. And then we'll spend some time thinking about application. So point number one. God is one.

God is one. So the first thing we must say that Christians believe, just as Jews believe, is that God is one.

And many accuse Christians of being polytheists. Right? Accusing Christians of believing in three gods. And while it is true that Christians believe in a plurality, it is not polytheism. So Christians would hardly affirm Deuteronomy 6, verse 4.

[12 : 15] Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might. So God is one. This is referred to as the Shema, because the first word here is the Hebrew word Shema.

Shema, O Israel. And Israel was to understand there is one God. In contrast to all the other surrounding nations who worship many false gods, Israel was to worship the one and only true God.

There is one creator God. The creator God of Israel is the God who created the heavens and the earth and who redeemed the people out of slavery to be his special people. But in another sense, the Shema means for Israel not only to say that God is one, but God, you are the one.

Like in a love relationship. God, you are the only one my heart desires. The one I will love with all my heart, my soul, my mind, and strength. And marriage pictures that exclusive love, does not, an unbreakable love between God and his people.

And the first commandment is you shall have no other gods before me. An exclusive loyalty to Yahweh as their king. And the people in exchange are his treasured possession. And the heart of the Old Testament is a call for Israel to worship God as their one and only true God and worship him alone.

[13 : 25] And this is a God who will have no rivals. His glory he will not share with another. He alone is God, utterly unique, ultimate authority. At his command, the Red Sea was parted.

In the ten plagues, he shows his supremacy over all the other false gods of the Egyptians. He can make the sun stand still at his word. I am the Lord God. That is my name. My glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.

So all glory and praise are due his name alone. And God speaks authoritatively about the past and the future. He's in absolute control of all things. And there are only two possibilities.

Either God is reigning or he is being ruled over. And the Old Testament is emphatic that God is reigning. Isaiah 44, verse 6, Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, The Lord of hosts, I am the first and I am the last.

Besides me, there is no God. Who is like me? Let him proclaim it. Is there a God besides me? There is no rock. I know not any. Or Deuteronomy chapter 32, verse 39, See now that I, even I am he, and there is no God beside me.

[14 : 30] I kill, I make alive, I wound, I heal, and there is none that can deliver out of my hands. Because he's in full control, fully sovereign, fully reigning, there is none that can deliver out of his hands.

There is none beside him or over him. Isaiah chapter 45, verse 22, Turn to me and be saved to all the ends of the earth. For I am God and there is no other. And so consistent in the Old Testament is that there is only one God.

And the New Testament actually affirms that God is one. Jesus affirms those Shema in Mark 12. You'll recall one of the scribes asked Jesus, Which commandment is the most important of all?

Jesus answered, The most important is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. So Jesus affirms that God is one. In 1 Corinthians 8, when resolving the question of meat sacrifice to idols, Paul says, We know that no idol is anything in the world and there is no God but one.

James says, You believe that God is one. You do well. Even demons believe and shudder. So the demons can affirm the Nicene Creed. 1 Timothy 2, 5, For there is one God and there is one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus.

[15 : 42] Ephesians 4, 6, One God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. Lastly, 1 Timothy 1, 17.

The king of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. So rewind in Genesis 1. This one God created all things.

Unlike other pagan cosmic stories where creation is a result of God's fighting against each other, one God speaks the world into existence by his word. Ex nihilo. Out of nothing, he creates.

Ten times, you're reading the opening chapter, and God said, and it was so. And God has supreme authority over all creation. He is not some tribal God, but he is the king whom every person will give an account.

And this is the one who created Adam and Eve in his own image. There is only one God. There are not three gods. There is only one. So the response to this oneness, right, makes Muslims and Jews say, that's right, God is one.

[16 : 44] So therefore, the Trinity is excluded, right? One plus one plus one equals three. Right? Father, Son, Spirit, that's three gods. If God is one, that excludes Jesus and the Holy Spirit's deity.

But this is not so. Not at all. So let's look at the Old Testament again and examine this criticism. And B.B. Warfield in his book, The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity, has an insightful comment about the nature of the Old Testament's witness about the Trinity.

He says this, The Old Testament may be likened to a chamber richly furnished, but dimly lit. The introduction of light brings into it nothing which was not in it before, but brings out into clear view much what was in it, but was only dimly lit.

That's a paraphrase. So what he's noting here is important, that the nature of the scripture is progressive. It's progressive. So God reveals himself in stages. So the Trinity is more clear in Isaiah than it is in Genesis.

It's more clear in the New Testament than it is in Isaiah. So the nature of the scripture is progressive. The light is getting brighter and then when the light of the New Testament is brightest, we can go back into the Old Testament and see things that were dimly lit, but not at all perceived.

[18 : 06] It's like we know more now than they did back then. Right. Yeah, exactly. Exactly. So we can go back into the Old Testament knowing what we know about God in the New and see things that were there all along.

And so the church fathers thought this was very important to go back into the Old Testament and to see hints or footprints, they would call it.

I think it's called the vestigia trinitatis. So it's the footprint or shadows of the triune nature of God in the Old Testament. So I want to throw out a question for us here is where in the Old Testament is the plurality of God implied?

And I have some here as you can see. Genesis 1 and the Spirit of the Lord hovered over and then when the angel of the Lord makes an appearance that's the pre-incarnate Christ.

Yeah. And then God. When does God ever make an appearance? The angel of the Lord is fascinating, right? He's a fascinating figure.

[19 : 14] He appears in numerous points and angels refuse worship, right? Yeah. In Revelation. Yeah, 22. The Revelation the angel says don't do that.

I'm a fellow servant. Don't worship me. But this angel accepts worship. It appears he has God's name, right? And God sends him out so it's he has a name of God but at the same time he's distinct from God.

So a lot of people have seen the angel of the Lord as being Jesus says in Israel the spirit of the Lord was upon me. You know he quotes Isaiah as another yeah the spirit of the spirit.

Yes. Yeah. So we have Genesis. We have the angel of the Lord. Is there any other place that the plurality Olivia? I don't know where somewhere in the Old Testament it's called the man of God or the son of man like a scene where they eat under a tree but a lot of people think it's Jesus or Elijah or the plurality of God and then there's there's I think one more place that's all the new trees.

Yeah. Yeah. I'm thinking when you say the son of man I was thinking of Daniel 9 where the son of man is given all authority sovereign power and glory and it's like who is this son of man who is presented to the ancient of days and is given an eternal dominion an eternal kingdom.

[20 : 40] It's puzzling right? So where is the plurality of God implied in the Old Testament? So we have the angel of the Lord there's the Daniel there's certain places where it seems that there are a divine figure that appears.

Yeah. The plurality of God implied. The servant passages in Isaiah come to mind.

They're not they're they're very shadowy but they're very much perfect once Jesus comes. Yeah. Yeah.

The servant the servant comes and seems to have the attributes of God the servant will save his people from their sins but who can save a God alone?

Who is the servant that Isaiah speaks of? And Moses talking about there's going to come a God will rise up a prophet after me and listen to him. Yeah. Yes.

[21 : 42] But does that passage not if you listen to that passage you're just expecting a prophet you want to be God and I'm sorry I can't wait to say the context of the question he was speaking about Jesus Yeah because Jesus well the prophet Deuteronomy 18 where it says Moses there will be a prophet like me and listen to him and the prophet will say things that will come true and that's the way you should know that he's a true prophet and I think Jesus his resurrection right he says I'm going to be raised up on the third day and when it happens it is the the prophet that Moses spoke of but it's he's not necessarily the deity of God I mean the deity of Christ but it does vindicate Christ in what all I said was true Yeah And it wasn't even yet he had to wait for David to come and then after David Jesus came Yeah So Moses was talking about two people ahead of him Yeah To clarify

I don't disagree what I'm saying is that that passage itself does not talk about Jesus as Moses was not God so if Moses said I'm a prophet like me Yeah That passage in the context it's actually it's not the plurality It's not the plurality of God it's it's affirming the truthfulness of what Christ said and all that he did and yes I agree and some of the things he said was I'm the Father I want Yeah Tom Maybe I missed this I stepped out for a second but the Hebrew word for God Elohim is plural but it's singular it's used as a singular verb but it's a plural noun referring to God which is puzzling and it's there's this plurality in the Godhead seemingly just in his name Yeah You can say the same thing from the Shema you're always real the Lord your God the Lord is one because it uses three different names for God it's the Yahweh and the Elohim and then this is a little more complicated but in the Hebrew manuscripts they didn't want to say Yahweh so they vocalized it with Abed and I so it's like

Yahweh anyway it's the classic you know God is one passage there's actually three names of lies for God Yeah that is good that is good Sneaky hints I want you to get this but I'm going to stick this in here too for here like you'll get it someday Yeah Right now after coming out of Egypt with all these multiple gods I want you to get God as one but later on remember that's that's so true Romans 8 16 the spirit of God bears witness to our spirit that we are children that's a reference to the spirit yes yeah the spirit is equally God exactly and all these and so many so much more if you look in the Old Testament right you can see hints footprints shadows of the triune nature of God not explicitly stated but you can go back after the of the New Testament the light shines and see like oh yeah

I see that there were the Old Testament authors were not uncomfortable using plural forms of nouns for God like why is that but and one other is the Genesis 2 which we we talked about that let us make man in our image after our likeness and Genesis 3 verse 22 the Lord God said the man has now become like one of us knowing good and evil he wasn't talking to angels well and it's interesting because the non you know some people could say look the church fathers you can go and find anything you want in the Old Testament if you have an agenda I can go find anything I want if I'm going to go in there looking for it but even non-Christians wrestle with this passage of Genesis 2 and 3 so many Jewish rabbis contradict each other fumbling in an explanation of what is going on in Genesis 2 some rabbis point that the us and our is Genesis as God speaking with angels and other rabbis like no that cannot be we did not

God angels didn't create us we're not creating the image of angels that just cannot be and one Jewish writer in the 2nd century BC wrote a book called Jubilee and he had a lengthy quote of Genesis and he just dropped the plural self-reference out of it so that's one way of avoiding the problem just avoid it by deleting it from your quotation and I think that just shows the early church were not reading back into the Old Testament things that weren't there if Jewish non-Christians were wrestling with the same issues with the plurality that's implied and you know the us and our from a New Testament perspective we can say this is intra-Trinitarian conversation so let us make man in our image and I think when John writes in the beginning was the word the word was God was with God right Jesus was clearly there the spirit is there and the scripture is hinting at that there is a plurality within the God even in their act of creation and so our response to the Muslim is that there is one God but there is a plurality and that is attested to in the Old Testament one other one I wanted to speak about was Psalm 110

[27:13] Psalm 110 Psalm 110 was the verse 1 was Jesus' favorite verse in the Bible to quote from it's quoted in 24 separate or alluded to in 24 different times and Psalm 110 verse 1 says the Lord says to my Lord sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool and the Lord Yahweh is speaking to another person whom he calls Lord right and this other person clearly within the context of the psalm is the Messiah David's messianic son and this one in Psalm 110 who sits at God's right hand who triumphs over his enemies he is a priest in the order of Melchizedek he has divine power to judge the nations to shatter kings in his wrath so the Lord is speaking to the Lord this Messiah it's a puzzling reality what is going on and Jesus quotes this in his dispute with the Pharisees who are attacking him Jesus says to the Pharisees who do you think of the what do you think of the Christ whose son is he they answer the son of David then he said how is it that David in the spirit calls the Messiah

Lord and I think it's the same it's the same Yahweh speaks to Adonai in Psalm 110 and I don't know how fully David understood this what he was saying but under the inspiration of the spirit he's somehow saying that the Lord is speaking to another person whom is called Lord the God the Father is speaking to the Son sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool in Isaiah 9 this Messiah is called Mighty God Everlasting Father Prince of Peace and again this Messiah will save his people from their sins in Isaiah 53 but who can save from our sins but God alone who is this Messiah that David and Isaiah speak about so those are the hints it's there but it's you know we don't know it could be is God three persons is God more than three persons from the Old Testament we can't we can't say for sure but one of the remarkable things is that once you open the pages of the New Testament the Trinity isn't so much explained but it's assumed throughout the whole narrative and so what was vaguely hinted at in the Old Testament now becomes clear you know some say

Jesus never claimed to be God except in a few lines in John's Gospel that were added much later is that right does the New Testament affirm Jesus deity yes yes yes they do yes there's scholars that now are acknowledging that ancient Judaism did have that is pluralistic pluralistic conception of their one God and that the phenomenon of Judaism denying that is a recent it's a recent phenomenon it's post-Christian that I would say was in response to Christianity but if you read the first century Jewish text first century BC AD they seem to all acknowledge this many of them anyway and then that's lost once you go through the Christian centuries so I think they knew it it wasn't they may not have the exact conception you know a precise trinity but they knew there was this plurality it wasn't just

David said something everybody forgot it I think they were aware yeah that's a good point so even historically this plurality has been part of the Jewish faith and it's not something the church fathers just kind of came up with that thin air yeah I think we can emphatically say yes the New Testament affirms Jesus DHU Pastor Matt preached on Mark 2 a couple weeks ago Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath he's Lord over God's law Jesus receives worship after the resurrection Thomas says my Lord and my God Jesus doesn't say look I'm your Lord but not your God what are you doing he says no no no he accepts worship he's like yes he accepts worship that is due God alone and in Revelation the Lamb on the throne is worshipped he receives that which is due to God alone he not only receives worship he takes on divine titles right he is given the name Savior but Isaiah 43

God says I even I am the Lord apart from me there is no Savior and Jesus the name Jesus literally means Savior Savior and not only Savior but he takes on the name of Shepherd right John 10 and David would say the Lord is my shepherd and there's many other titles that Jesus takes on Redeemer the Son of Man the True Vine the Bridegroom clearly alluding to God's work in the Old Testament the I am statements in the Gospel of John are filled with allusions to Jesus deity one of the I am statements for example is I am the light of the world and that gives life to the world he's recalling the wilderness experience and the pillar of fire that led Israel through the desert so any listener would have understood that light was a picture of the light of God himself and the light metaphor is where the light of God's glory is present as God led the people through the wilderness to salvation

[32 : 48] Jesus saying I will lead my people out of darkness into the light of salvation through my life and death and so these I am statements are alluding to God's work in the Old Testament and he not only takes on titles like Savior Shepherd Redeemer and Lord he has divine works right he forgives sins but who can forgive sins but God alone as a Pharisee is recognized they were rights only God can forgive sins because ultimately as David said I've sinned against God and him alone my sin against Bathsheba and Uriah he stops the wind at his word what kind of man is this says the disciples even the winds and sea obey him answer he's God right he's God he even commands the forces of nature and there's more we can say the apostles consistently gave the title Lord to Jesus in their letters 1 Corinthians 8-6 Paul says yet for us there is one God the Father from whom are all things and for whom we exist and one

Lord Jesus Christ through whom are all things and through whom we exist and it's interesting that is 1 Corinthians 8-6 people will point out that is the Shema and Paul is inserting Jesus into that as describing him as Lord there is one God in 1 Corinthians 8-6 so Paul calls him Lord through whom all things exist and the word Lord in the New Testament is the Hebrew word translated into the Greek Kyrios Kyrios and that is the word that is used to describe Jesus over and over again and that same word is used over 6,000 times in the Old Testament to describe God so Jesus is fully God and you will call Jesus in John 8 calls himself Yahweh before Abraham was I am and the Pharisees understood what he was saying because they picked up stones to kill him for blasphemy right they would be right he's calling himself

God except that it was true Jesus was God understandable reaction you're only 50 years old you're saying you saw Abraham face to face he existed 2,000 years ago and Jesus was saying I am God and they understood what he was saying because they picked up stones to kill him God came to earth and he killed him yes his people knew him not yes yes Jesus yes yes yes the love of God Jesus is the image of the invisible God as Hebrews 1 says so the eternal son of God light from light true God from true God we don't need to pick a couple verses from John to prove Jesus deity it is throughout the entire New Testament so let's talk about the Holy Spirit the third distinct person from the Trinity of the one God the Father is God Jesus is God and the Holy Spirit is God and these are distinct persons despite there being only one God

I hope your mind is just kind of getting a little confused now how can that be possible there being one God and three distinct persons in the one God and some people will say I don't really get this whole business about the Holy Spirit that's just the word for the breath the wind the power of God working through the world right they don't see the Holy Spirit as a distinct person and Christians who grew up with the KJV anyone grew up with the KJV here KJV there you go I'm familiar with the term Holy Ghost and the Holy Ghost it has connotations of distance of an impersonal God who's a ghost the Holy Ghost right it's like who is the Spirit I mean and in many passages the Holy Spirit is spoken of impersonal terms we tend to think of the Holy Spirit as a force but the Holy Spirit is a person right and frequently does activities that belong to personhood so right before the cross

Jesus expresses an internal intimacy with the Father and he promises to send the Holy Spirit onto the church one distinct from both the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is the paraclete the helper the advocate it says that God decrees Jesus accomplishes and the Holy Spirit applies to salvation yes it's all Trinitarian in the end yes our whole faith is Trinitarian yes now why did Jesus have to leave before the Holy Spirit comes well that's easy because God wanted it to be that way I actually don't know why Jesus had to leave before the Spirit comes maybe it's because Jesus was yes yes yes yes yes yes yeah at a at a Pentecost yeah the Spirit is poured out but yeah so there's the Jesus as a sense and the

[38 : 12] Spirit comes down and the Spirit in John 14 26 is the helper the one whom the Father will send in my name he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have taught you and so the Holy Spirit teaches us right the Spirit enables them to remember he bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness he intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words right the Spirit understands our needs and Paul in 1 Corinthians 4 the Spirit searches everything he knows every aspect of the depths of God and he makes God known so that's one of the roles of the Spirit is to make God known he applies the work of redemption in our hearts 1 Corinthians 12 verse 11 the Spirit gives gifts to each one individually as he wills so the Spirit gives us for service Acts 16 verse 6 Paul is traveling through Asia as they attempted to go into

Bithynia and it says the Spirit does not allow them to go and so the Spirit is preventing them from going somewhere the Holy Spirit talks he says to Philip go and join the chariot so the Spirit speaks to Philip and of course the Spirit can be grieved and troubled by what we do so the Spirit possesses full deity of the Godhead Raul mentioned earlier the deity of the Spirit in the work of creation where the Spirit is hovering over the waters in the birth narratives Jesus is conceived by the Spirit the Spirit leads Jesus into the wilderness where Satan tempts him and after he overcomes temptation he goes forth in So the Holy Spirit is equally God and distinct from the Father and the Son So in summary there's one God there are not three gods but there's one God but there are three persons who are distinct from each other the

Father is God the Son is God the Spirit is God but the Father is not the Son nor the Spirit the Spirit is not the Father nor the Son they're not identical so and this is clear from Jesus in the Great Commission all authority in heaven and on earth is given to me go therefore make disciples of all nations baptizing in the name the one name of the Father of the Son and of the Holy Spirit teaching them to observe all that I have commanded so there's one God in three persons so let's say something about some common mistakes that analogies I want to get to analogies so we can say that analogies could be helpful right if you an analogy might help you understand some of this oneness and threeness but I think if we go right to the analogy we actually end up misrepresenting the triunity of God so

Christians will say well God is one but he appears in three different forms right so oftentimes this mistake is done when we start analogizing God has three different masks that he puts on that's called modalism yes God appears in different modes and so God is like H2O sometimes he's water sometimes he's ice sometimes he's steam and that's kind of water is appearing in different forms but the problem is if water can turn into steam but can the father turn himself into the spirit no he can't and there's no situation where it's water steam and ice and they're all three at once right so it's not it's not like the it's not a good analogy for the trinity although we can that might be helpful but it ultimately falls short God can't turn himself into the spirit because God is the spirit there is no turning he is yes one is like a man who is a father and a brother and a son all together right so

I'm a man I'm also a father I'm a husband I'm a son three in one right well that doesn't work either because that denies the distinctions within the Godhead it's that doesn't so all analogies ultimately fail us I haven't heard of a good analogy I mean they could be comprehension and it's that makes sense doesn't it if God says that my ways are not your ways my thoughts are above your thoughts of course we're not going to find an analogy that perfectly corresponds one to one with who God is yeah yeah yeah words escape us words escape us try to define who God is and what he is the words fail

[43 : 32] I got it up here I just don't have it when the words come out yes yes like Augustine said what is needed is a loving profession of ignorance rather than a rash profession of knowledge yeah we need to profess our ignorance and not like rashly professed our knowledge of the matter yeah so let's pause for a moment and ask ourselves how does the plurality of God help us understand God's character because this is an attributes of God class how does that help us understand God's character God well there's a big difference between the conception of Allah and a Christian's view of the triune God so if we deny the trinity and let's say God was like Allah God would need his creation to be loving would he not can you love anything if you have been in solitary confinement since eternity past no you need an object to love to be loving and the scripture presents the father son and spirit being in eternal relationship and fellowship with each other in eternity past they have loved each other from eternity past it's out of this love and joy that they create the world or else if they weren't together in a way you'd have to say

God needs creation to be loving but that's not it's like in C.S. Lewis's Narnia the magician's nephew Aslan sings creation into existence it's a happy voice out of love and it's as if God sings the world into existence in Genesis 1 and it's out of this love and joy that he makes us and it's in Christ God is drawing us into that three person love that has always existed to have the sweet fellowship with the Trinity the father when he views us in Christ has the same love for us as he does for his very own son he's drawing us into that three person world of love that has always existed from eternity past and God and we could understand that God was the father was eternally a father right he didn't become a father once creation was was done in Genesis 1 he was always a father and the son was always a son who loved his father and honored him and so

God is a God of love because God is a triune God and we are created in the image of God ought we not to do the same right so we're created in this triune God image and we ought to be loving each other so let me speak to fathers just for a moment fathers or future fathers in some families the father is absent right or uninvolved in their children's lives in some cases I've known men who have never heard their father say I love you the father never said it yeah never said it what a distortion of the character of God the father right as the father said to the son you are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased as the father said that to the son we as fathers should say the same right to our children and that's the character of the father that we are imaging as fathers and

I just so fathers just be obnoxious about this right we need to be constantly saying this to our kids tell your kids that you love them you delight in them every single day don't just tell them that you love them but actually love them and if you have young kids play with your kids I think that's teaching a profound lesson about the nature of God and God the father when fathers take on the role of loving care for their children and we are imaging the triune nature of God as Raul said our faith is Trinitarian at its core so whoever has saving faith has been drawn by the father moved by the spirit to confess Jesus is lord of all and forgiveness happens because the father puts forward the son the righteous one in exchange for the unrighteous and satisfies God's wrath against sin and the spirit applies that work of redemption to our hearts so it's one unified program right the spirit intercedes for us bringing our prayers to the father in groanings too deep for words as

Jesus our great high priest always lives to make intercession for us always working as one amen so who should we pray to the father the son and the holy spirit who should we pray to yes yeah yeah yeah exactly amen brother yes pray I'll just say it's okay to pray to the father son or spirit but I will say Jesus pray to the father a lot and I think the pattern is praying to the father through the son by the spirit but we also have examples where Stephen is praying to the Lord Jesus in Acts so even though they're all three they're three in one one in three there is a pattern that we're praying to the father through the son by the holy spirit but having said that it is okay to pray to you know but

[49 : 07] Jesus could he can only pray to the father he can't pray to himself right yeah he's the trinity he's part of the trinity pray to yourself yeah our father in heaven yeah so so I want to throw this out a question so other ways that the trinity helps us to understand something about ourselves made in the image of God so how does the trinity help us understand something about ourselves made in God's image I'll say that something I love about the trinity is this idea that God is ruling and in charge but God also knows what it's like to submit and to honor like the son honors the father and we're called to do that but God has been doing that from eternity in person of Jesus to the father yeah so that reflects us as our calling and we all are in charge of certain things as well we have that father aspect also yeah so submission to authority isn't inherently dehumanizing as some would say because the son submits himself to the father yeah it's true yeah

I've always had this problem that I always ask myself did Jesus save did God save me because he liked me because he loved me because I got a lot of Christian brothers and sisters that I just don't like but I'm called to love them yeah you know I mean I'm sure there's a lot that's not likable about me a lot of people but they're called to love me and I'm called to love them and that's a big mystery you know yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah Ivor that whole thing is no mystery you need to come from a large family I don't like that but you love them you love them I think that there's something too that our three in one

God was a family before creation but then that he is our creator that means we belong to him or so probably I struggle a lot too with whether God likes me or not but he doesn't think he created us in his image yeah that image is marred by sin but he restores that right like there's there's no need to hate myself because God restores the goodness in me I resist I make it slower sometimes but he's patient so yeah God is God is a family God and he doesn't mind dealing he came down into our space to deal with the mess and to live with us brings the transcendent I think I wonder if that tension of light and love I think also helps or reflects the tension between us being justified and sanctified

I think in the sense in which God loves us but like Abraham in some way was a friend of God there is a place of being known and like you know who and when Jesus talks about those who obey my commandments and I think when we sin we suffer his displeasure and I think it's fair to say in those moments like maybe he wouldn't like us the same way we think about others but I think the bedrock of love doesn't change what changes is the nuance of you say fellowship for life and so I think it's a way to think about those two times when we distance from God because of our sin and our sin makes us feel distant from God and God is essentially using that as a way to draw us close to him but I don't know that it is and to purify it I think both of those perceptions do have a role in reminding us that the goal is to grow deeper in fellowship and in love with God but it starts with the bedrock of his love for us and actually without that that idea of being like by him is not even possible

I think we can't destroy the dignity we've been given as made in God's image that's been really important for me is his displeasure lasts for a moment but his love lasts for a moment I was reading a book by Michael Horton I got it downstairs in my lending library when the apostles or the disciples were in the boat in the sea of Galilee and the waves came up and they were master master we're going to drown wake up and he was just asleep and Michael Horton in one of his books in the face of God the dangers of spiritual intimacy talks about oh the waves are getting big let's wake them up we might drown no it was a dreaded fear when Job was before God in the pillar of the cloud or when Moses saw the backside of God it was like this gentle man in the front of this boat can kill us it's not the water that we should be afraid of or the wind that he stopped it's him it's him and he loves us but he can just like in a second but he doesn't you know it's like wow our God is a consuming fire yet he loves us and stoops and loves us it just blows my mind yeah yeah you know he's crazy around it is interesting that the first reaction that people in the

[55 : 24] Bible have when they see God is not of like this is great but like fear right like I'm a man of unclean lips you're going to destroy God but then God invites him he washes him clean invites him in so it's this yeah his holiness is the basis of our our fear but his holiness actually draws us in into fellowship with him yeah yeah it's an amazing it's like a three-year-old kid watching his son his father who was a lumberjack cut lumber and he said this is my daddy he can destroy me but he loves me yeah he'll never hurt me right yeah you know and it's like that's how we should be with God yeah yeah all this truck but he won't hurt us yeah yeah yeah he already he struck the sun once he won't he won't strike us a second time yes amen brother let me just finish up and I have just a few more thoughts we imitate the journey in our life together in our families and at the church when we mutually love one another in the church we're imaging something of God himself for people outside the church as in each plays as part in the grand play of redemption something like who God is between the father son and spirit and we said our marriages model something of eternity the wife is not inferior and the husband is not inferior the children are not inferior even though they may work differently in the house right we're all creating the image of God even if some of us play different roles than others and finally the Trinity should curb intellectual pride

God calls us to faith in the absence of a comprehensive explanation God is one God is three it doesn't explain how this is and as Christians we receive it by faith someone once asked a man Daniel Webster a prominent orator in the 19th century how a man of his intellect could believe in contradiction that three equals one Webster replied I do not fully pretend to understand the arithmetic of heaven now but the doctrine of the Trinity doesn't mean that three equals it's not a contradiction but it does show a humility in approaching the subject and so with that friends we've reached a little bit there's so much more we can plumb the depths of and that's why we worship an awesome God who is beyond our finite comprehension so let me pray and if there's any other questions we can do that Father in heaven we do thank you for the light of understanding by your word by special revelation you reveal yourself to us and you are not a God that we could just create out of a figment of our imagination

Lord you are an awesome God beyond all our highest thoughts help us to have humility as we worship you Father Son and spirits and that we would honor you Lord with our lives in Jesus name amen all right thank you friends thanks brother thank you thank you thank you thank you