

## **One God in Three Persons**

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### **Genesis 1:26 NLT**

Then God said, “Let *us* make human beings in our image, to be like us.

### **Isaiah 6:8 NLT**

Then I heard the Lord asking, “Whom should I send as a messenger to this people? Who will go for *us*?”

### **Matthew 3:16–17 NLT**

After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened, and he saw the *Spirit of God* descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is *my dearly loved Son*, who brings *me* great joy.”

**The truth of the Trinity is expressed in three fundamental beliefs:**

**1) God is three persons (Father, Son, Holy Spirit).**

### **John 3:5–8 NLT**

Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.”

### **John 1:1–5 NLT**

In the beginning the Word (Jesus) already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

### **Matthew 16:16–17 NLT**

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being.

### **Matthew 26:63–66 NLT**

Then the high priest said to [Jesus], “I demand in the name of the living God—tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.”

Jesus replied, “You have said it. And in the future you will see the Son of Man seated in the place of power at God’s right hand and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

Then the high priest tore his clothing to show his horror and said, “Blasphemy! Why do we need other witnesses? You have all heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?” “Guilty!” they shouted. “He deserves to die!”

### **John 14:10–17 NLT**

Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!

“If you love me, obey my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth.

**2) Each person of the Trinity is fully God (all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present).**

**3) There is one God.**

### **Deuteronomy 6:4–5 NLT**

Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.

## **1 Timothy 2:5–6 NLT**

For, there is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone. This is the message God gave to the world at just the right time.

**Why does it matter? Because God, in His most fundamental self, is in a perfect, loving relationship.**

## **1 John 4:7–16 NLT**

Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, *for God is love.*

God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.

Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

And God has given us his Spirit as proof that we live in him and he in us. Furthermore, we have seen with our own eyes and now testify that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. All who declare that Jesus is the Son of God have God living in them, and they live in God. We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. *God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.*

## **Hebrews 10:15–22 NLT**

And the Holy Spirit also testifies that this is so. For he says, “This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.”

Then he says, “I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds.” And when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, we can boldly enter heaven’s Most Holy Place [the place where God is] because of the blood of Jesus. By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. And since we have a great High Priest [Jesus who represents us and] who rules over God’s house, let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ’s blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

# Small Group Guide: One God in Three Persons

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## Opening Question

When you think about God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, do you tend to picture them as separate from one another, or more as one? Which person of the Trinity do you feel most personally connected to — and why?

## One God, In Perfect Relationship

Last week, we established that our beliefs determine our actions, and that borrowing beliefs from others, rather than developing our own, sets us up for manipulation, division, and even hatred. This week builds on that foundation by asking: so what do we actually *believe*? And where do we start? We start with God Himself.

Interestingly, the word “Trinity” never appears in the Bible, yet it is one of the most important doctrines of the Christian faith. The concept is hinted at throughout the Old Testament, but it is openly declared in the New. This week’s sermon notes walk through three core truths that hold the doctrine together: God is three persons, each person is fully God, and there is one God.

Theologians throughout history have reached for analogies to explain this “three-in-one” mystery — a three-leaf clover, the three phases of water (ice, liquid, steam) — but every analogy falls short. The closest we can get is simply to look at how God revealed Himself: as Father, Son, and Spirit in perfect relationship with one another.

Why does it matter? Because it means that at the very core of who God is, there is **relationship** and **love**. Not love as something God is capable of or chooses to do, but love as what He fundamentally *is*. This is not a selfish, self-directed love; it exists eternally in the relationship between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Creation itself was an overflow of that love: God bringing humanity into existence in His own image, as an invitation to share in the relationship He already had within Himself.

If God were not triune, relationship would be a foreign concept to Him. He would exist in and for Himself, and any worship would be stripped of genuine affection and reduced to a transaction: “*Do this for me, and I will do this for you.*” But God is relational to His core. Following humanity’s sin and failure, the Father sent His Son to live the life we couldn’t live and die the death we deserved. Jesus was raised on the third day, proving He is the Son of God and opening a path back into the Father’s love for all who believe. And the Holy Spirit is both the tangible expression of that divine love and the empowering capacity to actually engage with it.

The gospel, then, is more than an offer of forgiveness. It is an invitation into the relationship that has existed eternally within the Trinity itself. As Hebrews 10 reminds us, we can enter boldly, with sincere hearts, because of Christ.

## For Discussion

1. The message noted that every human analogy for the Trinity ultimately falls short. Why do you think that is? What does it tell us about God that He can't be fully captured by anything in the created world?
2. Jesus was crucified specifically because He claimed to be both the Messiah and the Son of God (see your notes, Matthew 26:63–66). Why do you think that claim was so threatening? What does it mean to you personally that Jesus is not just a great teacher, but eternally God?
3. The sermon described God's love not as something He *does*, but something He *is* — and said that love is not self-directed, but exists in the relationship between Father, Son, and Spirit. How does that shape the way you think about love in your own relationships?
4. Refer back to what the notes say about the Holy Spirit's role in the life of a believer. The sermon described the Spirit as both the *tangible expression* of God's love and the *empowering capacity* to engage with it. How aware are you of the Holy Spirit at work in your daily life? What might it look like to be more intentional about partnering with Him?

## Closing Prayer

Close by praying through all three persons of the Trinity. Consider having three different people each take one:

- **The Father** — Thank Him for creating us and for pursuing us in love.
- **The Son** — Thank Jesus for the cross, the resurrection, and for making a way back to the Father.
- **The Holy Spirit** — Ask Him to fill your group and empower each person in the week ahead.