

Starting to Think About the Trinity

There is one, and only one, true God whose eternal being has been revealed to us as a tri-unity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—three distinct, yet inseparable, Persons possessing one and the same divine nature.

Reasons We Overlook the Three-ness of God:

- The New Testament generally refers to one Person of the Trinity at a time. Around 75 passages in the New Testament mention all three Persons of the Trinity. (Ephesians 2:18; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6)
- More than 60 times in the New Testament, the Father is referred to simply as “God” (2 Corinthians 13:14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)
- Using the term “Lord” to refer to God in a general way, “as if a glob,” when in the New Testament, *Lord* usually refers to the Lord Jesus. Exception: *LORD* (small caps) to translate Yahweh/Jehovah from OT passages (Matt. 22:43-45; Acts 2:16-21).
- As you read the New Testament, the Trinity will seem to come alive to you if you will read the words... and not just read for the general idea — with the awareness that *God* usually refers to the Father and *Lord* usually refers to the Lord Jesus.

Seven Guardrails in Discussing the Trinity:

Seven truths which keep us out of the ditch of misunderstanding as we think about the nature of God.

- 1. There is One God:** There are three Persons, not three gods. (Deut. 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4)
- 2. There are Three Persons:** There are three Persons who may be distinguished (Matthew 28:19). The Son didn’t send the Father. The Holy Spirit did not die on the cross for our sins. The Father did not become a man.
- 3. Each Person is Truly God, Possessing the Same Divine Nature:** Jesus isn’t merely the highest created being; he is the uncreated Creator. The Spirit isn’t merely the energy of God. (Heb. 1:8; 2 Peter 1:1; 2 Cor. 3:18)

4. There are Three Persons Simultaneously:

God doesn’t simply wear different hats at different times as he relates to us in different ways. We see the Persons relating to one another (Matthew 28:19; 17:5; Mark 1:10-11). For example, Jesus prays to the Father, and from eternity past, dwelt in glory together with him (John 17:5).

5. God is Triune Eternally. There was never a time when God decided to start a family and *became* a Father. There wasn’t a time when the Son *became* a Son. He isn’t God Junior or a Junior God. There wasn’t a beginning to the Spirit; he is the *eternal* Spirit (Hebrews 9:14; John 1:1-2, 17:34; Revelation 5:13).

6. The Persons Mutually Indwell Each Other: Each Person mutually indwells the others so that the Trinity eternally communes in perfect fellowship. (John 10:38, 14:10)

7. The Persons Act Inseparably: God is “all in” for our salvation. For example, in our adoption: the Father sent his Son to secure our adoption, believers are adopted by the Father, and the Spirit assures us of our adoption (Galatians 4:4-6).

From the Father, Through the Son, by the Spirit

The Father initiates and sends

The Son executes and accomplishes

The Spirit applies and empowers.

What is the Application? Worship is! Worship that includes loving God with all our minds.

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, ESV

