

Session 4: The Trinity and the Christian Life

This final session considers what practical differences the Trinity makes to the Christian life, and how having an accurate view of the Trinity can enrich our prayer and our worship.

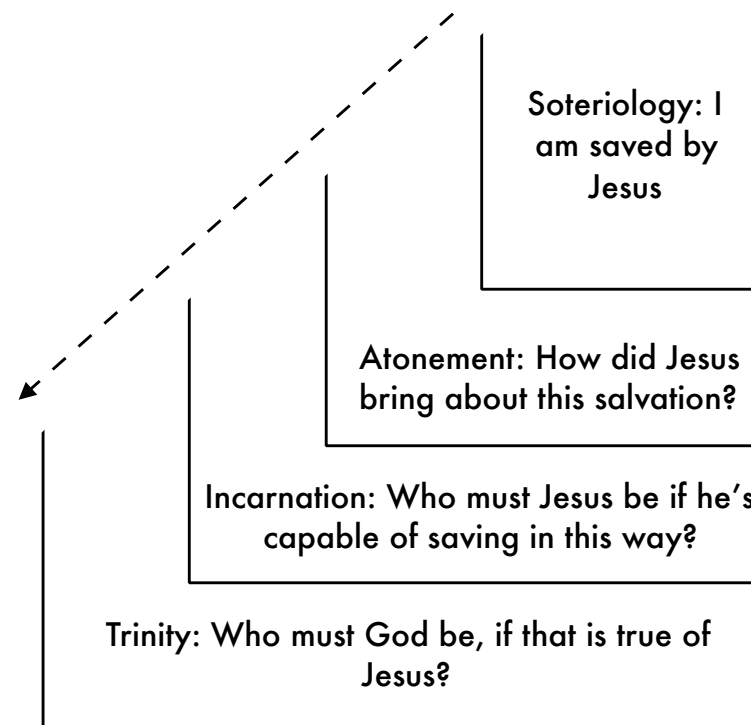
The Trinity and the Christian Life

How can we recognise the Trinity in our Christian lives?

'Anybody who has encountered God in Christ through the Holy Spirit has come to know the Trinity. But not everybody in this position knows that they know the Trinity. When they move to that next level of knowing that they know the Trinity, a bright light shines on everything they knew before.' (Sanders, *The Deep Things of God*, p45)

'It is possible to be a Christian and yet not take advantage of what our vital relationship with the three persons of the Trinity should mean in living a Christian life. We must first intellectually realise the fact of our vital relationship with the triune God and then in faith begin to act upon that realisation.'
(Francis Schaeffer, *A Christian Worldview*)

Evangelical Practice	Its Tacitly Trinitarian Dimension
Getting saved	Being adopted by encountering the gospel Trinity
Knowing Jesus personally	The Spirit joining believers to the life of Jesus
Devotional Bible reading	Hearing the Father's word in the Spirit
Conversational Prayer	The logic of meditation; prayer the name of Jesus



Adapted from Sanders, *The Deep Things of God*, p59, 73-74

The Trinity and the Christian Life

How do we pray in the light of the Trinity?

'You may ask, 'If we cannot imagine a three-personal being, what is the good of talking about him?' Well, there isn't any good talking about him. The thing that matters is being actually drawn into that three-personal life, and that may begin any time – tonight, if you like.

What I mean is this. An ordinary simple Christian kneels down to say his prayers. He is trying to get in touch with God. But if he is a Christian, he knows that what is prompting him to pray is also God: God, so to speak, inside him. But he also knows that all his real knowledge of God comes through Christ, the man who was God – that Christ is standing beside him, helping him to pray, praying for him. You see what is happening? God is the thing to which he is praying – the goal he is trying to reach. God is also the road or bridge along which he is being pushed to that goal. So the whole threefold life of the three-personal being is actually going on in that ordinary little bedroom where an ordinary man is saying his prayers.' (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

What do these verses tell me about the Trinity? And what difference do they make to my life?	
<u>John 14:5-17</u>	<u>1 Corinthians 2:6-16</u>

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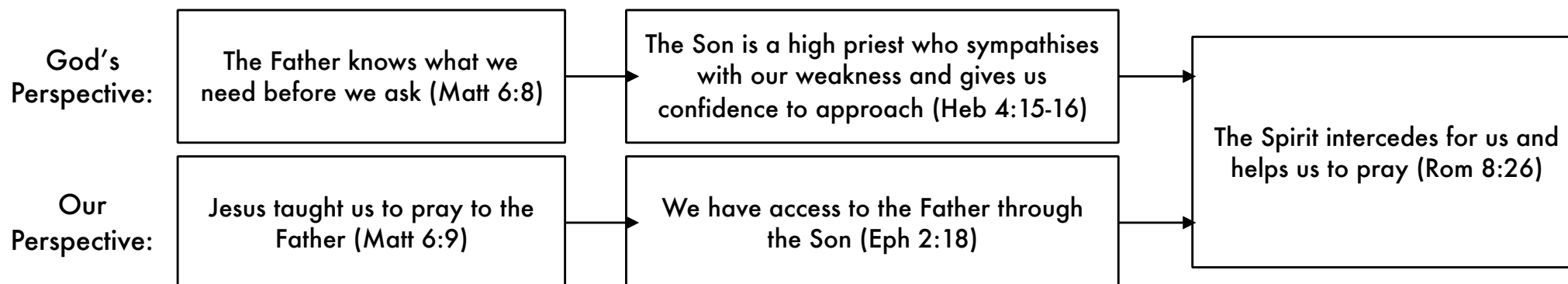
Praying with the grain of the Trinity

DEITY:
Each person is fully God

UNITY:
There is one God

DISTINCTION:
God is three persons

What do these verses suggest about who we should direct our prayers to? And why?		
John 15:16	John 14:14	1 Corinthians 1:2
1 Corinthians 12:4, 11	Ephesians 4:30	Revelation 22:20



The Trinity and the Christian Life

The Nicene Creed

In the light of all we've discussed, prayerfully read through the Nicene Creed, noting down any ways you have come to understand and appreciate it differently:

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

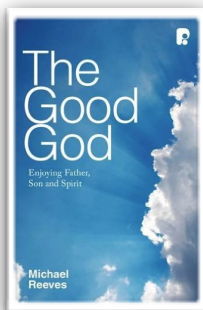
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

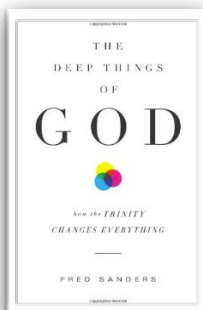
Theology Matters: The Trinity

Top Three Recommendations



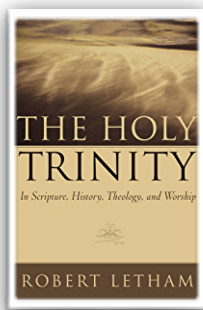
The Good God, Michael Reeves

A great, accessible introduction to the Trinity. Full of helpful material, but packaged in a really light and simple style.



The Deep Things of God, Fred Sanders

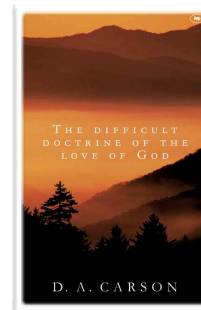
Full of insights into how the Trinity connects with other Christian doctrines and makes a difference to the Christian life.



The Holy Trinity, Robert Letham

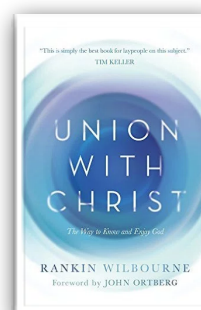
Comprehensive and a bit harder work, but a brilliant overview of the doctrine and its historical development.

Further Suggestions



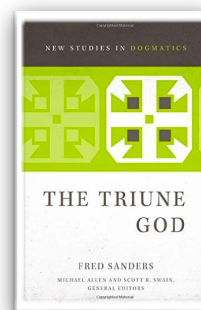
The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God, D.A. Carson

A short book on God's love, with insights into the intra-Trinitarian relationships



Union with Christ, Rankin Wilbourne

A practical book on the doctrine of union with Christ, and how that affects our experience of the Christian life.



The Triune God, Fred Sanders

Heavier than his other book. Explores how the Trinity is revealed, and how it sits alongside other Christian doctrines.