

# God is one yet three

*How can God be Father, Son  
and Holy Spirit?*

## God as Trinity

**In Study Two we learnt that God is Spirit.** He does not have different parts of the body like we have, that perform different functions and roles. The Bible teaches that God is one. This truth demonstrates that He has nothing in Him that is contradictory or can cause any inner turmoil. He is not confused about His thoughts on any matter or uncertain as to what His will is. He is firm and clear in everything that He does.

*Look up Deuteronomy 6v.4 and write it down :*

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Yet having said this, there is something further that God reveals about Himself which is very complex to understand. For the Bible clearly teaches that there are Three Persons in the Godhead. There is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

These Three Persons are called the Trinity. It is very easy to misunderstand what is meant by this. Through the ages people have often tried to explain it but have failed and ended up teaching something the Bible does not say. So, for example, when someone says Trinity means that there are three Gods, this is wrong – there is but One God. Others have said that the Three Persons are not real distinctions or separate entities. This is also wrong. So what can we learn from the Bible? How are we to understand who God is in this respect?



*N.B. The word "Trinity" is not found in the Bible. It is simply a convenient word to use in an attempt to describe the unique relationship within the Godhead. However, we must not claim that the Bible gives us this word to use. We must only consider God as He reveals Himself in three Persons, yet maintaining His unity. We find that He reveals Himself as a "tri-unity".*

**The Bible teaches the Trinity**

**The Bible shows us that a distinction is to be made when thinking about God.** We see this in a number of instances.

*Start by looking up and writing down 2 Corinthians 13 v.14:*  
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*Then do the same when you have found Matthew 28 v.19:*  
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We lack the ability to grasp fully how God can be one yet three. God is Spirit, and there are dimensions to His existence that are beyond our comprehension. Because it is difficult to understand does not mean that we should reject this for something simpler. Rather, it is a cause for us to worship and adore. Each member of the Godhead has the same attributes and characteristics.

We cannot say that the Holy Spirit is everywhere but that the Son is not. We cannot say that the Son is more loving than the Spirit. We cannot say that the Father is more holy than the Son.

Each member is, for example, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, personal and all-powerful. They are not in competition. They do not have to debate something to arrive at a consensus. There is harmony and they are in full and perfect *agreement*.

*What does John 8 vv.28-29 say? Write it out:*  
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*Write down John 6 v.38:*



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*Finally, find and read John 16 vv.13-15. Write down verse 14:*



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So each of the Godhead Person always has the same things in mind, desires the same things, and works to the same end.

**Can we say anything more?**

**Many people have tried to understand this high and holy relationship that exists between the members of the Trinity.** Some Christians have made the following observations about each of them.

**God the Father**

He is usually placed first. This is not because He is superior in power or wisdom. Yet within the arrangement of relationships in the Godhead it is He who is the initiator. You can see this in Ephesians 1 vv.3-5.



*Write down Ephesians 1 v.4:*

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**God the Son**

We will think a little more about the Son in a moment. It is enough to say here that He is described as the eternally begotten Son of the Father. There is not a date or time in history when He could be said to have become the Son. He did not have a birth in a human sense. The Son of God has neither beginning nor end. Nor does He depend upon His Father for His deity. Nevertheless, the Bible still describes His relationship to the Father as being one of sonship.

*This can be seen in Hebrews 1 v.5.  
Write it down when you have found it:*

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*Then find and write out John 1 v.14:*

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But there was a point in history when the Son of God became the person we know as Jesus Christ. We will learn more about this later.

**God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is equally personal, and He is co-equal with the Father and the Son. His work is closely related to the world, and to people. The Holy Spirit brings people to a knowledge and conviction of where they stand before God, and of their need of salvation (See Titus 3 v.5). We will think more about this in a moment.

The Holy Spirit equips Christians to serve God (See Acts 1 v.8). Also, He indwells Christians to make them more like Christ (See Romans 8 vv.12-17). In the complex and ultimately unfathomable relationships of the Godhead, He is described as proceeding from the Father and the Son – although of course, we must remember that, like the Father and the Son, He is everywhere all the time.





Find the following two references and write them down:

*John 14 v.26:*

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*John 15 v.26:*

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When, on one occasion, some people lied to the Holy Spirit, it was clearly stated that they lied to God (See Acts 5 vv.1-4). So we see the Holy Spirit is no less God than the Father or the Son.

**To know God, we must know Jesus Christ**

**Study One showed us that God is real and that He is knowable.**

This is not simply 'knowing about God'. We may finish this course and think that we know much there is to know 'about God'. But the Bible tells us that we can have a relationship with God, and this is where the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ plays a central part. He brings us to know God.

*Write out John 14 v.6:*

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*What does John 17 v.3 say? Write it out:*

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We have been saying that God is a Spirit and has no body. But Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became a man by being born to a woman two thousand years ago by a miraculous birth. He was miraculously conceived by a virgin through the “overshadowing” of the Holy Spirit (see Luke 1:35). Through this completely unique act, Jesus Christ, although He is the Creator and Sustainer of the world, then needed to eat, drink, and sleep, and had need to walk from place to place. Look up and read Mark 4 vv.35-41 and especially note verse 38.

*Read John 4 vv.1-8 and write down verse 6:*

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Thus it is right to say about Jesus Christ that He is fully God and fully man.

*Find 1 John 1 v.1 and write it down (and note that the “Word of life” refers to the Son of God, Jesus Christ):*

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Now read the Gospel of John 1 vv.1-14. In this passage also, “the Word” refers to Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

*Write down verse 14:*

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We will never be able to understand how God could take human nature to Himself. However it was necessary, if human beings were to ever be able to know God and have a relationship with Him. For we, as human beings, have sinned against God in thought, word and deed. God's perfect holiness and justice demands that the punishment for sin is death.

Therefore by coming as a human being who was perfect, and who did not sin in thought or deed, Jesus Christ was able to die on behalf of and in place of sinners. He died upon a cross, a form of execution devised by the Roman Empire. And therefore being a perfect human being who literally died – voluntarily and willingly – He was in this way able to pay the price that God's offended law required from us.

Now people can be forgiven their sin if they believe in Jesus Christ. By believing in Him they can receive the benefits of His death. Through faith in Him we really can know God and have eternal life. Only Jesus Christ can do this.

### Some questions to ask

Do I really know God?

What evidence do I have for the answer I give?

Have I ever understood that Jesus Christ is God and man?

Do I know that I have put my faith in Jesus Christ?

### Something to read and consider

Read the following passages in the Bible:

John 1 vv.1-18

John 14