

Pray for the people you know who need physical healing.

The Trinity

(an introduction)

There is one God who is the creator of all things. He exists forever as three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For all eternity the three persons of God, the eternal family, have enjoyed the infinite love, joy, peace and goodness which overflows from and through their relationships with each other. Out of this abundance, this overflow, God decided to create one creature capable of entering into, receiving and enjoying the love, joy, peace and goodness that the members of the Trinity have enjoyed forever.

We are those creatures. Humanity enjoyed its unique relationship with God for a time, but eventually fell into rebellion and sinfulness which severed our relationship with God. We came to know fear and anxiety and depression. We became familiar with despair and with all kinds of evil. This broke God's heart.

So God set in motion a plan to restore us to our place of blessing: The Father sent the Son and the Son became one of us and lived among us. The Son taught us and eventually died in our place. In so dying, he paid the penalty for our sins and purchased for us many gifts—gifts which are designed to restore us into the relationship God intended for us from the beginning.

The gifts include forgiveness, justification, adoption into God's family and spiritual rebirth. The gifts also include the giving of the Holy Spirit to live in and with us. (We'll explore each of these in the coming weeks.)

The eternal relationships between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit overflow with love, joy, peace and goodness, and you were made to experience this overflow—to live within it. You were made for an everlasting encounter with God.

Questions:

- 1) Reflect on the fact that you were made to enter into and experience the fullness of the love, joy, peace and goodness that the persons of the Trinity have experienced for all eternity. What emotions does this bring up for you?
- 2) Of the salvation gifts, (forgiveness, justification, adoption, spiritual rebirth and the giving of the Holy Spirit) which do you appreciate the most? Why?

Prayer:

Creator God, I cannot fully understand your nature, but I'm thankful that you created me with a nature that can enter into your presence and enjoy you fully. I want to experience this. Please make it happen. Amen.

[Text your Accountability Partner(s): Finished Monday's Exercises.]

Pray for the people you know who need emotional healing.

God the Father

God the Father...

has blessed us with every spiritual blessing:

Ephesians 1: 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. *(NIV)*

is the giver of every good and perfect gift:

James 1: 17 All generous giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or the slightest hint of change. *(NET)*

sent his Son to save the world:

1 John 4: 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. *(NET)*

was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in the Son:

Colossians 1: 19 For God [the Father] was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in the Son... *(NET; brackets added)*

out of great mercy, gave us new birth:

1 Peter 1: 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead... *(NET)*

is pleased to give us the kingdom of heaven:

Luke 12: 32 (Jesus:) Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father is well pleased to give you the kingdom. *(NET)*

will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him:

Luke 11: 13 (Jesus:) If you then, although you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" *(NET)*

In summary, God the Father:

the giver of

all good gifts
every spiritual blessing
his Son (to and for us)
new birth
the kingdom
the Holy Spirit

As we seek a deeper encounter with Jesus, know that God the Father desires this for us as well, and he will bless our efforts.

Questions:

- 1) Some have the impression of God the Father as stern and angry whereas God the Son (Jesus) is loving and kind. Given the above verses, is this image of God the Father justified?
- 2) To what extent does the word “generous” apply to the Father?
- 3) Jesus teaches that God (the Father) will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him. What are you waiting for?

Prayer:

Father God, I want to have and experience every thing which you intend for me. Please give to me every gift that you sent your Son to secure for me. Please give me the fullness of your Holy Spirit that I may know and honor you fully. Amen.

[Text your Accountability Partner(s): Finished Tuesday’s Exercises.]

Pray for salvation and/or spiritual breakthrough for friends and family members who need it.

God the Son

God the Son...

is fully God:

Colossians 2: 9 For in him all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form... *(NET)*

is the way, the truth and the life:

John 14: 6, 7 Jesus replied, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you have known me, you will know my Father too. And from now on you do know him and have seen him." *(NET)*

is one with the Father:

John 14: 8 - 10 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be content." Jesus replied, "Have I been with you for so long, and you have not known me, Philip? The person who has seen me has seen the Father! How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? *(NET)*

John 10: 30 The Father and I are one. *(NET)*

came to bring us abundant life:

John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come so that they may have life, and may have it abundantly. *(NET)*

was given to save us:

John 3:16, 17 For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world should be saved through him. *(NET)*

came to die:

Matthew 20: 17 - 19 As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve aside privately and said to them on the way, “Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the experts in the law. They will condemn him to death, and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged severely and crucified. Yet on the third day, he will be raised.” (NET)

offered himself as a ransom for many:

Mark 10: 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (NET)

died for us:

Romans 5: 6 - 8 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (For rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person perhaps someone might possibly dare to die.) But God demonstrates his own love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (NET)

rose from the dead:

Matthew 28: 5, 6 The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. (NET)

blesses us with peace; sends us in his name; releases the Holy Spirit to us:

John 20:19 - 22 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the disciples had gathered together and locked the doors of the place because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. Just as the Father has sent me, I also send you.” And after he said this, he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.. (NET)

receives as children of God all who receive him:

John 1: 12, 13 But to all who have received him—those who believe in his name—he has given the right to become God’s

children—children not born by human parents or by human desire or a husband's decision, but by God. (*NET*)

In summary, God the Son:

is fully God
is the way, the truth and the life
is one with the Father
came to bring us abundant life
was given to save us
offered himself as a ransom for many
died for us
rose from the dead
blesses us with peace
sends us in his name
releases the Holy Spirit to us
receives as children of God all who receive him

Questions:

- 1) Who does Jesus receive as children of God?
- 2) What does the Father sending the Son (Jesus) reveal about the Father's love for us?
- 3) What does the Son's willingness to die for us reveal about the Son's love for us?

Prayer:

Jesus, no words can express my thankfulness for what you have already done for me. Grant that I may grow to understand the precious gifts you've purchased for me. Help me to embrace the life to which you are calling me. Amen.

[Text your Accountability Partner(s): Finished Wednesday's Exercises.]

Pray for the specific needs of immediate family members and loved ones.

God the Holy Spirit

God the Holy Spirit...

is offered to those who come to Jesus in faith:

John 7: 37 - 39 (Jesus:) On the last day of the feast, the greatest day, Jesus stood up and shouted out, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. Just as the scripture says, ‘*From within him will flow rivers of living water.*’” (Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were going to receive, for the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.) (NET)

is available for the asking:

Luke 11: 13 (Jesus:) If you then, although you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (NET)

is given to live with and in us:

John 14: 16 - 18 Jesus: I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, because he resides with you and will be in you. I will not abandon you as orphans, I will come to you. (NET)

makes his home within us:

1 Corinthians 6: 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? (NET)

marks all who believe in Christ:

Ephesians 1: 13, 14 And when you heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation)—when you believed in Christ—you were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit, who is the down payment of our inheritance... (NET)

makes new those who have been reborn:

Titus 3: 5 He saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit,... (NET)

helps us in our weakness; intercedes for us:

Romans 8: 26, 27 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes on behalf of the saints according to God's will. (NET)

produces fruit within us:

Galatians 5: 22, 23 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (NET)

is the foundation for living life as God intends:

Romans 14: 17 For the kingdom of God does not consist of food and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. (NET)

is the bringer of freedom:

2 Corinthians 3:17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is present, there is freedom. (NET)

In summary, the Holy Spirit:

is a gift from the Father
is promised by the Son
is given to those who believe in (put their faith in) Jesus
lives in and with us
prays for us
produces fruit in us
is the source of abundant life
sets us free

Questions:

- 1) Read through the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5: 22, 23). Of which of the fruit do you desire to experience more?
- 2) Does Jesus seem willing or unwilling to give the Holy Spirit to us?

- 3) Does the Father seem willing or unwilling to give the Holy Spirit to us?
- 4) What course of action does Luke 11: 14 suggest to those who'd like a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit?

Prayer:

Father God, your Son says that you are eager to give the Holy Spirit. Jesus, you promise the Holy Spirit to all the thirsty who come to you. I do ask for your Spirit. I am thirsty. I want to know the renewal and the fruit and the communion that only the Spirit can provide. Please bless me, Holy Spirit, with awareness of your presence. I surrender to you so that you might produce every good thing you desire to produce in me. Amen.

[Text your Accountability Partner(s): Finished Thursday's Exercises.]

Pray for government and world leaders—that God would grant them wisdom, courage, knowledge of the truth and genuine faith in him.

Too Much Focus On Jesus?

In focusing our attention on an encounter with Jesus, are we neglecting the other persons of the Trinity? The short answer is no. Here's a medium answer:

Jesus is the “image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15) and “God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in the Son” (Colossians 15:19). To encounter Jesus is, therefore, to encounter the fullness of God. Furthermore, focusing on the Son does not neglect the Father because, as Jesus himself has said, to see and know the Son is to see and know the Father:

John 14: 8 - 10 Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be content.” Jesus replied, “Have I been with you for so long, and you have not known me, Philip? The person who has seen me has seen the Father! How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in me? (*NET*)

Focusing on the Son does not neglect the Holy Spirit because the communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is so close that Jesus equates the coming of the Spirit to us with his being with us:

John 14: 16 - 18 Jesus: I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, because he resides with you and will be in you. I will not abandon you as orphans, I will come to you. (*NET*)

A deeper relationship with Jesus will result in a deeper relationship with (and a deeper appreciation for) the Father and the Holy Spirit. The more we commune with Jesus, the more we will grow to love the one whom Jesus came to reveal and the more we'll revel in the presence of the Spirit who testifies of Jesus.

Questions:

- 1) If God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in the Son, who are we encountering when we encounter Jesus?
- 2) Jesus says “I am in the Father, and the Father is in me” not “I am the Father and the Father is me”. Why is this significant?

3) Jesus' promise to come to us is fulfilled by his asking for and the Father's sending of the Spirit. What does this suggest about the relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit?

Prayer:

Father God, as I seek a deeper encounter with your Son, please be the author of all that takes place. Amen.

[Text your Accountability Partner(s): Finished Friday's Exercises.]

(For those who wish to explore the nature of God at a deeper level, I recommend James White's book, *The Forgotten Trinity*. I also recommend R. C. Sproul's book, *What Is the Trinity?* (Please note that the latter is not for beginners.)

Pray for those in any of the daily categories who have the greatest need.

Understanding Worship

An excerpt from
Will There Be Dogs in Heaven?
(part 1)

*Author's note: For the next five days, we'll explore the subject of worship in light of what we've learned about the Trinity. What follows is the chapter on worship from my book **Will There Be Dogs in Heaven?** To make it suitable for this format, I've modified it slightly and split it into four parts. **Will There Be Dogs in Heaven?** is a fictional dialogue between a youth pastor and Jesus. I hope you enjoy it...*

"It would help if we started in a different place, perhaps with the question you were asked last week..." Jesus prompted.

"You mean the one about what you were doing before you created the universe?" I replied.

"That wouldn't be a bad place to begin," Jesus replied, "but I was thinking of the other one."

"The one about.... Are you sure you want me to ask that?"

"Why not?" Jesus replied.

"Isn't it kind of offensive?" my voice lowered to a whisper.

"You might be surprised at how hard I am to offend," Jesus replied.

"Okay. Let me think about the wording.... The question was something like, 'Wasn't it egotistical of God to make creatures so that they would worship him?' Was that it?"

"Essentially," Jesus replied. "What do you think?"

"It wasn't my question," I reminded.

"I know you didn't ask it, but I also know you're curious about the answer. So, what do you think?"

"Well, I know that if any mother or father demanded worship from a child, it would be a sign of real emotional... um..."

"Sickness," Jesus said, finishing my sentence.

"Yeah. So, I guess I do want to know the answer. I mean, I don't think you're sick, of course, but how is requiring worship okay in your case when it's rightly considered sickness for someone else?"

"Let's think about this in conjunction with the question about what I was doing before I created. What do you suppose? Did I create out of loneliness or

emptiness or neediness?”

“No,” I said. “I know the answer is ‘no’”.

“That’s right, and do you understand the difference that that makes?” Jesus asked.

“I’m not sure that I do,” I confessed.

“Let me make a contrast,” Jesus said. “Suppose that before creation I was sitting around with my Father and my Spirit and that we were unhappy and suffering from low self-esteem. Then we came up with the idea of making creatures to worship us, you know, so that we’d feel better about ourselves and so that our emotional needs would be met.”

I smiled. “I know it wasn’t like that.”

“No,” Jesus replied, “Not at all. Rather, before creation, my Father, my Spirit and I enjoyed perfect and complete love and joy. It was out of fullness that we decided to create another into which our love and joy could overflow. And so we created, and out of all creation, we made one creature with a nature capable of entering into relationship with us and sharing with us all that we enjoy.”

“But where does worship fit into this?” I asked.

“Worship is the expression of enjoyment that comes from entering into my presence and sharing with me the overflowing love and joy that I have in relationship with my Father and my Spirit,” Jesus replied.

Continued on Monday...

Questions:

- 1) Have you ever felt that there might be something a wrong with the idea of a God who created creatures in order that they might worship him?
- 2) What difference does it make whether God created out of neediness or out of abundance?
- 3) Does the idea of worship being an “expression of enjoyment” make sense to you? (Don’t worry if it doesn’t. We’ll pick up with this tomorrow.)

Prayer:

Jesus, lead me into the truth about worship so that I might honor you, your Father and your Spirit as I ought. Amen.

[Text your Accountability Partner(s): Finished Saturday’s Exercises.]

© Bruce Byrne 2020

All rights reserved. Users of this devotional have permission from the author to download the material for personal use. Users are invited and encouraged to share the links to these pages with others.

The majority of the biblical quotes are from the New English Translation (*NET*)

NET

New English Translation

Scripture quotations marked "NET" are taken from New English Translation: NET Bible, electronic edition. Dallas, TX : Biblical Studies Press, 1998. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

The remainder of the biblical quotes are from the New International Version (*NIV*)

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.