



Community Group Discussion Guide

The Trinity: The Threefold Nature of God

January 21, 2024 | John 14:15-31

MOTIVATE

Starter Question:

- ⇒ *How would 2024 look different if you were to submit yourself to the leading of the Holy Spirit?*
- ⇒ *How would the Holy Spirit empower you...*
 - *At work? In your marriage? In your family? In your church? In your Community Group? As a disciple and a disciple-maker of Jesus?*

Optional Activity: Think of a time when the Holy Spirit moved in a powerful manner (at church, in a circumstance, in a relationship, etc.). Describe the experience.

- ⇒ *How did you know it was the Holy Spirit at work?*

DISCUSS

The Trinity is a theological term used to define God as an undivided entity expressed in the threefold nature of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. As a biblical concept, the Trinity is considered a divine mystery beyond human comprehension. As such, the mysterious character of God should only be reflected upon through scriptural revelation. While the term Trinity does not appear in scripture, the trinitarian structure is present throughout the New Testament, affirming that God Himself is manifested through Jesus Christ by means of the Holy Spirit.

- ⇒ *Is it challenging for you to believe in something or someone that you do not fully understand?*
- ⇒ *Are there other people or things you trust that you do not fully comprehend? (For example: Cell phone towers or electricity.)*

The biblical theology of the Trinity developed through what is called "progressive revelation." Progressive revelation is the concept that God reveals Himself and His will through the scriptures with increasing clarity. Contrasting prevailing polytheism of its day, the Old Testament consistently affirmed the unity of God through such statements as, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

It is remarkable that New Testament writers presented the doctrine of the Trinity in such a manner that it did not violate the Old Testament concept of the oneness of God. In fact, these writers unanimously affirmed Hebrew monotheism, but extended it to include the coming of Jesus and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The New Testament reflects a seemingly accepted understanding that exists without a full-length discussion. It is embedded in the framework of the Christian experience and simply assumed as true.

⇒ *What is the greatest way you have heard the Trinity explained?*

In John 14:15-31, Jesus Himself described the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit as God's agent in the continuing ministry of His Son. The Spirit is a teacher who facilitates understanding on the disciples' part and, in being sent from the Father and the Son, is one in nature with the other Persons of the Trinity. The Spirit makes known the Son and "at the same time makes known the Father who is revealed in the Son" (John 16:15). This is a crucial segment of Jesus' farewell discourse with His disciples, occurring just before His looming crucifixion. This passage underscores the identity of the Trinity, with a distinct emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:15-17 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. **16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, **17** even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

In John 14:15, Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." Jesus underscored the intimate connection between love for Him and obedience to His teachings. Jesus emphasized that the salvation He provides, through faith, should result in a transformed life marked by obedience to God's Word.

⇒ *Is your love for Christ evident in your obedience to His commandments?*

In John 14:16-17, Jesus introduced the promise of the Holy Spirit, the "Helper" or "Comforter," emphasizing that the Father will send this Spirit of Truth to "dwell within" and "be in" believers forever. This reinforces the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

⇒ *Describe what it means for the Holy Spirit to "dwell within" or "be in" you.*

⇒ *In what ways do you rely on the Holy Spirit as the Comforter in times of trouble and uncertainty?*

One of our core values at Henderson Hills is "Desperate Dependence." This value recognizes that "we rely on the Holy Spirit to empower our lives and the church as we humbly abide in Jesus, recognizing that we can do nothing apart from Him."

⇒ *How do you experience the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in your life?*

⇒ *How can you continue to desperately depend on Him?*

John 14:18-24 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. **19** Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. **20** In that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. **21** Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." **22** Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?" **23** Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he

will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. **24** Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

In these verses, Jesus spoke of His impending departure and His promise to come again. He described a beautifully unique relationship between the Father, the Son, and the believer. This concept of a mutual indwelling was given to encourage Jesus' followers.

In John 14:18 when Jesus said, "I will not leave you as orphans," it is important to remember that very soon after this statement He was taken from the disciples through His death on the cross. Jesus anticipated that, as a result, they would become desperate for Him. As far as the world was concerned Jesus was gone for good. But it was not so for the followers of Jesus. He will come to us in our time of despair. We will not be "orphans" left unprotected, with no one to watch over us.

This means more than just Jesus' Resurrection appearances, although it includes them. For through His Resurrection, Jesus' followers will receive resurrection power, strength for living, and purpose for life in Him. Believers will have even deeper life through the Spirit who will lead them to fully know that Jesus is in the Father just as He said. All those who believe know that He has come to us and is in us and that we are in Him. The closeness of His relationship with the Father will echo the relationship we have with Jesus.

- ⇒ ***Have you experienced this kind of closeness with God? Explain your answer.***
- ⇒ ***Reflect on this promised indwelling presence of God in your life. How does this reality impact your daily walk with God?***

John 14:25-26 "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. **26** But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

In John 14:25, Jesus said, "*These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you.*" These words signal the end of His ministry to the disciples in the flesh. They will no longer benefit from His earthly presence and teaching. He has shared their lives and watched over them, corrected them and guided them, but now He will do so by sending the Holy Spirit in His place.

Jesus assured the disciples that the Holy Spirit will teach and remind them of His words. We can have full confidence in the authority of Scripture and the role of the Holy Spirit in illuminating and applying God's Word to our lives.

- ⇒ ***How can you be intentional in allowing the Holy Spirit to teach and remind you of God's Word?***

Another of our core values at Henderson Hills is "Anchoring Truth." This core value states that we prioritize God's Word in every sermon, every song, every prayer, every class, every group, and every decision.

⇒ ***In what ways can our Community Group prioritize God's Word?***

In John 14:26, Jesus said, "The Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." Jesus ensured the preservation of His Word and put His seal of authority on the interpretation of His death and Resurrection as well as the eventual biblical text known as the New Testament. Jesus promised His followers that the coming Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, will teach us the full truth from beginning to end and will bring to our memory all His words. It is our highest responsibility to rely on the Spirit in matters of Scripture. We must remember that the Spirit of God and the Word of God are never in conflict with each other. We must be ever careful to, as Paul wrote, "weigh what is said" (1 Corinthians 14:29).

⇒ ***What does it mean to "weigh what is said?" How do we learn to do this?***

John 14:27-31 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. **28** You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. **29** And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. **30** I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me, **31** but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise, let us go from here.

Jesus then assured His followers of the peace in mind and heart He will give to them. His Spirit will not only teach them but will give them inner peace, "which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7), a peace that is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). It is a peace which is permanent, not contingent on the changes of this world. The one who enjoys Jesus' peace may be troubled, as Jesus was sometimes troubled, but he or she will have an inner certainty that makes the troubles bearable and temporary (John 16:33). This is His peace that comes because of His presence within us and through an awareness of the greatness of God's love for us (Ephesians 3:17-19).

⇒ ***In what challenging areas of your life do you need the peace that Christ promises?***

Jesus ends these strengthening and encouraging words with further assurance. His followers should recognize that it was good He was going away because it meant a greater work was coming through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus acknowledged that the time was short because "the ruler of this world" was on his way, already gathering his minions so they could arrest Jesus and put Him to death. "The ruler of this world," humanly speaking, referred to earthly authorities (in this case Jewish and Roman), who ruled

the world at that time. But behind them undoubtedly lay a shadowy figure who orchestrated their actions, Satan himself. Jesus assured His disciples that Satan, "has no claim on me," claiming His ultimate authority over all.

- ⇒ *How is the "ruler of this world" attempting to distract you from God's glory? How can the Spirit guide you in this?*
- ⇒ *What assurance is there in knowing with complete certainty that Jesus has full authority?*

TRANSFORM

1. Make personal application: In Jesus' farewell discourse with His disciples, He identified the Trinity, with a distinct emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the New Testament and in this discourse it is made clear that God Himself is manifested through Jesus Christ by means of the Holy Spirit.

- ⇒ *How have you come to understand the perfect unity of the Trinity?*
- ⇒ *What assurance do you have as you come to understand the work of the Holy Spirit in your life?*
- ⇒ *How do we walk with and keep in step with the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16-17, 25)?*

2. Pray: Express your thankfulness to God for providing His Word. Praise God for His character and example of unity. Specifically confess ways you have grieved the Holy Spirit. Ask for forgiveness and for the Lord to fill you with the Holy Spirit. Ask the Holy Spirit to produce the fruit of peace in your life and to help you glorify God in your actions and intentions.

Resources used, compiled from, and quoted:

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