

SPRING 2021

LifeWay

YOU



**ESSENTIALS OF
CHRISTIANITY**

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**HOW TO
SHARE CHRIST**



A BIBLE STUDY ON THE CORE TRUTHS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

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“Do my beliefs really matter?” We may be tempted to ask ourselves this question because we live in a world that has become open to and tolerant of a variety of worldviews. Some people attempt to find a common ground with others by declaring, “It doesn’t matter what you believe, as long as you sincerely believe it.” But what we believe does matter! Our beliefs make a difference.

This study looks at core truths central to the Christian faith that have been revealed in the pages of Scripture. Without these truths, life loses all meaning and hope. But within these core truths, we discover the character of God, the nature and work of Christ, who we are, and where we are going—truths that point us to a right relationship with God. Knowing these truths is more than an academic exercise; as we trust what God has revealed to us, our faith impacts how we live both now and for eternity.

During this study, we will be reminded of these fundamental elements of our faith:

- God has revealed Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God created us to serve and honor Him.
- We are sinners, and on our own, we can do nothing to solve our sin problem.
- Forgiveness is possible because Jesus died on the cross for our sins.
- We experience new life when we trust the risen Christ.
- The Holy Spirit indwells and empowers Christians.
- Jesus will return to establish His eternal kingdom.

As believers, we need to know what we believe, so we can represent God well in the midst of a culture of unbelief and religious error.

THE NATURE OF GOD

Leader pages on pp. 102-105

THE POINT:
GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF TO US AS FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

JOHN /// 14:8-11,16-20,23-26

⁸ “Lord,” said Philip, “show us the Father, and that’s enough for us.” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been among you all this time and you do not know me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who lives in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Otherwise, believe because of the works themselves.

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¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. ¹⁷ He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive him because it doesn’t see him or know him. But you do know him, because he remains with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ “I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you. ¹⁹ In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Because I live, you will live too. ²⁰ On that day you will know that I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you.

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MEMORY VERSE

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²³ **Jesus answered, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.** ²⁴ The one who doesn’t love me will not keep my words. The word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me. ²⁵ “I have spoken these things to you while I remain with you. ²⁶ But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.

KEYWORDS

The works (v. 11)—The miracles that Jesus performed. These not only demonstrated Jesus is God, but they also validated the truth of His words and teaching.

Counselor (v. 16)—Literally, one called alongside another. The Spirit protects, guides, and supports believers until Jesus returns.

WHAT HAS GOD REVEALED ABOUT HIMSELF SO WE WILL KNOW HIM?

It's complicated. This is a sentence we all have uttered at some point. We all face situations and relationships that seem complicated to us, but with enough effort, determination, and time we usually can figure them out. However, some things are beyond our ability to grasp, at least for now. For example, a four-year-old may be learning to count, but we don't expect her to be able to understand calculus. It's not that the child is unable to learn, but her brain is still developing. It will be a while before abstract ideas like calculus are within her ability to understand. While calculus is complicated now, she will grow in her understanding.

One subject that remains beyond our ability to grasp is the Trinity. A key truth in Scripture is that God has revealed Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Three Persons, but One God. Perhaps our finite minds cannot fully comprehend how three can be one, but we can still appreciate the beauty of the nature of God. Let's take a deeper dive into John 14 to discover more about how God has revealed Himself.

To Know the Son Is to Know the Father // John 14:8-11

The "Trinity" is a word we use to try to put God's nature into human words. It describes three ways God has revealed Himself to us. He has revealed Himself as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We do not find the word "Trinity" anywhere in Scripture, but many passages help us understand exactly how it works. John 14 is one of those passages.

On Jesus' last night with His disciples before His arrest and crucifixion, He told them, "If you know me, you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him" (v. 7). This wasn't clear to Philip, so he made a request: "Show us the Father, and that's enough for us" (v. 8). Jesus essentially told him, "You're looking at Him." Indeed, Jesus equated Himself with the Father, but He was not saying He is the Father.

IN WHAT WAYS DOES JESUS SHOW US WHAT GOD IS LIKE?



THE POINT: GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF TO US AS FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

Saint Patrick was a missionary in Ireland during the fifth century. Legend has it that when Patrick went to Ireland to share the gospel, the people had trouble understanding the Trinity. So he reached down, plucked a clover from the ground, and explained how the clover had three distinct leaves, but it was just one plant. This might be a helpful way to get the idea of the Trinity in our minds, but it falls short in an important way: God is not divided into parts. Each part of a clover is just a part of the whole. But each Person of the Trinity is fully God, not just a part of Him.

Our inability to fully understand how the Father and the Son are one but separate does not mean we can't appreciate the way He works. We might not understand how an engine works in our cars, but we can still rely on it to take us from place to place. In the same way, we may not understand exactly how God works, but we can know and trust that He does work.

When the Word of God became flesh and made His home among us (John 1:14), He came to us as Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus is fully God, and He revealed God to us in a way we can relate to. He became human like us. He looked like us. He could walk with us and talk with us. The people could see and touch Jesus. And most importantly, even though He is God, Jesus died as a human. The key difference is that Jesus died with our sins upon Himself. He died in our place so that we could be cleansed from our sins and have eternal life with Him. Look back at what Jesus said to Philip in verses 9-11. By looking at Jesus, we see God. God the Son shows us God the Father.

ACCORDING TO VERSE 11, WHAT ENCOURAGEMENT DOES JESUS PROVIDE TO THOSE WHO MAY STRUGGLE TO UNDERSTAND THAT JESUS SHOWS US WHAT GOD IS LIKE?

To Have Jesus Is to Have the Holy Spirit

// John 14:16-20

Jesus had just given His disciples seemingly sad news: He was going away, and they couldn't come with Him. It had already been a traumatic night because they had learned one of them would betray Jesus before the night was over. But Jesus didn't leave them hanging in despair. He was about to leave them, but He would be giving them a gift that was, if



DIGGING DEEPER COUNSELOR

When we hear the word *counselor*, we may think of a professional listener who allows us to lie on a sofa and talk through our issues. However, Jesus was referring to something a little different.

In verse 16, Jesus used the word "Counselor," translated from a Greek word that literally means "a calling to one's side." It refers to someone who comes alongside us to comfort, encourage, and exhort us. Specifically, Jesus was referring to the third Person of the Trinity—the Holy Spirit. A key to understanding the Holy Spirit is Jesus' use of the word "another." In the Greek language, it means "another of the same kind." In other words, this Counselor, the Holy Spirit, would be just like Jesus! They are both God.

How is Jesus' description of the Holy Spirit similar and different from the way we think of the Holy Spirit?



they could believe it, better than the gift they had sitting in front of them. Later that evening, Jesus told them it was *good* that He was going because, if He didn't, the gift wouldn't come (John 16:7). That gift was the Holy Spirit.

ACCORDING TO THESE VERSES, WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING THE HOLY SPIRIT IN YOUR LIFE?

Jesus explained two things about the Holy Spirit. First, the Counselor was coming so the disciples wouldn't be left "as orphans" (v. 18). Jesus wanted them to know His physical absence didn't mean that the Father had left them on their own. In addition, the Counselor was coming so they could still have access to God just as they had access to God when they spoke with Jesus face-to-face.

The eleven disciples sitting with Jesus—Judas having departed (John 13:30)—had already fulfilled the only requirement for receiving the Holy Spirit: they recognized and acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, the One who came to save them. The promise of the Holy Spirit meant they would not be disconnected from a relationship with God. He would walk with them every day of their lives.

This is also good news for us. We don't have Jesus physically standing beside us, eating dinner with us, or teaching us face-to-face. But we still have access to Him because we have His Holy Spirit. When Jesus, the Son of God, is in your life, God the Holy Spirit is in your life. The Holy Spirit will work through you in ways you can't comprehend in order to carry out the will of the Father.

The Holy Spirit Continues the Works of Christ // John 14:23-26

When Jesus said it was good that He was going away and that the Holy Spirit was taking His place (John 16:7), He meant it. In God's Word, we have the written testimonies of people who met the living Jesus; they recorded what Jesus said and did while He was on earth. But now we have the Holy Spirit to guide us in the same way Jesus guided His disciples.

Jesus said the Spirit would "teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you" (v. 26). Later, as the Spirit moved God's people to action, we see Him empowering them to share the gospel in languages they didn't speak (Acts 2:4), heal the sick and the lame (Acts 3:1-9), and discern truth from lies (Acts 5:3-4).

THE POINT: GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF TO US AS FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

Whatever the act or situation, each time someone did an amazing thing through the power of the Holy Spirit, it was to further the kingdom of God. It allowed them to reach people who had been unreachable, speak to those who had not heard, teach the gospel, and make disciples in impossible places.

The Holy Spirit we read about in Scripture is the same Spirit at work in our hearts today. He still convicts us, moves us, and empowers us. And He dwells inside of everyone who calls Jesus Lord. The Father sent the Son to give us an example to follow and to die for our sins. He sent the Holy Spirit to continue the work of the Son by empowering believers to be His church.

The Holy Spirit comes alongside us and instructs us in the ways of God. Through the Holy Spirit we can understand God's truth in Scripture, live the way Jesus taught, and carry out the work Jesus left for us to do—making disciples of all nations.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THESE VERSES ABOUT THE ROLES OF THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT?

DID YOU KNOW?

We may not fully understand the Trinity, but in the words of African-American hymnologist Charles A. Tindley, “We’ll Understand It Better By and By.” Tindley (1851-1933) was born in Maryland to a father who was a slave and a mother who was free. At the tender age of two, his mother died. To ensure he remained free, he lived with his mother’s sister, who was also free. Tindley worked alongside slaves and was very familiar with plantation life. As a young man, he moved to Philadelphia, where he committed himself to learning. In 1880, he was licensed to preach at Bainbridge Street Methodist Episcopal Church, and he became the church’s janitor. Years later (in 1902), he became the pastor, and the church grew rapidly under his leadership. History notes that Tindley wrote the hymn “We’ll Understand It Better By and By” as he faced challenges with negotiations to purchase a larger facility that would seat nearly 1,000 people.¹

What do you want to understand about the Trinity by and by?

LIVE IT

What will you do with the truth that God has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

We don't have to live in confusion and with unanswered questions about God because through the Scriptures He has revealed Himself to us. He has revealed Himself as our Father who loves us, as the Son, who died for our sins, and as the Holy Spirit, who will never leave our side. He is all of these persons, yet, He is one. This is a mystery beyond our understanding, but it does not change who God is.

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- **Pray.** Thank God for being a God who reveals Himself to us. Thank Him for coming to us in Jesus Christ and for giving us His Holy Spirit to work in us and through us.
- **Study.** Compare two passages: Genesis 1:1-2 and John 1:1-18. Underline where you see the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in these passages. Make note of the similarities and differences.
- **Display.** Just as the world around us reveals God, we are called to reveal Him to those around us. Trust the Holy Spirit to give you the opportunity and the words to point others to Jesus.

DAILY READINGS

1. ONE WAY TO THE FATHER // JOHN 14:1-6

Prior to teaching the disciples about the indwelling Holy Spirit in John 14, Jesus prepared His anxious disciples for His inevitable departure. Jesus said, “Don’t let your heart be troubled” (v. 1). Then He encouraged them by pointing to the unity between God the Father and Son. Jesus assured them He was preparing a place for them to join Him. When Thomas honestly admitted his confusion—“We don’t know where you’re going. How can we know the way?” (v. 5)—Jesus declared He is the only way to God the Father. He alone provides access to the Father because He alone paid the penalty for our sins. Thomas reminds us to come to Jesus when we are confused.

Prayerfully ask Him to answer your questions and strengthen your faith.

2. NOT UNDERSTANDING IS OK // ISAIAH 55:8-9

When we think about the Trinity, it’s easy to get our brains in a twist. How can one be three? Are there three Gods? Christians have struggled to understand the doctrine of the Trinity for thousands of years. Just as we can watch a TV without fully understanding how it works, we can embrace and trust the truth that God is one in essence, but He exists in three distinct Persons. This passage reminds us God’s ways and thoughts are higher and different from human ways and thoughts. We may not fully understand the Trinity, and that’s OK.

Make a conscious effort to trust Him even if you don’t have or understand all the details.

3. FAITH REQUIRED // LUKE 8:22-25

While on the boat with Jesus in Luke 8:22-25, the disciples had enough faith to believe they would be able to cross the lake with Jesus at the beginning of the trip. However, when the storms started to wage war on the lake and they feared their lives might be in danger, they momentarily forgot the

power and concern of their sleeping Master. Most of us are like the disciples when we face anything that causes us to doubt. The question, “Where is your faith?” (v. 25) is a reminder that when we don’t fully understand something in life, we don’t have to abandon our faith in Jesus.

Let us trust and rest in Him because He is with us.

4. IN THE BEGINNING, GOD // GENESIS 1:1

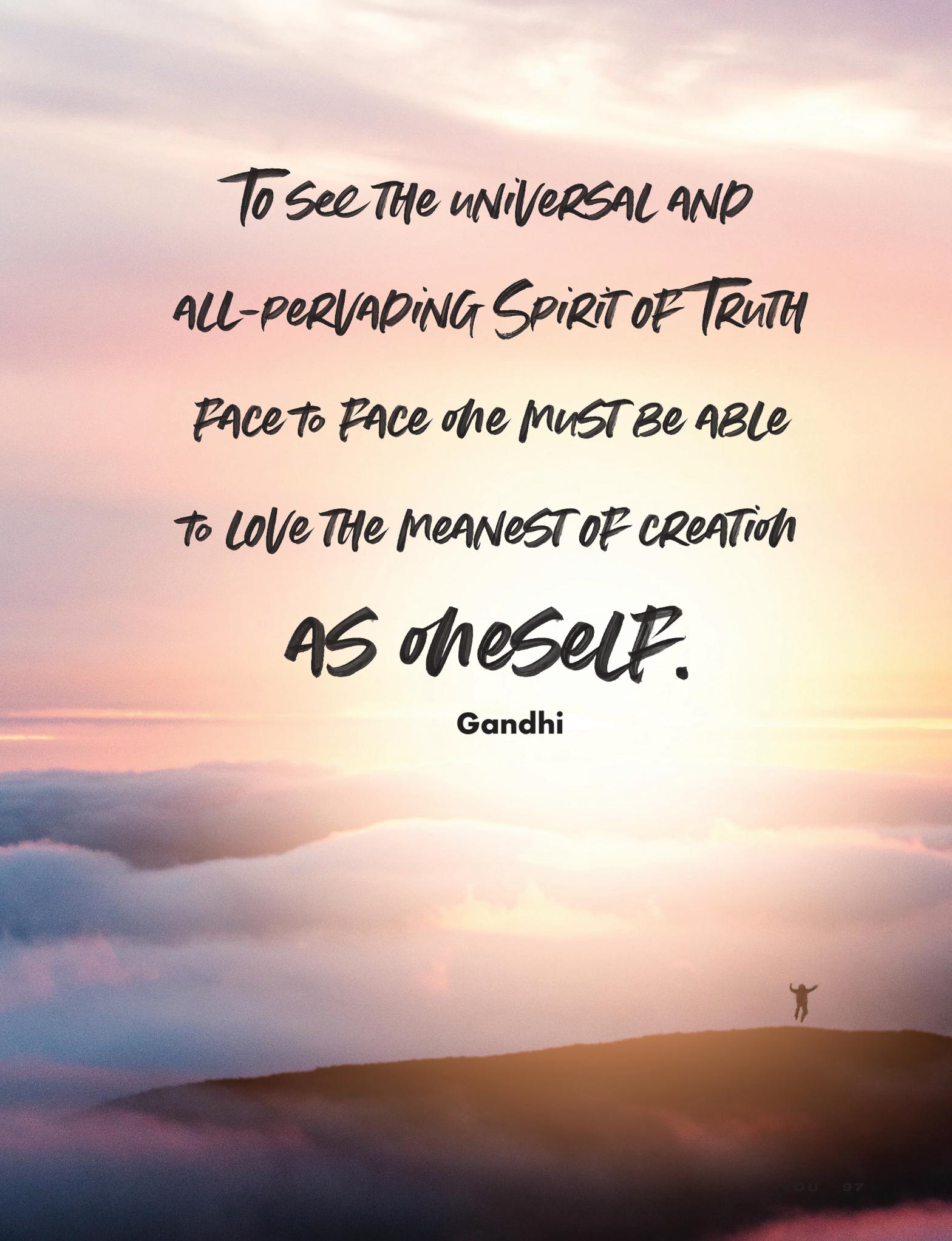
A few years ago, my family took a trip to the Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky. We enjoyed the experience, and it strengthened our faith. While there, we were reminded that God’s Word is the place to begin if we want to make sense of the world in which we live. This is because, as Genesis 1:1 reminds us, God is the uncreated Heavenly Father who existed before there was a universe. Speaking of Himself through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord declares He is “the Creator of the heavens, the God who formed the earth and made it, the one who established it... ‘I am the Lord, and there is no other’” (Isa. 45:18).

Let us remember that the creation story is a true testimony of the greatness of our God.

5. GOD’S GREATEST CREATION // GENESIS 1:26

Until my daughter was about nine-years-old, I could give her a few canisters of modeling clay, and she would create for hours. We even had family challenges to see who could create the best version of the word selected. It’s amazing what we can make with modeling clay. However, it’s even more breathtaking to read about God’s creative power in Genesis 1. That He created humanity in His image and likeness—giving humans the ability to reason, experience emotions, and make moral decisions—gives me goosebumps! We have been given the most privileged role in all of creation.

How will you take care of the world He created and live in a way that honors Him?



To see THE UNIVERSAL AND
ALL-PERVADING SPIRIT OF TRUTH
FACE TO FACE one MUST BE ABLE
to LOVE THE MEANEST OF CREATION
AS ONESELF.

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LEADER GUIDE

STUDY 1 ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY

INTRODUCTION

When we compare world religions, we quickly see that we are far apart in our beliefs and worldviews. Some people attempt to find a common ground by declaring, “It doesn’t matter what you believe, so long as you sincerely believe it.” But what we believe does matter! Our beliefs make a difference both now and for eternity. This study looks at the core truths

central to the Christian faith. Without these truths, life loses all meaning and hope. But within these core truths, we discover the character of God, the nature and work of Christ, who we are, and where we are going—truths that point us to a right relationship with God.

Writer Bio

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wrote the pages for this study. He works as an editorial director for Ramsey Solutions in Franklin, Tenn. He and his wife, Helene, have been members of Gladeville Baptist Church for twenty years and are involved in a variety of ministries. Rick has participated in international mission trips to eight different countries on five continents.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Encourage Attendance and Questions

The beginning of a new unit of study is always a fantastic time to contact current and prospective class members. This study on the Essentials of Christianity will appeal to a wide variety of people—believers and unbelievers. Take some time to email the information about this unit of study and encourage members to attend.

Belief Matters

As you begin the unit, write on the board: *Belief Matters!* Explain that this study looks at the core truths central to the Christian faith. Without these truths, life loses all meaning and hope. But within these core truths, we discover the character of God, the nature and work of Christ, who we are, and where we are going—truths that point us to a right relationship with God.

LOOK BACK

Before introducing this new unit of study, call for several volunteers to share the impact of the “Live It” exercise from the previous lesson. Ask: In what ways have you drawn closer to Christ, or become more aware of Him this week?

TEACHING PLAN

INTRODUCTION

There are a lot of different beliefs in the world today, especially religious beliefs. Some people think that as long as you're sincere in your belief, you will be OK. But it is possible to be sincerely wrong. You can sincerely believe you won't get hurt if you fall off a building unprotected, but the reality is that you will get hurt—no matter how much you believe otherwise. Explain to learners that belief matters when it comes to Christianity. That's what the Bible teaches when it describes having a relationship with God.

TRANSITION: Read **The Point: God has revealed Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.** Summarize the unit overview (p. 10) and explain that within the pages of Scripture, God has revealed truth—the core truths—that define Christianity. Knowing these truths is more than an academic exercise; as we trust what God has revealed to us, our faith impacts how we live both now and for eternity.

DIG INTO THE TEXT

To Know the Son Is to Know the Father //John 14:8-11

PACK ITEM: Direct attention to **Pack Item 1: “Essentials of Christianity”** poster and highlight the flow of the sessions to be studied.

DISCUSS: Write the word *Trinity* on the board and ask, “What does this word refer to?” “Other than the Trinity, what are some other things that people would say are complicated?”

READ: Invite a learner to read the paragraphs that begin “It's complicated ...” and “One subject ...” (p. 12) to set the context for this lesson.

EXPLAIN: Point out that the concept of the Trinity can be hard to understand, but that's OK. If we could understand everything there is to know about God, He would be fairly small. But let's dig into this difficult topic and develop a deeper appreciation for the nature of God.

READ: Invite a learner to read the paragraph that begins “Trinity is a word ...” (p. 12) to lead into the reading of Scripture. Invite another learner to read John 14:8-11.

ASK: “What is the relationship between Jesus and God according to these verses?” “How does Jesus reveal God to us?”

EXPLAIN: Share that Jesus came to reveal the Person and the passion of God. Through Jesus, we understand the nature of God.

THE POINT: GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF TO US AS FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT.

OBJECT LESSON: Use the “Object Lesson” (p. 104) to demonstrate the difficulty of describing the nature of the Trinity.

GUIDE: Use the commentary for verses 10-11 (pp. 104-105) to explain how Jesus came to reveal the Father. Then lead learners to discuss what it means that Jesus and the Father are one.

EMPHASIZE: Point out that these verses have identified the Father and the Son, two Persons of the Trinity. Let’s move on to discover the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

To Have Jesus Is to Have the Holy Spirit //John 14:16-20

READ: Invite a learner to read John 14:16-20 and discuss how the Holy Spirit is described in these verses.

ASK: “Why is it significant that the Holy Spirit is described as the Spirit of Truth?”

DIGGING DEEPER: Review “Digging Deeper” (p. 13) to discuss the role of the Holy Spirit as a Counselor. Lead learners to discuss the question included in “Digging Deeper.”

READ: Invite a learner to read the paragraph beginning, “Jesus explained two things...” (p. 14) and discuss what these two things meant to them personally.

GUIDE: Use the commentary for verse 17 (p. 105) to explain and discuss two important facts about the Counselor. Discuss why this is important when considering the Holy Spirit as our Counselor.

ASK: “What does it mean for the Holy Spirit to remain with us and live in us, as described in verse 17?”

EMPHASIZE: When Jesus, the Son of God, is in your life, the Holy Spirit is in your life. As believers, we should sense the leadership of the Holy Spirit and His guidance while reading Scripture.

ASK: “How might the promises in these verses encourage believers today?”

The Holy Spirit Continues the Work of Christ //John 14:23-26

WRITE: On the board, write “Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

PACK ITEM: Distribute **Pack Item 2: “The Trinity”** handout and review with learners. Ask learners how they would use it to prove the Trinity.

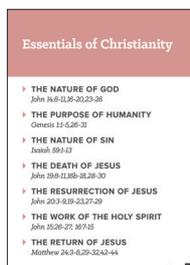
READ: Invite a learner to read John 14:23-26.

ASK: “In what ways does the Holy Spirit continue the work that was begun by Jesus?” “How have you experienced the work of the Holy Spirit in your life as described in verse 26?”

DISCUSS: Lead learners to discuss how an automobile engine works and how the process of driving a car works? Explain that while we may not fully comprehend how a car works, we experience it working. In the same way, we may not fully comprehend the work of the Spirit or how the Persons of the Trinity all work together, yet we experience God’s work in our lives.

READ: Invite a learner to read the two paragraphs beginning “The Holy Spirit we read ...” and “The Holy Spirit ... (p. 15) to further discuss the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer.

DID YOU KNOW?: Use “Did You Know?” to discuss the history of the song “We’ll Understand It Better By and By.” Discuss the question that follows.



PACK ITEM 1



PACK ITEM 2

CLOSE THE SESSION

Write **The Point: God has revealed Himself to us as Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit** on the board. Remind learners of some of their responses to the question at the beginning of this lesson about what the word “Trinity” means. Ask them about what they have learned from this session about the roles of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

PRAY: Close with prayer, asking God to give us a better understanding of the roles and work of the Persons of the Trinity in our the lives.

OBJECT LESSON

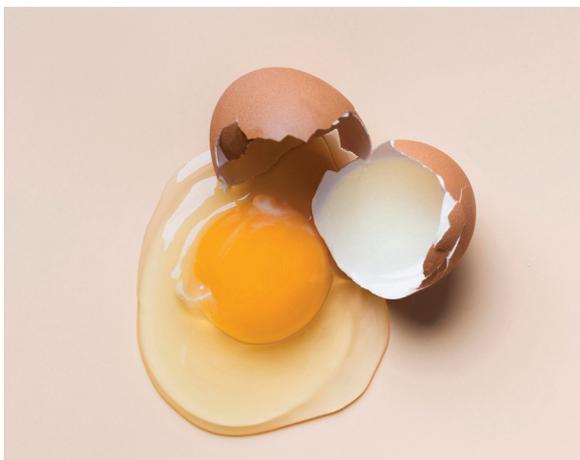
Bring an egg and a small glass bowl to class (along with some paper towels). Optional: an egg separator with an additional small glass bowl.

EXPLAIN: Point out that an egg is often one of the tangible demonstrations used to help believers understand and grasp the concept of the Trinity.

ASK: What are the three primary parts of an egg? (the shell, the white, and the yolk) Explain that all three parts of the egg can all be present at the same time in an uncracked egg.

GUIDE: Crack the egg into the bowl and place the shell next to the bowl. Identify the three parts.

DISCUSS: Lead learners to discuss how the egg analogy falls short. [Each of the three distinct parts is not the egg; you have egg shell, egg white, and egg yolk. Individually they are not an egg.]



COMMENTARY

JOHN 14:8-11

Verse 8. In John 13, Jesus had washed His disciples’ feet during the Passover meal (John 13:2-20) and had revealed that He would soon be returning to His Father (vv. 31-35). As the news of His departure sank in, He assured His followers He would return for them and reminded them He alone represented God’s path to salvation (14:1-7).

In response, Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father. The Greek word for “show” is the same as Jesus’ command for lepers to show themselves to the priest (Matt. 8:4; Mark 1:44). Here, Philip was asking Jesus for physical evidence the Father existed—and that Jesus shared a relationship with Him.

Verse 9. Jesus reminded His followers He and the Father were one. They were—and are—co-equal in every sense of the word. Jesus had been among the disciples for three years. God had lived among them every day, and they had seen His works and heard His preaching. What they had seen and experienced should have given them the security they sought. They knew God because they knew Christ.

Verse 10. Jesus challenged the disciples to grasp this important truth. Jesus came to earth to reveal the Father, and He fulfilled that mission perfectly. Everything about Jesus revealed the Person and purpose of God. Without really understanding Jesus and what He came to do, the disciples would never be able to spread the gospel after He returned to heaven.

Verse 11. Jesus called on His followers to evaluate their hearts and to believe He and the Father are one—even if they could not physically see the Father with their eyes. Again, they needed to grasp this reality in their hearts—even if it didn’t make sense to their heads.

As their faith matured, they would rely more on faith and less on sight. But in the moment, the

disciples' trust was still growing; and, in some ways, seeing still meant believing for them.

JOHN 14:16-20

Verse 16. Here, Jesus taught His followers about the third member: God the Spirit. Jesus said He would ask the Father to send another Counselor. The word "Counselor" has also been variously translated "Comforter," "Helper," or "Advocate." The Greek idea refers to one called alongside another for support or encouragement.

Verse 17. Jesus identified the Counselor as the Spirit of truth. This reminds readers of two important facts. First, the Spirit shares the character of God. Just as the Father and Son do not deal in falsehood, nothing dishonest or "shady" can be associated with the Spirit. Second, the Spirit can be trusted. His guidance and conviction are absolutely perfect, so believers can trust Him.

Verses 18-19. The disciples were likely still feeling the shock of Jesus' initial announcement that He was leaving. They probably felt alone, confused, and maybe even scared. Jesus wanted to put their fears to rest. He was leaving, but He was not leaving them alone like orphans.

The phrase "in a little while" at the beginning of verse 19 indicates the disciples would see Him while the world would not. That suggests an event that would happen sooner rather than later. Jesus' death and burial would hide Him for a time, but that situation was temporary. The crucifixion was not the end of the story. It was the beginning of a new era.

Verse 20. Since Jesus was likely referring to the resurrection, that day also refers to the immediate aftermath of the resurrection. The Father raised Christ from the dead, so the resurrection provides the most convincing evidence that the Father and the Son are one. Upon seeing the risen Messiah, the disciples would have no more reason to question this connection.

What's more, the disciples would gain a better understanding of their own relationship with God. Just as the Son exists within the Father, they would

exist in the Son. Since Jesus had already declared that the Spirit would also live with them and in them, they would realize the full impact of the Godhead in their lives.

JOHN 14:23-26

Verse 23. In John's Gospel, Jesus often connected love and obedience. One key act of obedience is embracing the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. As we acknowledge the presence of the Counselor and allow Him to work on us from the inside out, we draw closer to Christ. The closer we get, the more we learn to love Him—which results in deeper levels of obedience.

But even more, Jesus promised His presence. Jesus said both He and the Father would "make our home with" those who truly believe and obey. The disciples had secured a dwelling place in eternity, and the proof was the Godhead's dwelling with them on earth.

Verse 24. Jesus made it clear to His disciples—and to us—that obedience is a direct result of love and faith. Those who obey demonstrate their genuine love for the Savior. Those who refuse to obey reject Him and His Word.

Christ also made it clear He was not speaking from His own agenda. His words and teaching aligned with the Father who sent Him into the world. Likewise, the guidance the disciples would later receive from the Spirit also would be grounded in the message and mission of the Father and the Son (John 16:13).

Verses 25-26. Jesus identified two primary jobs of the Holy Spirit in our lives. First, the Spirit would teach the disciples. While teaching was an important work, the Spirit's prime role is to remind disciples, to jog their memories about what they already knew or to show them how to apply those truths effectively. They needed to remember those teachings as they stepped into His plan. John's own Gospel, along with the other Gospels written by or in partnership with those present that day, is an example of the Spirit's ministry of reminding.

STUDY 1 ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY

OVERVIEW

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When we compare world religions, we quickly see that we are far apart in our beliefs and worldviews. Some people attempt to find a common ground by declaring, “It doesn’t matter what you believe, so long as you sincerely believe it.” But what we believe does matter! Our beliefs make a difference both now and for eternity. This study looks at the core truths central to the Christian faith. Within these core truths, we discover the character of God, the nature and work of Christ, who we are, and where we are going—truths that point us to a right relationship with God.

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STUDY 2 HOW TO SHARE CHRIST

OVERVIEW

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The gospel of Jesus Christ is truly life-changing. Every follower of Christ knows that and has experienced it, but we are surrounded by countless others who have yet to hear or experience that same gospel. Christians are called to point others to the gospel. It is a privilege to share with others the message of Christ, the way out of death and into eternal life.

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