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Why Belief in the Trinity is Essential in Christianity - Part 2
The Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity
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Why the Doctrine of the Trinity Is So Important
When the topic of the doctrine of the Trinity comes up, the most common reaction from the average Christian is to default to one of the common metaphors in order to try and understand the concept itself (See part 1 of this series). There is rarely any thought, though, as to "why" this doctrine is actually important. Of course, it is considered to be important because the Bible reveals God to be a Trinitarian being, but the deeper "why" question which drills down to the cognitive reasons for its importance virtually never gets asked. Well, it is important and there is a logical reason why it is important. And the reason can be summed up in one word – relationship.

Are you aware of any person who is so self sufficient that they have no need for interaction with other people? Probably not. Some do need it more than others, but virtually every person needs it. And if you do come across someone who doesn't feel any need for human interaction, you have met a person who has something either emotionally or psychologically wrong with them. Persons have a built in need for relationship. And this built in need is not a physical thing, it is spiritual. It resides at the very core of our being. So with this in mind, let's take a look at three ways the doctrine of Trinity is important.

1. It Is How God Is Able to Be Self Sufficient as it Relates to Relationships

When we think about God, one of the most important aspects of his being is that he is a person.

When this is brought up, some people are thrown off a bit because they associate "person" with "human being." But the fact is, God is the original person. The only reason humans are persons is because we were created in his image. God is a person, and a part of personhood is the characteristic of being a relational creature.

At this point, we begin to see the first element of why the concept of Trinity is so important. When we characterize the God of the Bible, one of the things that is front and center is that there is only one God. Now, if there is only one God and he is a person, and if being relational is a part of personhood, where would God get his need for relationship fulfilled? Obviously not from another God since there is only one.

Some people try to reconcile this problem by saying that God created other beings in order to have this relationship need fulfilled. Some might speculate that God created other transcendent beings for this purpose – angels, for instance. Others might point to Jesus Christ and assert that he is a created being and that one of the reasons God created him was to fulfill this relationship need. Then, there are those who believe that the reason God created mankind was to have this relationship need fulfilled. But if God needed to create a being in order to fulfill a need he has, that means he is, in one respect, dependent upon his creation for need fulfillment. That is a problem because, as God, he is totally self-sufficient.

Perhaps you now see where this is going. By God existing as a creature who is one but has within that

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oneness three separate persons, he is able to have his need for fellowship fulfilled within himself. This does not prevent him from creating other persons he can also fellowship with, but he does not require them for personal need fulfillment. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all part of the single being who is God, but are also three separate centers of consciousness within that single God who are able to interact with one another in a legitimate personal relationship.

2. It Is the Root of the Human Ability to Have Self-conscious Relationships

The fact of God's Trinitarian existence has profound implications for human existence, as well. Since God created human beings in his image, that means we are persons. And, as with God, that also means we are capable of personal, self-conscious relationships. That puts us in a different category of being from other created creatures. There is no other creature on earth which has that capability.

Beyond that, our ability to enjoy self-conscious personal relationships makes us able to relate personally to all other beings who are persons. This includes other human persons and it also includes God.

Let's take just a moment, now, to look a little deeper into the implications of this characteristic as it relates to the human person. As was noted earlier, human beings have a profound need to interact with other self-conscious persons. The reason this characteristic exists is because God put this part of his image into humanity.

There is another place, though, where this characteristic plays an even deeper role, and that has to do with marriage. As creatures created in the image of God, there are

numerous personhood characteristics that we possess. Interestingly, the characteristic of gender is the only one that human individuals don't have completely. Gender does, of course, have physical expressions in humans, but the essence of gender is spiritual. While the entirety of this characteristic exists within God, it is expressed differently in human beings. In humans, the feminine element of gender is in women and the masculine element is in men. This promotes a particularly strong need within individuals to bring a particular type of completion to the person. The biblical expression used to denote this completion is "one flesh" (See Genesis 2:24). And it is in natural marriage that this possibility is able to become a reality. In other words, God created marriage as the means by which two human beings, one male and one female, are able to come to completion by joining their very spirits together. Marriage is not a mere opportunity for physical, sexual union. It is a true bonding of spirits.

Sadly, there are many counterfeits to this. People having sexual relationships outside of marriage – including fornication, adultery, polygamous relationships, homosexual relationships, and others – are attempts to create this union using illegitimate means. The reason sexual immorality, of any kind, is wrong is not simply "because the Bible says so," though it certainly does say that. There is a reason behind the prohibition, and that reason is that it distorts the very order of God's creation. God created relationships to operate based on his very nature, and a distortion of that is not only a personal affront to him, but it also throws a human life out of sync.

3. It Is the Basis for Our Connection with God

When an individual invites Christ into his or her life, there is a spiritual unification that takes place where we become united with God. This is true for every believer. Because of that unity,

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then, we actually get to participate in the life of the Trinity.

And as profound as that is, there is something that takes this even a step further. The nature of the Trinity is that while the three members of the godhead are three separate persons, they are also unified in a single being. In humanity, the marriage of two believers is the closest thing that exists on earth to an expression of this concept. As we saw above, the two become spiritually unified in a way that is similar to the unity that exists in the Trinity.

But to take it one step further, when a believing couple is joined in that kind of unity and they are both spiritually unified with Christ, a type of trinity is formed in that relationship, as well - the man, the woman and God. It is the ultimate that is possible as it relates to relationship in human existence. Obviously we don't be

come an actual part of the Trinity, but by this we do participate uniquely in it. This does not mean, necessarily, that everyone does relationships well. But the relationships do exist, and the potential to enjoy the ultimate in fellowship through that relationship, and to grow in it, is available.

The Importance of the Trinity

Belief in the Trinity is important because it expresses the character, nature, and existence of the God who is revealed in the Bible. Those who would deny the Trinity are on very shaky ground because they are looking to worship a God who is different than the one revealed in Scripture. On the other side of the equation, when we grasp the Trinitarian existence of God, even in the limited sense that is possible in our own nature bound state, we are able to appreciate a relationship with God that doesn't even make sense with other beliefs.

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