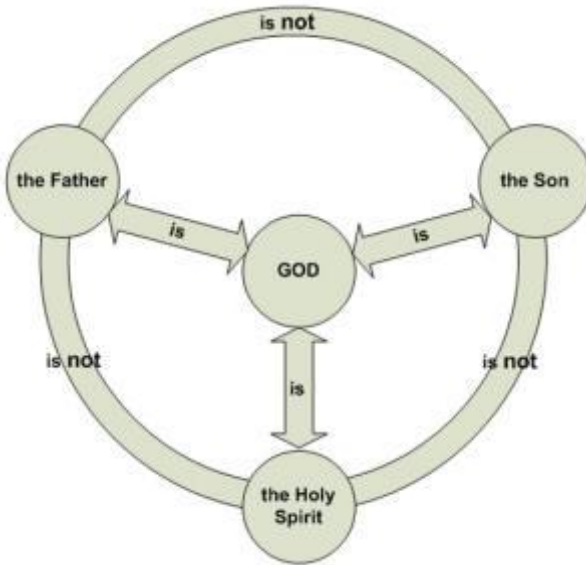


## **"Our Great God/THE Great God: The Holy Trinity" (topical)**

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### **Introduction: The Holy Trinity: Doctrine or Life Application?**

- A. Once I had the unpleasant duty of meeting a church elder in a different congregation who was leading one of our small group Bible Studies. The reason why it was unpleasant was because he was teaching false doctrine. When I confronted him with the details and presented our actual confession, he objected by saying [quote], "I don't care about doctrine!" [unquote]**
- B. This was in fact a silly thing to say, since "doctrine" is way of referring to *the teaching of the Church derived from Holy Scripture*.**
- C. That is to say, if one teaches Scripture (or at least tries to teach Scripture), they are automatically teaching some form of doctrine. The question that remains is whether that doctrine is true or false; accurate or inaccurate.**
- D. We have to care about doctrine; we have to care about what the Word of God actually reveals and then we must present this and teach this accurately. When we do so we expound on doctrine that is true, good, beneficial, efficacious, and holy.**
- E. In addition, it is important that we remind ourselves that what true doctrine presents is not simply a kind of detached-from-life teaching (facts which subsist in some kind of academic vacuum). If what we *mean* by doctrine are just facts to be aware of, then we are missing a great deal indeed.**
- F. When it comes to the Holy Trinity, we learn in confirmation about the doctrine of the True God as He reveals Himself: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the three holy persons in the one eternal essence or substance called "The Holy Trinity." It is typically presented something like this and this is certainly important to know and to learn:**



**Part I: But our sinful flesh treats this as stale theology.**

- A. How often do we go through confirmation -- or ongoing catechesis for that matter -- in an entirely wrong state of mind?**
- B. We cannot view confirmation as going through a check-list of facts to learn so that we qualify for confirmation.**
- C. When we study God's Word and learn the Christian faith, we are learning about how to live.**
- D. We are coming to know the True God and the life that flows from Him! And in this way we also come to know how to live as Christians in this world.**
- E. But our sinful nature objects to this entire enterprise.**
  - 1. Our nature is bent inward, not outward. That is our natural inclination is to care only about ourselves. We do not want our lives defined by anything other than ourselves.**
  - 2. The sinful influences in the world are also bent inward. The temptations that come to you from the world are for your sinful pleasure; and to convince you that the reason you are alive is to manipulate the world around you for yourself.**

3. Furthermore, the evil one, the devil, is dedicated to tempting you to live only for yourself. To be your own “god,” to be your own authority, your own master, and to serve only yourself.
- F. Put these three together and what do you get? Answer: an *unholy* trinity: SELF, WORLD, and SATAN.
- G. But even these are revealed in Scripture not just as facts, but as what they are; how they exist: they are again – bent inward – they are all about living in such a way that you really do not care about others, but only about yourself. The supreme goal of evil is to focus on “me, myself, and I.”
- H. And this is a miserable condition. It is not what the Lord intended for us, but it is what your sinful nature is inclined to do every, single day. And what we experience is much more than an inclination, we prove ourselves to be self-centered by our thoughts and actions every day. We are called, however, to repent and to turn from this inwardness of the unholy trinity.

## **Part II: Instead, we are called to the True God, The Holy Trinity!**

- A. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is so much more than a simple teaching. Rather, God Himself is revealed.
- B. The Trinity Diagram shown above conveys a cyclical relationship that has no beginning and no end. That is to say the doctrine of the Trinity itself teaches that God IS; He is existence and life itself.
- C. This is a crucial revelation. God is life and He is the source of all life. We all long to live and to live forever. We do not want to live for a short time; we do not want to live temporality. We want to live forever.
- D. But left to ourselves, we botch-up on HOW to live, so again, we return to the Holy Trinity.

- E. The doctrine reveals that God is always extending Himself for fellowship and unity. He gives of Himself by extending Himself. He gives of Himself to another.**
- F. Your every existence, the fact that you are sitting there breathing right now is testimony to the Gracious God who willed to give you life and breath. And this extension of the gift of CREATION is an extension of His giving-orientation which is love. He lavishes gifts upon you!**
- G. Think about it. Your health, your body, your house, your home, your job or your retirement, your family, and the things that bring you good and wholesome joy are all from the Creator who is author of all things...since He extended Himself and caused that which was nothing to come into being when He simply spoke, "Let there be..."!**
- H. Creation itself is testimony to His love for you...He gives, and gives, and gives, and gives...and He does so but for one reason: to convey that He who is love loves you. You are loved by the God of Love and the proof is in all creation!**
- I. But there is more. For us to be human we were given the capacity to choose and we chose and broke fellowship with our God of Love...but God did not cease being Love, so again, in extension of Himself, the Father who loves the Son sent the Son and His love overflowed once again to you!**
- J. And in this overflowing, extended love, Jesus – true God – became your brother and gave His life as a ransom for many...He didn't come to be served; He didn't come to do what we do according to our sinful nature (namely, to live for ourselves), but He came to live, die, and rise for you.**
- K. The Father who is eternal life and love saved you by sending the Son who is eternal life and love and He accomplished the salvation for which He was sent...and now Father and Son send forth the Holy Spirit who is eternal life and love who breaks**

**through your darkness to open your eyes from unbelief to saving faith.**

### **III. What remains:**

- A. Is not God saying, "Let's work something out: you be good to me, and I'll be good to you."**
- B. No, the infinite life and love of God is not conditional, it is not transactional between us and God. God the Holy Trinity ALWAYS extends His life to you; God the Holy Trinity ALWAYS extends His love to you (the Father is the promise of that; Jesus is the proof of that; and the Holy Spirit is the seal of that).**
- C. There is no sin you've committed or continue to struggle with that is greater than the infinite extension of God's life and love for you. The very nature of the Holy Trinity cannot be overpowered by any sin, but rather overpowers all sin.**
- D. All that remains is our realization of this state of affairs. Our sin tempts us to deny it; to push it away; to say it isn't so or as one man in his home once told me, "It sounds too good to be true." But it IS true! To be the Holy Trinity means that He never tires of giving you life; and He never tires of loving you.**
- E. It is only our flesh, and the world, and the devil which cling to fear and say, "It can't be, I must earn it, I must deserve it, I must take credit for it, I must manipulate it, I must manage it, I must qualify for it so that later I can give myself glory." But these are deceptions and delusions.**
- F. The truth is that while we were dead in our sins and trespasses; when we were too weak and helpless to save ourselves; God the Holy Trinity who is rich in mercy saved us. The Father had mercy; the Son sacrificed Himself; and the Holy Spirit opened our eyes to the truth: The Holy Trinity gives us poor sinners once dead in**

**sin LIFE; He gives us poor sinners once only objects of wrath  
LOVE.**

**G. The Holy Trinity...no mere doctrine, but the source of all life and  
all love; our Great God who has made us His living people, filled  
with His love. May we always confess the Holy Trinity!**