

From the series: *It's not hard to understand the Trinity, when you look closely at what the Bible says about it*

## Part TWO, The ONE Substance of the Trinity

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Your Notes

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**Review—this lesson is part of a series on the Trinity**

- ***Understanding the Trinity, part One, The Three Persons of the Trinity***, how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are uncreated, co-equal, and eternal persons.
- ***Understanding the Trinity, part Two, The One Substance of the Trinity***, the attributes shared by the members of the Trinity and what that means to us.
- ***Understanding the Trinity, part Three, The Trinity Throughout the Bible***, descriptions of the Trinity and roles of each member in the Old and New Testaments.
- Notes, videos, podcasts, charts, and associated resource links of these lessons on the Trinity are all available on [www.Bible805.com](http://www.Bible805.com)
- Source materials to teach the lessons, all free, editable, and with no need to attribute them are at [www.Bible805Academy.com](http://www.Bible805Academy.com)

**We are again going to use Tertullian's explanation of the Trinity in this lesson**

- To review, Tertullian was a Roman lawyer, and in the early days of the church, he came up with the word, ***Trinity***, which he defined as—
- ***una substantia, tres personae***
- Meaning ***God is one substance in three persons***.
- We know what a person is and we went into detail to show each member of the Trinity is a person in Lesson One of this series on the Trinity.
- In this lesson we are looking at the “una substantia,” the one substance of the Trinity.
- The word “substance” also means attribute or characteristic; it's a word or term to describe what a person is like.
- If we say a human person is kind, loving, and generous you've described what they are like, these terms, these characteristics make up their substance, and it is no different with God.

**In the previous lesson we looked at the meaning of the Personhood of the Trinity and In addition to looking at what the characteristics mean to us**

- I will point out how we ought to live in response to the various characteristics.
- Of course, some only are possible for God, such as his omnipotence (all power), but many we can imitate.
- And as much as is possible, we need imitate, we need to work to make these characteristics part of our lives.
- As I go through them, don't stop at mentally understanding them only, but consider and be in prayer about how you can COPY the characteristics of your God into your life.
- This is possible because we are made in the image of God and we are commanded to work on implementing them fully in our lives as His image-bearers, as representative of Jesus in our world.

**We will take the characteristics one by one**

- I'll first define it.
- Then share verses that show how that particular characteristic applies to God.

- Then, sometimes with one or two of them grouped together, I'll show how we are to imitate that characteristic.

### God is Holy

- **Definition:** *"Holiness, in the biblical context, refers to the state of being set apart. . .the idea of separation from the common or profane . . .God's holiness is intrinsic and absolute, setting Him apart from all creation. . .God's holiness is also evident in His moral purity and righteousness."* from the BibleHub
- This is the first and foundational characteristic of God's because truly there is no one, no god, no anything like our God.
- When the prophet Isaiah and others in the Bible had a vision of the holiness of God, they were overwhelmed.
- It was not until God touched Isaiah that Isaiah was able to walk closely with God as His servant.
- There is a balance we must always keep in mind when we study and as we walk with the Lord, both of His holiness, of His extraordinary "otherness," that is beyond us and incomprehensible and AT the SAME TIME, how our God has gone to extraordinary lengths to be accessible to us.

### Verses on the Holiness of God

- *Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? **Exodus 15:11***
- *"There is none holy like the Lord; there is none besides you." **1 Samuel 2:2***
- *"Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord Almighty." **Revelation 4:8***
- **Good summary** "The holiness of God stands at the center of Christian thought and informs our understanding of the divine nature, redemption, and moral living. From the act of creation itself, which displays His glorious distinction, to the calling of every believer to live a life reflecting God's pure character, holiness remains a defining pillar of biblical theology."  
[https://biblehub.com/q/what\\_defines\\_the\\_holiness\\_of\\_god.htm](https://biblehub.com/q/what_defines_the_holiness_of_god.htm)
- **An observation:** Holiness, as a description is also used of many of the items in the Tabernacle, things set apart for God's worship that were above all, precious and very beautiful. It shows us how God's holiness is not an uptight and awful thing, but a thing of beauty. And that beauty can be reflected in those who worship Him.

### God is Just, Definition of Justice

- As God is set apart with His holiness, He is totally different than us in that He is JUST in a perfect degree. He defines what is just and fair and never waivers from it. He always does what is truly fair/just in line with His holiness.
- What however, does "truly fair and just" mean? Does God make up standards simply to be cruel? To keep people from having fun or doing what they want.
- To clarify, I found this quote from the [www.GotQuestions.org](http://www.GotQuestions.org) site
- *Justice is a term used for what is right or "as it should be."*
- And I think that is such a good definition of justice as how it should **be is how God designed all to be at Creation.**
- At that time people walked with God, they were at peace with each other and all creation. Sin broke all of that. His justice wants to see that restored.
- God eternally wants the best, healed and whole, for His creation and His justice is the standard by which our deviation from the best for us is measured.

## Verses on the Justice of God

- *“The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and **without injustice, righteous and upright is He.**” Deut. 32:4*
- ***Thou art just** in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly. Nehemiah 9:33*
- *“Surely, God will not act wickedly, And the Almighty **will not pervert justice.***  
*Job 34:12*

**These two characteristics of Holiness and Justice were put first and go together because**

### What this means to us

- As the holy and eternal God, He has the right and power to set the rules—that even God Himself is subject to.
- And in ways we do not understand, our turning away from the holiness of God had consequences that the justice of God could not ignore. It created a debt of death and only the shedding of blood could cancel the consequences of our sins and make it possible for us to again walk with God, the source of eternal life.
- Not only was a death required, but it had to be the death of a sinless sacrifice.
- We have a problem because in Adam and Eve and their descendants down to us, we can't stop sinning, going our own way, and because of that, none of us can pay that debt, can never offer an adequate sacrifice.
- But Jesus, (the sinless, second Person of the Trinity) came to earth and both fully human and fully God, lived the life we could not live and then died the death we could not die to cancel the debt against us.
- And when we accept Him as Savior, He gives us God's very life in us, so that instead of His Holiness being something that separates us from God, ***it can become a characteristic of our lives that reflects our relationship with God.***

**God's Holiness—from the source of condemnation to a call to participation in it**

- **1 Peter 1:15-16**  
*But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct. Since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”*
- **1 Thessalonians 4:7**  
*For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness.*
- **1 Peter 2:9**  
*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*
- Like God's, this holiness can and should be a beautiful thing, not a negative, condemning stance in life. It is showing ourselves and others how life ought to be lived.
- Since we have a hard time doing this, the next characteristic is important....

### God is Merciful

**And we are to be like Him in showing undeserved mercy to others**

- **Matthew 9: 13** *But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”*
- *James 2:12-13 LB* *You will be judged on whether or not you are doing what Christ wants you to. So watch what you do and what you think; <sup>13</sup>for there will be*

*no mercy to those who have shown no mercy. But if you have been merciful, then God's mercy toward you will win out over his judgment against you.*

- **Micah 6:8** *He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? **To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.***
- Mercy often translated "Kindness" and it is one of the basic requirements God has of us.

#### **APPLICATIONS for us—**

##### **Always come down on the side of kindness and mercy**

- We are so easy to take offense.
- Don't assume a negative about others (why is it, we never assume good things?)
- Great advice by I've forgotten who, when they said, **"I don't know why I do what I do, so how can I assume to judge why another person does what they do?"**
- Remember Satan is the "accuser of the brethren."
- Don't do his job.
- We can kindly critique or challenge actions, we cannot NEVER ascribe motives or label a person or judge their hearts.
- ***Even if people do truly awful things and PEOPLE DO.***
- We don't excuse or lie that things didn't happen, but we are still to grant mercy (some translations=kindness).
- We can only do that with God's help and when we do grant mercy in truly horrible situations it shows that it is from God.

##### **Moving along in God's Characteristics—**

##### **God is Love, What this means for us—**

##### **in 1 Cor 13, put in "God" for the word "love"**

- **Here it is, first love defined—**
- *<sup>1</sup> Cor 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. <sup>5</sup> It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. <sup>6</sup> Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. <sup>7</sup> It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. <sup>8</sup> Love never fails.*
- **Put God in for the word LOVE because all these characteristics describe what God is to us.**
- *"God is patient; God is kind... God does not dishonor others, God is not easily angered, God keeps no record of wrongs. God does not delight in evil but rejoices in the truth. God always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. God never fails."*
- **This is how He acts toward YOU—it is part of who HE IS—not what He feels like that might change or regarding your actions.**
- **He simply LOVES YOU and will forever, because again, it is part of who HE is.**

##### **Like many of God's attributes, it is difficult to truly understand God's**

##### **love—Paul prayed for his people that they might be able to understand it**

- *Eph. 3:17 I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, **to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <sup>19</sup> and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.***

- We need to pray for that understanding also—I think many of our questions and fears would be solved if we truly understood and grasped to the core of our minds and hearts the depths of God’s love to us.
- Many of the “whys” would turn into “thank-yous” for all He protects us from, guides us into, redirects us toward.

### God is Truth (definition next on this)

Definition of Truth—because we think we know what it means, but consider...

In contrast, Satan is the father of lies

- **John 8: 44** *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*
- Much of the confusion, errors, problems of all sorts in our world are because of Satan’s lies.
- **His lies do not correspond to reality in any area—not about you, people, the world, anything. And, he never delivers on what he promises.**
- **ALSO, this is why untruth in ANY FORM is so horrible for a Christian.**
- Whenever we are not honest, we reflect the enemy, not our Lord.
- Little lies grow into a lifestyle of deceit—*simply never deceive in any way, ever.*
- Make truth non-negotiable in every part of your life—though speak the truth in love when necessary.

Now on to some characteristics of God, that though not easy to comprehend are easier to define

Omniscient, meaning all-knowing

What this means to us

- He knows all about us **and yet**—
- HE understands AND He still loves us.
- He doesn’t get tired of us, of dealing with us.
- His acceptance of us is a wonderful example for us to follow.....so often we might say or think, “oh if you really knew that about this person. . . Or really knew me you wouldn’t like me or think well of me or them.”
- **God already does** and He loves and accepts you and them—
- Also, we might get tired of someone we love or ourselves, messing up in the same ways again and again—but God doesn’t!
- 7x70 in forgiveness isn’t just what we are supposed to do for others, **it is how God treats us.**
- We cannot do less in our forgiveness of others.

Omnipresent, meaning God is Everywhere

Combining His Love and Omnipresence—remember these verses...

- **It isn’t just that He sees everything, everywhere—His love is filling it all, as this passage reminds us.**
- *Romans 8: 38* **For I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can’t, and life can’t. The angels won’t, and all the powers of hell itself cannot keep God’s love away. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, <sup>39</sup> or where we are—high above the sky, or in the deepest ocean—nothing will ever be able to separate us from the love of God.**
- WE NEVER need feel abandoned or afraid because we will never be alone—God’s loving presence is everywhere with us forever.

- And no concern is too small; He has room for all; He has the bandwidth for world hunger and your tears.

### **Omnipotent, means God is All Powerful**

#### **What it means to us— and a reminder that God’s omnipotence isn’t a magic power we can control**

- **Recognize that just because God CAN do all things, doesn’t mean He will do them.**
- Or do them in the ways we think are best; Or in the timing we want—that’s often the key issue.
- REMEMBER God sees the BIG PICTURE of the timing of your life, past, present, future.
- He sees His plans for us, what He wants you to become and in that what you need protection from, guidance in, testing, or joy and ALL in His time.
- Some platitudes that are useful and true—“It wasn’t rejection; it was protection.” “Delay is not denial.”
- Good verse to remember on His Power, “Many are the plans in a person’s heart, but it is the LORD’s purpose that prevails.” – Proverbs 19:21—**remember this POWER is always paired with His LOVE and He is a GOOD GOD.**

### **Immutable, which means Unchangeable**

#### **What this means to us**

- Few things are worse in human relationships than being around someone who is always changing in their mood, emotions, or actions—that will NEVER happen with our God—what a relief that is!
- Nothing we do can change how He feels about us, He will never not love us or stop being merciful to us. God does not have bad days.
- Nothing can change His promises to us—though again, timing and methods are under His discretion.

#### **It also means**

- His expectations, commands, rules and guidelines, His justice—
- **Don’t change; they are timeless also.**
- At the same time, for fine-tuning in our understanding, it helps if we take into consideration cultural, historical, and application context as we understand His Word and the commands in it.
- For example, the OT command to “*not boil a kid in its mother’s milk*” Ex. 23:19. Most scholarship tells us that referred to not following some pagan practices at that time; not necessarily avoiding cooking dairy and meat together (no more pasta Alfredo).
- To do this well, involves the study of **Hermeneutics, or how to correctly interpret the Bible.**
- There are studies on the [www.Bible805Academy.com](http://www.Bible805Academy.com) on this and many excellent resources from Christian sources.
- HOWEVER, overall understanding the timeless nature of the majority of His commands, rules, and guidelines is mostly timeless and applies in all cultures and you’ll learn all you need to know from becoming familiar with the whole Bible.

### **God is Eternal, without beginning or end**

#### **What it means to us**

- We can’t truly or comprehend conceive what this really means, what eternity is, though it is incredibly important to us because.....

- All the extraordinary, previously mentioned attributes of our God ***will never end.***
- ***There are no expiration dates to all God is and how He acts towards us.***
- And our God wants to share His eternal life with us. *“God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.” 1 John 5:11–12*
- Once you become a Christian, you don’t get to experience God’s love and forgiveness temporarily, but forever.

**Final application, strive to be like your God**

- We cannot imitate the “omni” characteristics but many of God’s characteristics we can and are commanded to.
- WWJD, “What would Jesus do?” is not just a saying but an excellent question to ask ourselves continuously as we think about the character of our God.
- Remember the #1 goal of a disciple, by its very definition, is to become like the one we follow.
- We should always and in every way make it our goal to become like our God, like Jesus, and we will as we spend more time with Him.
- ***Finally, it is a goal that we will one day succeed in because, as the apostle John tells us: “We know that when Christ appears, we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is.” 1 John 3:2***

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE for Understanding the Trinity, Part Two: The One Substance of the Trinity**

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### **Brief Lesson Summary**

This lesson explores the shared attributes of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that make up the one divine nature. It explains God's holiness, justice, mercy, love, truth, omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, immutability, and eternity, showing not only who God is but how believers are called to reflect His character in everyday life.

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### **Ice-breaker Question**

Which characteristic of God has had the greatest impact on your life, and why?

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### **Discussion Questions for a Group; Journal Questions for Individual Study**

1. Why is it important to study God's character rather than simply learn facts about Him?
2. How do God's holiness and justice help us better understand the need for Jesus' sacrifice?
3. Which of God's moral attributes—such as mercy, love, truth, kindness, or forgiveness—do you most want to grow in? Why?
4. How should understanding God's truth affect the way Christians speak, act, and respond to others?
5. What comfort do God's omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, immutability, and eternity give you during difficult times?
6. After studying this lesson, what practical step can you take this week to become more like Jesus?

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## **Life Application Suggestions, consider and respond**

1. Choose one attribute of God each day this week and meditate on the Bible passages connected with it.
2. Ask God to help you intentionally demonstrate mercy, kindness, and truth in your conversations and relationships.
3. When facing a problem, remind yourself that God knows, is present, is powerful, and never changes.
4. End each day by thanking God for His unchanging love and asking Him to make your character more like Christ's.

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## **Prayer Focus**

Praise God for His perfect character and thank Him for His holiness, justice, mercy, love, truth, and faithfulness. Pray for a growing desire to become more like Jesus and for the Holy Spirit's help in reflecting God's character to others.