

# Chapter 1

## GOD

### KEY IDEA

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### KEY VERSE

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. — *2 Corinthians 13:14*

BEGIN BY RECITING THE KEY VERSE AND THE KEY IDEA TOGETHER AS A GROUP.

### LESSON

#### INTRODUCTION:

**“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” -A.W. Tozer-theologian.**

What we think about God – believe or non-belief – will be the foundation for all we are and all we do.

*What are your comments regarding the above quote and statement?*

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***KEY QUESTION:** “Who is God?”*

#### GOD REVEALS HIMSELF

*Everything begins with God. The Bible never seeks to defend the existence of God. It is assumed. God has revealed himself so powerfully through his creation — both at the macro and micro level — that at the end of the day, no one will have an excuse for not putting their trust in him.*

*Before you read Chapter 1 of BELIEVE, did you believe this statement was true? Why?*

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*After reading the chapter do you have difficulty believing this statement is true? Why?*

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THE BIBLE SAYS:

*Psalm 19:1-4*

*<sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*

*<sup>2</sup> Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge.*

*<sup>3</sup> They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them.*

*<sup>4</sup> Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.*

> The *heavens and the sky* above recall Genesis 1 about the creation story. They are God’s creation and proclaim in their own way God’s glory.

> The “glory of God” in verse one refers to his power, wisdom, and worthiness of honor and worship.

< His role of Creator brings His worthiness.

> The “speech” referred to in vs. 2 and 3 shows that there may be no sound, but all people have an innate knowledge of it. (Although not all follow it.)

> Verse 4 leads us to Romans 10:18-20

*<sup>18</sup> But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did: “Their voice has gone out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”*

*<sup>19</sup> Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says, “I will make you envious by those who are not a nation; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding.”*

*<sup>20</sup> And Isaiah boldly says, “I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me.”*

< God’s power and divine nature are clearly revealed through the world he has made.

< The entire natural world bears witness to God through its beauty, complexity, design and usefulness.

**NOTE:** No one should complain that God has left insufficient evidence of his existence and character; the fault is with those who reject the evidence.

*Is the above statement something you can accept as true?*

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*For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. Romans 1:20.*

*FROM TRANSFORMATION STUDY BIBLE:*

*The existence of creation implied the existence of a Creator, and the nature of the creation implied that he was wise enough to plan it and powerful enough to execute his plan and maintain what he had made. So complex a universe demands a Creator who can do anything, who knows everything, and who is present everywhere.*

*KEY IDEA: I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.*

**THE ONE TRUE GOD**

*The Bible reveals that there is only one true God. The book of Deuteronomy looks back after Moses had led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. During that time God had revealed himself as the one true, all-powerful God over Pharaoh. Now a new generation had grown up in the wilderness and was getting ready to inherit the land God had promised Abraham. Moses offered the second generation a series of farewell speeches to remind them to choose, worship and follow the one true God. If they did, all would go well for them.*

*Deuteronomy 6:4-9*

*<sup>4</sup> Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup> Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. <sup>6</sup> These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. <sup>7</sup> Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. <sup>8</sup> Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. <sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.*

> These verses from Moses to the Hebrews implores them to be so dedicated to God that he will become a part of every aspect of their lives –when they sit..walk...like down...get up. They were to keep God’s commandments visible – tie them on hands...bind on forehead...write on doorframes and gates.

*Your Journal asked “On numerous occasions the Israelites struggled to follow God only. In what ways can you relate to them?” What did you answer?*

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*Why do you think some people struggle to believe that the God of the Bible is the ONE true God?*

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*Do you know what you would say to help someone with these doubts?*

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**GOD IN THREE PERSONS: THE FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT.**

*Throughout the Old Testament, people were invited to worship the one true God, but what do we know about this amazing God, this God of miracles and creative wonder? Christians believe God is actually three Persons, a "Trinity."*

The most difficult thing about the Christian concept of the Trinity is that there is no way to easily comprehend it. Therefore, it becomes difficult to explain.

> We need to remember that God is infinitely greater than we are; therefore, we should not expect to be able to fully understand Him.

The Bible teaches

- The Father is God
- Jesus is God
- The Holy Spirit is God.

The Bible also teaches that there is only one God.

> Though we can understand some facts about the relationship of the different Persons of the Trinity to one another, it still is a difficult concept to comprehend. However, this does not mean the Trinity is not true or that it is not based on the teachings of the Bible.

The Trinity is one God existing in three Persons.

> Trinity does not suggest there are three Gods.

> Although the word "Trinity" is not found in Scripture, it is a term that is used to refer to the triune God—three coexistent, co-eternal Persons who make up God.

< Just because the word is not used in the Bible, this does not mean that the concept is not taught there.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES SUPPORTING THE IDEA OF THE TRINITY

1) There is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Corinthians 8:4; Galatians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:5).

2) The Trinity consists of three Persons (Genesis 1:1,26; 3:22; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8, 48:16, 61:1; Matthew 3:16-17, 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

> In Genesis 1:1, the Hebrew plural noun "Elohim" is used.

> In Genesis 1:26, 3:22, 11:7 and Isaiah 6:8, the plural pronoun for "us" is used.

< The word "Elohim" and the pronoun "us" are plural forms, definitely referring in the Hebrew language to more than two.

^ The Hebrew word for "God," "Elohim," allows for the Trinity.

> In Isaiah 48:16 and 61:1, the Son is speaking while making reference to the Father and the Holy Spirit.

< Compare Isaiah 61:1 to Luke 4:14-19 to see that it is the Son speaking.

> Matthew 3:16-17 describes the event of Jesus' baptism. Seen in this passage is God the Holy Spirit descending on God the Son while God the Father proclaims His pleasure in the Son.

> Matthew 28:19 and 2 Corinthians 13:14 are also examples of three distinct Persons in the Trinity.

3) The members of the Trinity are distinguished one from another in various passages.

> In the Old Testament

< "LORD" is distinguished from "Lord" (Genesis 19:24; Hosea 1:4).

- < The LORD has a Son (Psalm 2:7,12; Proverbs 30:2-4).
- < The Spirit is distinguished from the “LORD” (Numbers 27:18) and from “God” (Psalm 51:10-12).
- < God the Son is distinguished from God the Father (Psalm 45:6-7; Hebrews 1:8-9).
- > In the New Testament
  - < Jesus speaks to the Father about sending a Helper, the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17). This shows that Jesus did not consider Himself to be the Father or the Holy Spirit.
  - < Consider also all the other times in the Gospels where Jesus speaks to the Father. He was speaking to another Person in the Trinity—the Father.

4) Each member of the Trinity is God.

- > The Father is God (John 6:27; Romans 1:7; 1 Peter 1:2).
- > The Son is God (John 1:1,14; Romans 9:5; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:8; 1 John 5:20).
- > The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 3:16).

5) There is subordination within the Trinity.

- > Scripture shows that the Holy Spirit is subordinate to the Father and the Son
  - < Concerning the Holy Spirit see John 14:16, 14:26, 15:26, 16:7, and especially John 16:13-14.
- > The Son is subordinate to the Father. This is an internal relationship and does not deny the deity of any Person of the Trinity.
  - < Concerning the Son see Luke 22:42, John 5:36, John 20:21, and 1 John 4:14.

6) The individual members of the Trinity have different tasks.

- > The Father is the ultimate source or cause:
  - < of the universe (1 Corinthians 8:6; Revelation 4:11)
  - < divine revelation (Revelation 1:1)
  - < salvation (John 3:16-17)
  - < Jesus' human works (John 5:17; 14:10).
- > The Son is the agent through whom the Father does the following works:
  - < The creation and maintenance of the universe (1 Corinthians 8:6; John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17)
  - < Divine revelation (John 1:1, 16:12-15; Matthew 11:27; Revelation 1:1)
  - < Salvation (2 Corinthians 5:19; Matthew 1:21; John 4:42).
- > The Holy Spirit is the means or power by whom the Father does the following works:
  - < Creation and maintenance of the universe (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Psalm 104:30)
  - < Divine revelation (John 16:12-15; Ephesians 3:5; 2 Peter 1:21)
  - < Salvation (John 3:6; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:2)
  - < Jesus' works (Isaiah 61:1; Acts 10:38)

The doctrine of the Trinity has been a divisive issue throughout the entire history of the Christian church. While the core aspects of the Trinity are clearly presented in God’s Word, some of the side issues are not as explicitly clear. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God—but there is only one God. That is the biblical doctrine of the Trinity.

> Though the concept of the Trinity has been debated, it would be better to focus on the fact of God's greatness and His infinitely higher nature. “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the

Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" (Romans 11:33-34).

*How would you describe the Trinity to someone who does not believe this concept can be accepted as truth?*

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*What roles of the Trinity to you see utilized in your own life?*

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*The journey of faith begins with our belief in God. Like the early Christians, we too are called to make our own personal declaration. Do we believe in the one true God? Do we accept the Bible as it reveals that God exists in three persons?*

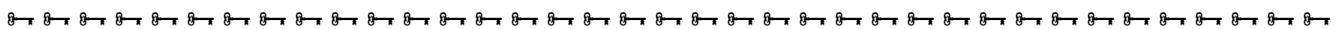
**Case Study**

*Use the following case study as a model for a real life situation where you might put this week's Key Idea into practice.*

Mike is one of your favorite co-workers. He is funny, hard-working, and passionate about life. Your conversations are always enjoyable and thought-provoking. Occasionally, the subject of religion comes up in conversation. He mentions that his parents brought him to church as a kid and for the most part he agrees with the teachings of the bible, but he has two issues that are holding him back.

1. He has a hard time understanding who God is, therefore he finds it difficult to wholly put his trust in someone/something He doesn't know.
2. Throughout his life he has had moments where he wants to get to know God, but he doesn't know where to start.

What could you say or do to help Mike find the answers to his questions?



FROM *THINK, ACT, BELIEVE LIKE JESUS* by Randy Frazee

*KEY APPLICATION: What difference does this make in the way I live?*

If we actually believe this truth about God, not only in our head (understanding) but also in our heart, how can it guide the way we live?

If we embrace the God of the Bible as the one true God, these principles will direct us:

Because God is God . . .

- I am not.

- I can be sure he is in charge and in control,
- I want to know and follow his will for my life.

If we embrace the threeness of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we will observe how they treat each other and seek to emulate these principles in our relationships with each other.<sup>13</sup>

Because I was created in the image of God as, and for, community . . .

- I recognize the full personhood of others and respect boundaries.
- I look out for the rights, preferences, and comfort of others.
- I value and enjoy others.

**So, what do you believe?** Who is the one true God? He gives you the freedom to choose what you believe.