

# What Difference Does Belief In The Trinity Make?

## Notes

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Acts 4:1-31

*Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things, but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit. Romans 8:5*

**Heresies** - To see why it makes a difference what we believe about the Trinity, we need to look at some of the heresies and where they lead.

- **Modalism**: The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are three temporal modes.  
Truth: All Three of the Trinity eternally coexist.
- **Adoptionism**: Christ was originally a man later adopted to be God's Son.  
Truth: Christ is eternally the genuine Son of God.
- **Arianism**: The Son is an inferior deity created by the Father.  
Truth: The Son is the eternal uncreated God.
- **Tritheism**: The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are three separate gods.  
Truth: The Three are One God, distinct but not separate.

When just one of these dimensions of the Trinity is neglected—or emphasized too much—we end up with an incomplete and skewed relationship to God.

- What if we concentrate only on God the creator? This can lead to downplaying the unique revelation in Jesus Christ
- What if we stress only God the redeemer, whom we know as Jesus Christ? This often leads to a nasty dogmatism, where correct doctrine about Jesus becomes more important than a personal relationship with him.
- What if we neglect God in us, the Holy Spirit? Without the Spirit empowering it, the Christian life is dull and boring and nearly impossible.

We really do need each of these dimensions of God's being--the trinitarian Father, Son, and Spirit--to accurately describe our experience and the revealed nature of God.

## **The work of the Holy Spirit**

### **1. To make us one with God.**

Jesus prayed to his Father for his disciples, including us,

*that they will be one, just as you and I are one Father--that just as you are in me and I am in you, so they will be in us...I in them and you in me, all being perfected into one" (John 17:21, 23)*

*My dear Martha, you are so upset over all the details! There is really only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it--and I won't take it away from her" (Luke 10:40-42)*

## **2. To illuminate the truth of Scripture.**

God's word, through the power of his Spirit,

*is useful for teaching us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do" (2 Timothy 3:16-17)*

God has given us his Spirit,

*so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us" (1 Corinthians 2:11-12)*

Even non-believers can often grasp the truth of the Bible, but it's only through the power of the HS that the truth can take hold of our lives and transform our character.

## **3. To empower us for service.**

Jesus said,

*When the HS has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere" (Acts 1:8)*

In fact, Jesus said that when the HS came, his followers,

*will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father" (John 14:12)*

Whether God's Spirit empowers us to perform miracles, witness boldly, give joyfully, serve tirelessly, or die courageously as a martyr, he is there in our lives to reflect his light to this darkened and needy world.

## **4. To bring meaning to our lives.**

We were made in God's image, and when we become intimate with God through his HS we begin to live as God intended and be the person God designed. Paul said,

*It's in Christ we find out who we are and what we are living for" (Ephesians 1:11)*

Jesus told his disciples to obey his father's commands,

*so that my joy may be in you" (John 15:11)*

**His life completes ours; he gives us meaning; he provides the fulfillment and joy in living; all because the HS is God's agent for a continuous relationship between God and ourselves.**