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**Key Point:** In general, the Trinity is the essential doctrine for Christians to learn and adjust their lives to. If one has a misunderstanding of the Trinity, it will have a negative impact on their life. If one believes there is a God that exists, then it would be important for them to understand the nature and function of this God.

**I. The Definition of the Trinity**

- A. The word “trinity” is a word used by theologians to explain the uniqueness of God being one, yet three in person.<sup>1</sup>
- B. In others words, there is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4). Yet there are three persons who are God (Matthew 28:19).<sup>2</sup>
- C. Another way to explain the Trinity would be to say that “the Trinity is composed of three united Persons without separate existence so completely united as to form one God.”<sup>3</sup>
- D. There is one God who is revealed in three distinct persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**II. The Details of the Trinity**

- A. The concept that God is one reveals that each person of the Trinity share the exact same essence or characteristics that define the nature of God (Deuteronomy 6:4).<sup>4</sup>
- B. God the Father is equal to God to Son and God the Holy Spirit in relation to essence of nature (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).
- C. There is no division between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in reference to nature. Therefore, there is only one God (Matthew 28:19).

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<sup>1</sup>Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1986), 58-63.

<sup>2</sup>Milliard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1985), 322.

<sup>3</sup>Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1989), 199.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, 199.

- D. The three in one concept of God is revealed in Genesis when God talks about the creation of man (Genesis 1:26). Although Genesis does not give a number, it exposes that God is one yet has a distinction of persons within this oneness (Genesis 11:7).<sup>5</sup> But, as one progresses through the Scriptures, they will discover this unique God is revealed through the distinct persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

### **III. The Deity of Each Person of the Trinity**

- A. Each person of the Trinity is called God thereby affirming their essence as God.
- B. 1 Corinthians 8:6 reveals that there is One God, the Father, thereby affirming the essence of the Father as God.<sup>6</sup>
- C. Hebrews 1:3-9, the Son is revealed as being exactly like God, the Father, and is called God, thereby affirming the essence of the Son as God.<sup>7</sup>
- D. Acts 5:3-4, the Holy Spirit is called God, thereby affirming the essence of the Holy Spirit as God.

### **IV. The Diversity and Unity of the Trinity**

- A. Although each person of the Trinity is God, the Trinity does not operate independently.<sup>8</sup>
- B. Each person of the Trinity works in unity with the others.
- C. Genesis reveals the Triune God working together in the creation of mankind and the dispersing of people at the tower of Babel (Genesis 1, 11).
- D. 1 Peter 1:1-2 reveals the Triune God working together in the salvation of mankind.

### **V. The Distinction Between the Trinity**

- A. Ephesians 4:6 gives the indication that God the Father is the head of all. He is seen as

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<sup>5</sup>Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 59.

<sup>6</sup>John Gill, *The Doctrine of the Trinity Stated and Vindicated Being the Substance of Several Discourses on That Important Subject* (Paris: Baptist Standard Bearer, 1999), 15.

<sup>7</sup>Edward Henry Bickersteth, *The Trinity: The Classic Study of Biblical Trinitarianism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2000), 92.

<sup>8</sup>Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 200.

the director of all that happens in the past, present and future.<sup>9</sup> From creation to the salvation of man, it is God the Father who orchestrates the master plan of creation and redemption (Genesis 1, Romans 8:28-30, 1 Corinthians 8:6, 1 Peter 1:1-2).

- B. God the Son can be seen as the person of the God community that carried out the will of God the Father on earth and now in heaven.<sup>10</sup> The creation of mankind was through God the Son (Colossians 1:15-16). The salvation of mankind is through God the Son (John 3:16-18, 1 John 2:1-2). He sits at the right hand of God. He also is the head of the church and will reign on earth and heaven in the future (Ephesians 1:20-23). God the Son carried out the plans of God in the past and in the future to come.
- C. God the Holy Spirit can be seen as the person of the God community that is carrying out the will of God now on earth.<sup>11</sup> The Holy Spirit convicts people of sin and empowers people to come to salvation (John 16:8, 1 Peter 1:1-2). The Holy Spirit develops the character of God in Christians and empowers Christians to serve God accordingly (Galatians 5:22-23, 1 Corinthians 12:11). The Holy Spirit teaches truth, helps Christians understand truth, and leads Christians into right living (John 14:25-26, 1 Corinthians 2:12-16, Romans 8:14). The Holy Spirit carries out those plans of God now on earth.
- D. Although the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are equal in essence, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are seen as subordinates in the God community in relation to the master plan of God the Father.

**Summary:** In terms of essence, nature, power or ability, there is equality. Yet in terms of how the God community has chosen to relate to one another and to creation, there are roles and responsibilities, as well as a hierarchy. One could be confused in thinking that the hierarchy within the Trinity suggests that there is inferiority amongst the Trinity.<sup>12</sup> However, the Scripture affirms that there is one God who is revealed in three persons (Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 28:19). The God community operates in subordination to one another because of relationship, not because one is greater than the other.<sup>13</sup> God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are irreducible in their identity and inseparable in their unity.<sup>14</sup> The unity of the God community does not happen at the expense of their individual personalities, and their individual personalities do not happen at the expense of the unity.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> John Babler, David Penely, and Mike Bizzell, *Counseling by the Book* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2007), 91.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 92.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 94-95.

<sup>12</sup> Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 200.

<sup>13</sup> Gerald O'Collins, *The Tripersonal God: Understanding and Interpreting the Trinity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999), 178.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 179.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 178-179.

**VI. The Direction of All People to be Considered from Evaluating the Nature of the Trinity in this Series**

- A. From this series we see that, created in the image of God, mankind was designed to operate within all relationships as equal to, over, and under one another accordingly.
- B. From this series we will see that mankind was designed to function in roles and responsibilities within relationships that do not equate to one being greater than or less than, but all functioning accordingly in perspective roles demonstrating the glory of God.
- C. From this series we will see that subordination to one another should not be based on superiority or inferiority of one group of people to another, but on the basis of the role or task designed and/or prescribed by God and demonstrated within the Trinity. No one people group is to be subjected to the whims or the standards of another people group. All people groups are to be subjected to the standards and will of God for mankind.
- D. In summary, as God is same in essence, different in person, and operating with different roles interdependently, so we too as people are same in essence, different in person, and operating with different roles interdependently. Therefore, where people believe they are less than or greater than other people groups, the problem lies with individuals embracing the doctrine of demons and not paying attention to the nature of the Trinity and the purpose of His making mankind into His image.