



OPENING QUESTION

What is your first memory of ever thinking about the idea of the Trinity – that God exists as Father, Son and Spirit?

BIG IDEA

God does amazing things for us as we begin to know Him as Father, Son and Spirit.

CONTEXT

Sometime around 62 A.D. the Apostle Paul wrote this **epistle** or letter to the followers of Christ in Ephesus, a city located in modern-day Turkey. It's been a few years since Paul has been with these folks and so, while sitting in prison in Rome with plenty of time on his hands, Paul writes to help these believers understand what God has done, is doing and wants to do in them. Those who have read and studied Ephesians have found it to be the most clear and concise communication of God's vision for His people of all Paul's letters. In short, Ephesians helps us to understand and expand our experience of what God is doing in history and what He wants to do in us. Critical to this understanding is the role of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in our lives.

READ TOGETHER

Ask two members of your group to read **Ephesians 3:14-21** through. For the first reading, simply listen as these verses are read. You may even want to close your eyes. Remember that this is the way the Ephesians, who first heard these verses, would have heard this letter. Paul had this letter delivered by someone named Tychicus (see Ephesians 6:21) and then someone in this group would have simply read the letter out loud to everyone as they gathered for worship. Then ask the second reader to read these verses more slowly as everyone follows along in their Bibles.

PRAYER

In **Ephesians 1:18**, Paul prays for the Ephesians that their hearts would be flooded with light so they can understand the confident hope and rich and glorious inheritance God has given them as His holy people. Stop and pray as a group that the Holy Spirit would use your study together to flood your hearts with light so you can understand what you have been given in Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) Focus on verses 14-19. What is Paul doing in these verses?
- 2) Picture Paul as an older man (which he was) on his knees in his prison cell, bowing before God and praying for the Ephesians. What are the various things he prays for them?
- 3) What would you say is the overarching theme of all Paul asks God for on behalf of the Ephesians? How is that theme relevant to your life?
- 4) Of the various things that Paul prays for the Ephesians, which one do you need to experience most? Why?
- 5) Look through these verses again. Can you find the various members of the Trinity in these six verses? What does Paul say about the responsibilities the three of them take on in our lives?

- 6) Look up Ephesians 1:3, Ephesians 4:6, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 and John 3:16. How would you describe the role the Father plays in the Trinity?
- 7) Now look at Colossians 1:15-20. How would you describe the role the Son plays in the Trinity?
- 8) Look up John 14:15-18 and John 16:5-15. How would you describe the role the Holy Spirit plays in the Trinity?
- 9) Go back and read Ephesians 3:20-21 like you did last week. What is the result of each of these members of the Trinity working in our lives? What will come from God doing what He has promised?

PRAYER

Take a few minutes of quiet as a group to ponder what you've been learning in your time together this week. We believe that the Holy Spirit can speak to us at any time and when we gather as believers and we ask God to speak through His word, He speaks. So what has He been saying to you as you have met? What do you need to "press into" and follow through on this week in your life? Share this with the group and then pray for each other as you share.

CHALLENGE

The greatest resource any follower of Christ has is God's presence with us all the time. The Bible reveals God to be **omni-present** or always present in our lives (see Psalm 139:7-10 and 2 Chronicles 16:9). In our worship gatherings this past weekend, Matt challenged us to experiment with a specific 180 as part of our lives this week. He asks us to set up our day in such a way that every 180 minutes (3 hours) we would take 180 seconds (3 minutes) to focus or refocus our attention on God. He encouraged us to set an alarm or series of alarms on a phone or watch that would remind us to pause for 180 seconds and simply talk to God. This is our challenge this week. To pause regularly throughout the day to invite God into our lives. We can pause to thank Him – Father, Son and Spirit – for being present. We can praise Him for answered prayer. We can ask for help or any of the things Paul prays for in Ephesians 3:14-19.

NEXT STEPS

You may want to take this experiment further this week by downloading a copy of **Practicing the Presence of God** by Brother Lawrence. This book highlights the story of a seventeenth-century French monk who learned to practice the presence of God - AKA "**remain in fellowship with Christ at all times**". Through a collection of conversations and letters that Lawrence wrote, the big idea of this short volume is that at any moment and in any circumstance, we can seek and find God and practice His presence in our lives. Download it at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/lawrence/practice>.