

COVENANT PRAYER

Dear Jesus,

I want to thank you for your unselfish love. You are far above me and different to me, but you are also close to me. Thank you Jesus for becoming one of us and living on this earth. Jesus you showed us that God is completely holy and just and also how much God wants to reconcile us to Himself. Thank you for saving me from sin and death through your death and resurrection.

I want a relationship with God and I ask Him for it now.

Signed _____

Key Texts to Memorise

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

John 14:16,17

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”

New Disciples Guide

Knowing God in Christ

Freedom in Christ

Growing in Christ

Loving God in Christ

Hope in Christ

Victory through Christ

Living for Christ

Worshiping Christ

Community in Christ

Knowing God in Christ

Knowing God through Christ

What do you think of when you think of God? Many people have unfortunate views of God. Many people think God is a bigger version of a human being, often an old man in the sky. Some people see God as distant and indifferent, even cold and cruel. Other people think 'God' is an impersonal energy or force that they can tap into and harness or manipulate for themselves. Along this line of thinking some people think that they themselves, are an extension of God.

What does the Bible say?

The Bible rejects all of these as human misunderstandings. There is a God and, no, he is not you. Let's look at what the Word of God has to say.

What is God like?

Read the following verses from Isaiah 40 and write what each one is telling us about God. (Try reading verses 9 to 40 if you a deeper insight).

Vs 11,12, 13

Vs 21,22

Vs 28-31

Wow! What a picture of God. Such a God is beyond our comprehension, he is vast and unimaginably great. He is far above and different to us yet the verses tell us he is also very close and gentle. It is awe inspiring just contemplating what he is like. Holding these two truths together is one of the keys to knowing God and having a exciting relationship with him.

Calling God by A New Name

**Who does Jesus call God and how should believers address him?
Matt 6:9.**

God's Desire

Read these breath-taking verses from John and write down *who* (there is more than one) seeks a relationship with us? John 14: 16-18, 23.

Remember yesterday we learnt that God is the Trinity? At the very heart of God is community, an eternal fellowship of Father, Son and Spirit. God is love. The verses above build on this and the meaning is staggering. Here Jesus says that he and the Father and the Spirit will make their home with us! Despite all our problems God wants to take us up into the friendship of the Trinity. This is the ultimate meaning and goal of life – to know God and enjoy him forever.

God put eternity into our hearts (Eccl 3:11) so we would seek him out. Only he can fill our deepest longing. Humanity is currently a wounded, marred, rebellious and incomplete image of God. God wants to restore us to himself. He has done this through Jesus. Do you wish for this relationship with God? Ask God for it and enter in.

Day Five

God's Desire

The closest thing to God in all of creation is human beings. Even though the difference is infinite, there is a reflection of God in human beings.

God's Special Creation

What does Genesis 1:26-27 say about the creation of humans?

We are 'like' God – made in his image. We are not the same but have some similarities. We are in God's image, because, like God, we are moral, intelligent, responsible beings who can have relationships with each other. The verse implies that both male and female together are made as the image of God. We can see something of God in the very best of maleness and femaleness in human community.

The Best thing in Life

Do you enjoy unselfish caring friendship? More than anything else! When human beings love each other in a holy way, they are expressing their capacity to image or reflect God. It is the most fulfilling thing in life. The reason why is this: God is relational and because we are like him we find relationships the most important things in life. Remember God is a trinity – he is relational in his very heart. Genesis tells us that God said it was not good for man to be alone, so God made woman – a companion equal to him. God made us social beings so we could enjoy relationships like he does.

Sin destroys

In the beginning, before sin, no-one was lonely or hurt or angry with each other. Unfortunately, our first parents sinned and there has been a broken relationship between God and humans since. In addition, relationships between human beings broke down as a result of this (see Genesis 2, 3) and are often painful. God has restored all things in Jesus and wants people to enter the great reconciliation in Jesus.

Calling God Father

In the New Testament we find this same God is a loving Father to those who are willing to accept him. We can call him Father. In one place Jesus even calls him 'abba', which is like calling God 'daddy.' It is very intimate and special. A God of infinite power and infinite love!

Misunderstanding God

The Father God is greatly misunderstood. Satan wants us to have a wrong view of God so we fear and dislike him. Some people have suffered abuse or neglect by an authority figure or an earthly Father and Satan gets us to project that onto God. Our heavenly Father is not like this at all. He is the *true* Father.

The Real Father

God the Father is kind and gentle. He is strong and caring. Jesus said he knows the number of the hairs of your head and even notices when a little sparrow falls (read Matt 10:29-31). He gives the sun and sends rain to those who love him and those who hate him (Matt 5:45). He is the great Creator who values his creation.

The Great Giver

What does God the Father give to us? John 3:16; Luke 11:13.

God the Father is the great giver. Out of love he gives the best gifts to the human race – his own divine Son and his own divine Spirit. God cannot give any more than this. The great Father, who is the source of all creation, dwells enthroned in incredible majesty and is intensely interested in you.

Read 1 John 3:1 and pray to God as your Heavenly Father and thank him for his love.

Day Two

Jesus the Son of God

In 1 Tim 6:15,16 the Apostle Paul speaks of God the Father as the “*blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords. It is he that dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see; to him be honor and eternal dominion. Amen.*” Because we are fallen, no one can see God in his glory and holiness and live. However the Bible says something incredible has happened in history.

The Word

What is the ‘Word’ called in John 1:1?

What happened to this Word in John 1:14?

What was made possible because of this in John 1:18?

The ‘Word’ here is Jesus. He is not just a human being. *Jesus was God in the flesh.* Just as only a woman can tell what it is like to be a woman, a Russian what it is to be a Russian, so, only God can reveal God. Humans and angels may reflect God but not reveal him in his fullness and perfection. But the New Testament tells us that Jesus is the *exact image* of God (Heb 1:3) and *all the fullness of God* is seen in him (Col 2:9).

Just like the Father

Only because Jesus is God can he reveal God to us. Jesus is God’s ‘Son’ because he is just like the Father and because of the special love between them. By coming in flesh and hiding his outward glory, Jesus has made God visible to us. In studying the life of Jesus, we see God is better than we could have imagined – he is incomparably beautiful!

Perfect Unity

These three (Father, Son and Spirit) are one in nature (all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present), character (holy, loving, just), purpose, wisdom, knowledge, will and power. *But this one single perfect nature is expressed in three persons.* They are not three separate gods, but one God. There are many passages in Scripture where Father, Son and Spirit are mentioned together in perfect unity. God is one nature (not three natures) and three persons (not one person). God is completely unique.

How is God described in 1 Peter 1:2 and Heb 9:14?

Someone once said that if you have God all figured out and nicely explained, then you probably haven't got God at all. God is infinite so he is going to exceed our ability to explain him. (If we can't explain each other, how are we going to explain God?) Hence, the teaching of the Trinity describes the basic truth about God and prevents us from saying false things about God but it cannot fully explain God. He is always more than we can take in, a wonderful mystery.

A Summary

Here is a summary of what we have been learning about God this week.

- God is Father, Son and the Spirit. God is the mystery of the one who is three and the three who are one (trinity). God in his very essence is an unselfish community of love.
- God is far above us and different to us ('transcendent', especially seen in the Father).
- God is also close to us and everywhere near to us ('immanent', especially seen in the Spirit).
- God has also become one *of us* and one *with us* (incarnate Jesus).
- God is completely holy and just (pure, without imperfection, separate from wrong).
- He is infinite in power and wisdom.
- God is maker and sustainer of all the universe (Creator).
- God is the one who saves us from sin and death (Saviour).

God is worthy of worship and love. God loves *you*.

Day Four

The Holy Trinity

You may be thinking to yourself, “Wait a second. How can the Father be God, and Jesus be God, and the Spirit be God, all at the same time?” Here we begin to approach the most sacred and amazing mystery – the mystery of God’s being.

The Name of God

Believers are to baptise in what name (singular)? Matt 28:19.

We baptise into the singular name of one God (not three gods), yet this name is Father, Son and Spirit. How can this be?

Trinity

When we try and find an exact parallel in creation to describe God we can’t. Based on the testimony of the entire Bible, Christians describe God as a Trinity. God is a *tri* (three) *unity* (one). This is not irrational but a paradox and the deepest mystery.

The Inter-relational God

God is one and yet three at the same time. God is one God in three persons. God is completely unified yet diverse. Within this one God there are three who love each other and relate to each other. Father, Son and Spirit are three relations within one God. Their unity does not eliminate their diversity and their diversity does not destroy their unity and oneness.

God is Unique

Remember God is not a big human being. God is God and thus he is totally unique. He is not a solitary being by himself. If God were like a big human being he would be isolated and unrelational. Such a God would need us to communicate. But the Bible says God did not make us because he needed to but because he wanted to, out of love. God is not an isolated figure by himself; rather God is a trinity perfectly complete in himself. God is a divine relationship of love.

Our Saviour and Priest

What does Hebrews 2:17-18 say about Jesus?

This verse points out two unique things about Jesus.

1) Jesus is the sacrifice of God for our sins (1 Cor 15:3). That is, Jesus bore all our sins and wrongs and suffered punishment as if they were his so we could be freed from them. Jesus substituted himself for us. He did it to show God's love. He did it so we could be freely forgiven from breaking God's unchangeable law and God could reconcile us to him. In Jesus, God has removed every barrier between God and humanity. We can be fully right with God because of Jesus.

2) Jesus was 'made like us,' he became 'flesh.' This is called the incarnation (*carne* is Latin for flesh), when God became human! It is the most amazing event in history. God willingly humbled himself to become one of us and rescue us. Jesus has experienced all of human life, including its suffering and hardship. He has faced temptation and pain. Jesus understands all that you go through. This has qualified Jesus to become our sympathetic High Priest and he now intercedes for and represents us.

Because Jesus is both divine and human, he can connect God and humanity back together. He can reveal God to us and he can understand humanity perfectly. He is the perfect Saviour.

Jesus is totally unique and incomparable. Knowing him is the most important thing in life. Ask God to give you a love for Jesus and that he will reveal Jesus to you more and more.

Day Three

The Holy Spirit

The Bible has yet another dimension to tell us about God. Jesus said “*God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth*” (John 4:24). God is Spirit. God is not a created being with a created body – he is an infinite Spirit and has no physical limitations to his power or his presence. This is why God can be present everywhere.

The Gift of the Father

Who does Jesus say he will ask the Father to send to us? John 14:16; 15:26

Jesus uses the word *parakletos*, which is variously translated comforter, helper, counsellor. Jesus is our comforter but here he tells us that the Father will send ‘another comforter’ to be with us. This other comforter is the Holy Spirit.

Another Comforter

The ‘Helper’ or ‘Comforter’ is a good description of the invisible member of the Godhead we call the Holy Spirit. Just like the Jesus we read about in the gospels, he comforts and helps us. The Holy Spirit is a very humble divine being. Jesus said the Spirit would not speak of himself but would glorify and teach us about Jesus (John 16:12-14). The Spirit enables us to have a relationship with Jesus and follow him.

The Closeness of the Spirit

For believers, where did Jesus say the Spirit dwells? John 14:17,23

The above verse says that when we accept God, the Spirit mysteriously enters into our lives. This means we are never alone. The Spirit enables God to work in our lives in a special way and makes possible a relationship with God.

The Work of the Spirit

The Spirit does many things in our lives. Here are just a few:

- He convicts of “*sin, righteousness and judgment*” (John 16:8).
- He witnesses to our minds that we are loved and accepted by God as his children (Rom 8:14-17).
- The Spirit enables people to live a new life in harmony with God (Gal 5:22,23).
- The Spirit gives us spiritual gifts so we can serve God and help build up people (1 Cor 12:1-11).

The Spirit is a Divine Personal being

The Spirit is not an impersonal energy or a bare force. He is personal and has all the elements of personality. He has mind (Rom 8:27), can be grieved (Eph 4:30), he can be lied to (Acts 5:3) and he speaks (Acts 13:2). The Spirit is called God and Lord (Acts 5:3,4; 2 Cor 3:17). The Spirit is the power and presence of God in our lives. He is not inferior to the Father or Son but one and equal with them.

Jesus said the activity of the Spirit is mysterious like the wind – you can't see it or know where it comes from or goes to, but you can see its effects (John 3:8). So too in your life, just like the wind, you can't grab the Spirit, or control him. But like the wind, you can see the effects of the Spirit, you can know he has drawn you to God, convicted you, helped you, led you and encouraged you.

In Jesus' name pray and ask God to grant his Spirit to be active in your life.