

Three Essential Questions for Every Christian

Let's begin with a high-level, big-picture view, like viewing the earth from space. Every model is off, yet this one with *three essential* questions goes a long way to point to how we can recalibrate our inner compass.

1. "What is God like?" He is like no other! God is relational Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit, with belongingness and oneness at His core. Read the creation account in Genesis one. What He created reflects who God is. God is *good* (expressed every creation day), *great* (He spoke and it happened), and *generous* (note the vast variety of His creation).

Reread how this God intimately relates to us in Ephesians 1:3-14. The **Father** is the Living God, whose good pleasure is to bless and to adopt us blameless in His sight. The **Son** sacrificed His life to ransom us from the clutches of our enemies. He also chooses to include us with Him in His epic adventure to restore our world to the Father's heart. The **Spirit** permanently includes us in Christ as the seal and deposit guaranteeing our unending life and empowers His people in every aspect of our spiritual life.

An accurate grasp of the Bible begins with the relational Trinity and the incarnation of Jesus (both of which fry my mental circuits). Everything flows from this living, personal God. All things work through Him and will ultimately return praise and honor to Him. This world is the theater of God's splendor, alive with His life and presence.

2. "How does this God see and know me?" To see accurately, we must first begin with God's thoughts so take a glimpse behind the curtain of time. **WHY** did God create? Not because of any lack. The Father, Son and Spirit were Community before anything else existed. Their unbridled delight and satisfaction with One Another in the outpouring of their mutual co-love and their joy-filled life with each other knew no bounds! Life and love must be multiplied to reach the zenith of its fullness.

The Father so deeply loved His Son that the Team-of-Three decided to "go public" in creation. God designed His image-bearers as much like the relational Trinity as any created being could ever be. This Team determined to populate the world with men and women like Jesus to receive and to pass along His presence to others. Our Family-of-Three now has companions to receive their Divine life, love and light and to display to others our ardent delight in our mutual indwelling. God is "*in us*" and we are "*in God*." We share the *same* glory and the *same* love as the Son received from the Father.

This means God's *generosity* moved His *goodness* and *greatness* to create community beings like Himself. He created us in His image, as much like the Uncreated God as a created being could ever be.

I see three clear, primary aspects of God's design. *First*, God fashioned us for **belonging**, to enjoy secure relationships, with God and also with people (our *identity*). *Second*, for **purpose**, to partner together in significant mission, with God and also with others (our *authority*). *Third*, for blessing or **affirmation**, to experience mutual, sincere acceptance, from God and then both toward and from other people (our *culture* releasing freedom).

Adam and Eve went rogue and failed God's test in Genesis 3. This persuasively demonstrates to us how much we need Him. Jesus has always been **God's Plan-A**, "*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*." He conquered and still conquers. Jesus came both to remove all the damage created by Adam and also to restore and thrust us forward "*in Christ*" towards God's eternal-intent of shared life. Our greatest joy and highest good is partnering with Him in our God-Assignments.

"*In Christ*," God unites believers in a new, permanent relationship as fellow members of His spiritual body (union with Christ: "*I am in My Father, and you are in me, and I am in you*," John 14:20). "*In Christ*," the Triune God draws us near to powerfully experience His eternal life, love and light from the inside out. This mutuality of "Christ in us" and "us in Christ" is the revelation of true humanness in the image of God. God conceived this vision in eternity past, initiated it through Jesus, and will fulfill it in eternity future, while we presently live in the "*already, but not yet*" (Rev 21:1f).

This high view is the only one I know worthy of the extraordinary sacrifice of God Himself dying for me, oh mystery! Our relational God, Father, Son and Spirit, gives us a long, refreshing drink of how much our Family-of-Three passionately delights in us. Begin with His passion for us to see ourselves with the same delight God does.

3. "What are my God-Assignments?" God celebrates us with indescribable pleasure as His Beloved **child**, His servant-**warrior**, and His beautiful **Bride**. He enjoys partnering with us, both as friends and partners. We delight ourselves in the Lord as His desires become our heart desires. We mature and grow personally to grasp our true identity and authority as we lean into Jesus more profoundly. Even in trials, we grow in maturity and ministry if we lean into our Family-of-Three to fulfill our God-Assignments on His epic adventure to restore His prodigal world to the Father's heart.