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Disciplemaking 1 Abiding in His Word

KNOWING GOD

"Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises loving-kindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things." Jeremiah 9:23-24

Knowing God is more important and more valuable than human wisdom, might, and riches. However, we must consider the perplexing question in Job 11:7, *"Can you discover the depths of God? Can you discover the limits of the Almighty?"* The answer is obvious ... we cannot understand and cannot know the infinite, unlimited God without His initiative. Our finiteness limits our comprehension of the infinite.

God has taken the initiative to reveal Himself to us. Therefore, we can understand and know Him. God has given us the Spirit to guide us into truth, John 16:13. He has revealed Himself in creation, Romans 1:20 ... in that we see His invisible attributes, His eternal power, and His divine nature. We see something of God in man. He made man in His image and His likeness, Genesis 1:26-27. The Bible is God's Word to us and for us, Matthew 4:4, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12. In addition, God has revealed Himself to us through Jesus Christ, Hebrews 1:1-12, 1 John 5:20. Jesus said, *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father."* John 14:9. We can know the true and infinite God. Jesus said, *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."* John 17:3. God has given us these five means to learn of Him ... the Spirit, creation, man, the Bible, and Jesus.

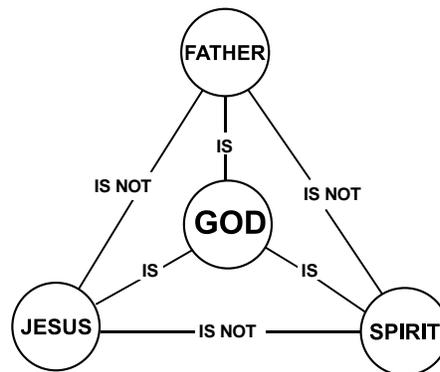
There is so much of God that we can know even within the inadequacies of our limited, finite words. We can know that God is one. We can know that He is three. In addition, we can know that He is three-in-one. However, we cannot know how that can be. The general attributes of God give us understanding about how great, how immense, how immeasurable He is ... but finite understanding falls short of the infinite.

Each of the members of the Trinity is equal to the others. Each is fully and totally God. At the same time, each is uniquely distinct from the others. The Father sent Jesus to us. He returned to the Father. Then Jesus sent the Spirit from the Father to help us ... to indwell us ... to empower us. Our life with the Spirit is of vital importance to our being all that the triune God wants us to be.

THE NATURE OF GOD

God is one. The Bible states that God is one. He is indivisible. There is only one God. *"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!"* Deuteronomy 6:4. No other Gods exist. *"To you it was shown that you might know that the Lord, He is God; there is no other besides Him."* Deuteronomy 4:35.

God is three. God is one. He is also three. He referred to Himself in the plural in Genesis 1:26, 3:22, 11:7, and Isaiah 6:8. The Father is God, John 6:27. Jesus is God, Titus 2:13. In addition, the Spirit is God, Acts 5:3-4. Each is distinct from the others, John 14:24-26, 15:26-27, and Isaiah 48:16. The Father is not the Son ... and the Father is not the Spirit. The Son is not the Spirit ... and the Son is not the Father. The Spirit is not the Father ... and Spirit is not the Son. However, each is fully God. Each member of the Trinity fully expresses all the attributes of God.



God is three-in-one ... a tri-unity ... a trinity. The combination of *God is one* and *God is three* leads to the three-in-one description of God known as the Trinity. The Trinity is alluded to in Matthew 28:18-20 which includes baptizing in the singular name of the Father, Son, and Spirit...*"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit"*. All three are evident at the baptism of Jesus ... Jesus was baptized ... the Spirit descended ... and the Father spoke. *"And after being baptized, Jesus went up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him, and behold, a voice out of the heavens, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.'"* Matthew 3:16-17. The three members of the Trinity are mentioned in Isaiah which was written about 700 BC. *"Listen to Me, O Jacob, even Israel whom I called; I am He, I am the first, I am also the last. Surely My hand founded the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand together ... Come near to Me, listen to this: From the first I have not spoken in secret, from the time it took place, I was there. And now the Lord God has sent Me, and His Spirit."* Isaiah 48:12-13,16.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

The following characteristics present a partial picture of God. These are shared attributes in that they describe God as one and as three. These equally describe each member of the Trinity. *"To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare with Him?"* Isaiah 40:18.

God is infinite. He has no limitations. He cannot be contained in any way. He is not bound by space and time. His existence is immense ... immeasurable in all ways.

"Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable." Psalm 145:3

"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built!" 1 Kings 8:27

God is eternal. He is infinite in time. He always was. He is. He always will be. God extends endlessly from eternity past to eternity future.

"Before the mountains were born, or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." Psalm 90:2

"But Thou art the same, and Thy years will not come to an end." Psalm 102:27

God is omnipotent. He is infinite in power. He is all-powerful. His strength is without limit. He can do anything that He chooses to do. No one and no thing have, is, or ever will be as strong or stronger than God.

"I know that Thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted." Job 42:2

"Ah Lord God! Behold, Thou hast made the heavens and the earth by Thy great power and by Thine outstretched arm! Nothing is too difficult for Thee." Jeremiah 32:17

God is sovereign. He is infinite in authority, power, control, and autonomy. He is the highest authority. He is the supreme ruler. He has ultimate, independent, and final control of all things.

"Whatever the Lord pleases, He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps." Psalm 135:6

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD (continued)

"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O Lord, and Thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all."
1 Chronicles 29:11 (This verse completes the previous page.)

God is immutable. He is infinite in constancy. He has never changed. He is not changing. In addition, He will never change. God's character, His self-existence, is constant ... not changing, growing, or developing. This does not mean that what He does (His behavior) is unchanging.

"Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow." James 1:17

"For I, the Lord, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed." Malachi 3:6

God is omniscient. He is infinite in knowledge. He is all-knowing. His knowledge is without limits. God knows all things that have happened ... could have happened ... are happening ... could happen ... and will happen. His knowledge is unlimited, extending infinitely beyond the realm of the created universe ... beyond space ... and beyond time.

"For God is greater than our heart, and knows all things." 1 John 3:20

"No creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Hebrews 4:13

God is omnipresent. He is infinite in presence and location. He is everywhere. God is present everywhere with His whole being. This does not mean that God is partially or fully made up of the things that He created (that is pantheism). God is different from the universe ... but He is everywhere present in and beyond the universe.

"'Am I a God who is near,' declares the Lord, 'and not a God far off? Can a man hide himself in hiding places, so I do not see him?' declares the Lord. 'Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?' declares the Lord." Jeremiah 23:23-24

"Where can I go from Thy Spirit? Or where can I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, Thou art there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, even there Thy hand will lead me, and Thy right hand will lay hold of me." Psalm 139:7-10

THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD (continued)

God is holy. He is infinite in purity. He is separated from all that is evil. He is good, pure, and right. He is not affected by that which is evil, unclean, and common. Holiness is much more than the absence of evil. Holiness is the positive existence of purity.

"For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy; for I am holy." Leviticus 11:44

"For holy is the Lord our God." Psalm 99:9

God is truth. He infinitely represents Himself in a way consistent with His being. He is totally trustworthy and reliable in any way that He reveals Himself. His words are consistent with His nature.

"In the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago." Titus 1:2

"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent; has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?" Numbers 23:19

God is just. He is infinitely righteous in Himself and in His treatment of good and evil. He is righteous in His treatment of all that He has created.

"The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He." Deuteronomy 32:4

"The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether." Psalm 19:9

God is love. He is infinite in the expression of holiness. He accomplishes the best for Himself and the best for man. God is love. The reverse of that, *love is God*, is not true.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."
John 3:16

"The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love."
1 John 4:8

THE UNIQUENESS OF EACH MEMBER OF THE TRINITY

Each member of the Trinity is a full expression of God. However, each one is distinguished from the others. However, each is equal to the others. One is not less than or more than another is. However, each has done, is doing, or will do things that distinguish that member from the others ... and that is the emphasis in the next three segments of this lesson. Two or three members of the Trinity share many of these actions and activities. The order of each list is not that of importance ... nor are all possible distinguishing positions and actions covered. There are many other things that God has done, is doing, and will do.

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE FATHER. The Father has always been, is, and always will be fully and totally God. However, we see Him uniquely doing particular things that distinguish Him from the Son and the Spirit.

He is the father of all mankind in the creator/creature sense. This refers to the physical fatherhood rather than spiritual fatherhood of God. God's spiritual fatherhood is different from this ... and it is conditioned on faith. Malachi 2:10, Acts 17:29

He is the father of Israel. He is the father of Israel as nation of people. This does not imply that He is the spiritual father of each person of Israel ... that is based on individual faith. His being the father of Israel is not the same as His being the father of the Church. The Church is the bride of Christ ... Jesus is the bridegroom ... and God the Father is the father of the bridegroom. Exodus 4:22, Isaiah 63:16

He is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. All members of the Trinity are equal ... but God the Father is positionally the Father of Jesus Christ. This does not mean that the Father is greater than the Son is. Ephesians 1:3, John 3:16, John 5:37

He is the Father, the spiritual Father, of all who believe in Christ. We are His children. Psalm 103:13, John 1:12, Galatians 3:26

He delegates authority to world rulers and sets the boundaries and times for nations. Acts 17:26, Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-14

He is the author of salvation. He is the one who chooses ... the one who elects ... the one who calls men to believe. Ephesians 1:3-12, Romans 8:28 - 9:24

He gives us direction. The Father gives us His will for our days and lives. Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 32:8, Jeremiah 29:11

The uniqueness of the Father (continued)

He is our protector. He protects us in our battles against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Psalm 23, Psalm 37, Psalm 56:3-4

He is our provider. He provides for our physical and spiritual well-being. He is the source of all good gifts. Matthew 6:25-34, James 1:17

He gives us eternal security. We are safe in God's hands forever ... safe because no one is strong enough to take us out of His hands. John 10:27-29

He hears our prayers. Jesus taught that we should pray to the Father. Matthew 6:8-9, John 16:23

He disciplines His children. As a loving Father, He disciplines us to be all that we can be. He is the vinedresser who prunes us to bear more fruit. Hebrews 12:4-13, John 15:1-2

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE SON. The Lord Jesus Christ has always been, is, and always will be fully and totally God. However, we see Him uniquely doing particular things that distinguish Him from the Father and the Spirit.

He is the Creator. Jesus is the Creator and sustainer of all things created. John 1:3, Colossians 1:16-17

He is the defender and deliverer of Israel. Joshua 5:13 - 6:2, Psalm 34:7

He became the God-Man. Jesus became a man ... adding humanity to His undiminished deity. He became the *logos*, the physical representation of God, on earth. Philippians 2:5-8, John 1:1-2,14

He is the Apostle of our faith. He is the founder and forerunner of our faith. Hebrews 3:1

He is the High Priest of our faith. He is the superior and permanent priest. Hebrews 3:1, 4:14-15, 7:23-24, 9:11-12

He was a prophet predicted by Moses, Deuteronomy 18:15. He authoritatively declared God's Word in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5-7 ... on the Mount of Olives, Matthew 24-25 ... and in the upper room, John 13-16. He predicted Judas' betrayal, Matthew 26:21. He predicted His death and resurrection, Matthew 16:21, 20:17-19.

The uniqueness of the Son (continued)

He is the Head of His Body, which is the combination of all believers.

He is building His Body ... building His universal church. Ephesians 1:20-23, 4:15, Matthew 16:18

He gives equipping gifts to His Body. These gifts are specialized people. They are apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers. They are given to equip believers for service. These are different from the empowering gifts (special abilities) given by the Spirit to believers individually. Ephesians 4:11-13

He is praying for us. Jesus intercedes for us. Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25

He is preparing a place for us in the presence of God. John 14:1-3

He is King ... and will rule as King. John 12:14-15, 1 Timothy 6:13-16, Revelation 19:15-16

He will return for us. John 14:3, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18

He will judge all people. He will judge believers and non-believers. John 5:22,27, 1 Corinthians. 3:11-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Revelation 20:11-15

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE SPIRIT. God the Spirit has always been, is, and always will be fully and totally God. However, we see Him uniquely doing particular things that distinguish Him from the Son and the Father.

He inspired the men who wrote the Bible. He carried them along to produce the written Word. The Word is God-breathed by the Spirit through the men that wrote the Word. God's Word is the sword of the Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21, Matthew 22:43, Acts 28:25, Ephesians 6:17

He was in *and* upon certain people in Old Testament times. These people included Joseph, Genesis 41:38 ... Joshua, Numbers 27:18 ... Daniel, Daniel 4:8 ... Gideon, Judges 6:34 ... Samson, Judges 13:25 ... and Saul, 1 Samuel 10:10.

He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgement. The Holy Spirit convinces and convicts people of the sin of their unbelief. He convinces and convicts people of the righteousness of Christ. He convinces and convicts people of the surety of judgment. John 16:8-12

The uniqueness of the Spirit (continued)

He glorifies Christ. He specifically directs people to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Spirit glorifies Jesus rather than Himself. John 16:14

He is the agent of our spiritual birth. He regenerates us. He gives us new birth. This birth into the Body is described in the Bible as baptism in the Spirit. Titus 3:3-5, John 3:5-6, 1 Corinthians 12:13

He indwells all believers. He permanently, irrevocably, and without variation indwells each and every believer from the moment of salvation. This constant and unconditional indwelling of the Spirit is different from the variable filling of the Spirit. John 14:16-17, 1 Corinthians 6:19

He fills believers. This is our voluntarily coming under the influence and control of the Spirit. It is our allowing the Spirit to work in and through us. His filling is conditional ...varying according to our response and availability. This filling of the Spirit is different from the indwelling of the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18

He assures us that we are God's children. He is our pledge and seal that we are safe forever. He gives us the assurance of our salvation. Romans 8:16, Ephesians 1:13-14, 4:30, 2 Corinthians 5:5

He gives empowering gifts to the Body. The Spirit gives at least one special empowering ability to each believer. These gifts enable each part of the Body of Christ to do its part to build up the Body in love. These are different from the enabling gifts given by Jesus. The gifts given by Jesus are specialized people. The gifts given by the Spirit are special abilities. Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 12:11

He leads believers. The Spirit gives guidance to believers ... as He did with Jesus during His earthly life. Luke 4:1, Romans 8:14, Acts 8:29

He teaches believers. The Spirit teaches believers in their own private study ... and teaches them through their teachers. He leads them into truth ... giving them an understanding of God's Word. John 14:26, 16:13

He comforts us. He is called along side to help us. John 14:16-17

He prays for us when in our weakness we do not know how to pray. He prays for us ... prays for us when we do not know how we should pray. This does not imply that He prays through us. Romans 8:26

He bears fruit in our lives. The Spirit's characteristics of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control become visible as we live under His influence. Galatians 5:22-23

THE BELIEVER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus said, *"And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you."* John 14:16-17. The Spirit, our helper, is with us and in us. The Spirit gives believers special abilities to serve the common good. However, there is much more to our life with the Spirit than spiritual gifts. We must respond to Him properly to gain the benefits of His ministry to us and through us.

Be filled with the Spirit. Be under the influence of the Spirit. Give Him freedom in your life. Be available to His filling by emptying yourself of the influences of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Ephesians 5:18

Follow the Spirit. Pray for the Spirit's leading. Be attentive to His leading. Let Him lead you, Psalm 143:10, Romans 8:14, Galatians 5:18. When the Spirit leads you ... follow Him. Allow Him to guide your steps. Walk by the Spirit, Romans 8:4, Galatians 5:16,25.

Pray in the Spirit. This is praying under the influence of the Spirit. You should pray under His influence ... just as you should do all things under His influence. Ephesians 6:18, Jude 1:20

Set your mind on the Spirit. Direct your mind to the Spirit instead of to the flesh. Your life will follow the aim of your mind. Romans 8:6

Sow to the Spirit. You will reap whatever you sow. Invest your life in the things of the Spirit. Sow in the field of the Spirit instead of in the field of the flesh. Galatians 6:7-8

Quench not and grieve not the Spirit. 1 Thessalonians 5:19 ... quench not the Spirit. Do not extinguish, dampen, or crush His influence in your life. Unavailability to the Spirit quenches the Spirit. Ephesians 4:30 ... grieve not the Spirit. Don't give Him sorrow and distress. Sin grieves the Spirit. Don't cause Him to grieve ... cause Him to rejoice.

Preserve the unity of the Spirit. Unity is of the Spirit. We do not have to create unity. We are called upon to preserve unity. We are to be one with other believers ... one in heart, in soul, and in mind. Ephesians 4:3-4