



THINK ABOUT YOUR BELIEFS

The Three-Person God

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all

2 Corinthians 13:14

Theologian A. W. Tozer wrote, “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.” Why? Because this mind-set—or absence of it—will drive all we are and all we do.

KEY QUESTION: Who is God?

The entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation is written on the assumption there is a God—the constant focal character of each story. In Joshua 24, Joshua challenges the people, “choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve...But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:15) Scripture makes it clear that there have always been, and will always be, other gods that people choose to follow.

KEY IDEA: I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Throughout the Old Testament, the clarion call is for belief in the oneness of God. The *Shema* (Hebrew for “hear”) forms the belief without mincing words: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one” (Deut 6:4). Judaism and the Christian faith are rooted in monotheism—one God. Yet, as we turn the page to the New Testament, the names of what seem to be three deities emerge—each declaring to be God—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three are mentioned and appear throughout the Old Testament, but their distinctive identity and presence invade the life and times of the New Testament. Throughout Christian history, theologians have focused on clarifying what this does not mean (see the Nicene Creed, for example):

- God is not three separate gods (tritheism; modern-day Mormonism)
- God is not one God who manifests himself in different roles or modes (modalism; Oneness Pentecostalism)
- Jesus is not subordinate to God the Father (subordinationism; modern-day Jehovah’s Witness)

Theologians invented the word Trinity (a word not used in the Bible) to capture God’s essence—three persons who share a being, or fundamental nature.

KEY APPLICATION: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES THIS MAKE IN THE WAY I LIVE?

Each person teaches us something about the nature of God. We can see clearly in the Trinity God’s authority, God’s redeeming grace, and God’s presence with us.

Excerpts from pp. 27-32, Randy Frazee, *Think, Act, Be Like Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014).