

life group study guide

January 4, 2015



The Dance

“In Christianity, God is not a static thing...but a dynamic, pulsating, activity, a life, almost a kind of drama. Almost, if you will not think me irreverent, a kind of dance.”

—C.S. Lewis

The Big Idea: In the Trinity, we see the relationship of love that existed before time began. And it is that relationship that shows us what God has always experienced and always intended for us to experience.

READ: Mark 1:1-13

The Holy Spirit

The Spirit has always been the most mysterious member of the Trinity. We ignore Him, argue about Him, split denominations over Him. But the Holy Spirit plays an undeniable role in the work of God in our lives and in the world.

Q: How do you understand the role of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

Q: What do you think John the Baptist means by “baptize you with the Holy Spirit?”

Q: What did the Holy Spirit give to Jesus as He was tempted in the wilderness?

Q: How does that illuminate his work in our lives on a daily basis?

The Trinity

“The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are each centering on the others, adoring and serving them. And because the Father, Son, and Spirit are giving glorifying love to one another, God is infinitely, profoundly happy. Think about this: If you find somebody you adore, someone for whom you would do anything, and you discover that this person feels the same way about you, does that feel good? It’s sublime! That’s what God has been enjoying for all eternity. The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are pouring love and joy and adoration into the other, each one serving the other. They are infinitely seeking one another’s glory, and so God is infinitely happy. And if it’s true that this world has been created by this triune God, then ultimate reality is a dance.”

—Tim Keller (*Jesus the King*)

Q: What does the Trinity show us about where we find our own joy, fulfillment, and happiness?

Q: Do you have a relationship you would refer to as “sublime?” What is it about that relationship that makes it so fulfilling?

Q: Why do you think mutually serving and seeking one another’s happiness brings us joy?

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Q: What does mutual self-seeking do to our relationships? Have you experienced this personally?

Q: “Self-centeredness makes everything else a means to an end” (Keller). What are some real-life examples of what that might look like?

Q: Our lives were made to revolve around God and other people, but our sinful nature wants everyone and everything to revolve around us. What would happen if a roomful of people all simultaneously demanded, “no, you orbit around me!?” How does that reflect the world we live in today?

READ: Mark 12:29-31

“Jesus replied, “The most important commandment is this: ‘Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD. And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.”

Q: Can you truly love someone selflessly if you need something from them?

Q: How does the Gospel – the good news of what Jesus Christ has done for us – free us to truly love?

Q: If your honest, what keeps you from being able to let go of yourself as the main character of the story, the center that everyone else is expected to revolve around?

“Why would a triune God create a world? If he were a unipersonal God, you might say, “Well, he created the world so he can have beings who give him worshipful love, and that would give him joy.” But the triune God already had that—and he received love within himself in a far purer, more powerful form than we human beings can ever give him. So why would he create us? There’s only one answer. **He must have created us not to get joy but to give it. He must have created us to invite us into the dance**, to say: If you glorify me, if you center your entire life on me, if you find me beautiful for who I am in myself, then you will step into the dance, which is what you are made for. You are made not just to believe in me or to be spiritual in some general way, not just to pray and get a bit of inspiration when things are tough. You are made to center everything in your life on me, to think of everything in terms of your relationship to me. To serve me unconditionally. That’s where you’ll find your joy. That’s what the dance is about.”

–Tim Keller (Jesus the King)

Q: How does that quote resonate with you? What sticks out?

Q: How can this concept of “the dance” reflect your relationship with God? With others?

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