



FBCD Women's Theology Study

Do You Believe? by Paul Tripp - Chapters 3 & 4 (God)

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"You may not have any inconsistencies in your theology of God, yet we all have functional inconsistencies in the way we live out that theology in the places, situations, and relationships of our daily lives" (Tripp, 79).

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

"Few believers suffer from a God who is too big, but many suffer from a God who is sadly too small. We all have to take care that our limited ability to conceive or imagine doesn't restrict our theology of God and his glory. We cannot allow ourselves to hold a theology that shrinks God down to a manageable size" (Tripp, 68).

What is God?

God is the creator and sustainer of everyone and everything. He is eternal, infinite, and unchangeable in his power and perfection, goodness and glory, wisdom, justice, and truth. Nothing happens except through him and by his will.

- Question 2, *New City Catechism*

What is God?

God is a Spirit (John 4:24), in and of himself infinite in being (Exodus 3:14, Job 11:7-9), glory (Acts 7:2), blessedness (1 Timothy 6:15), and perfection (Matthew 5:48); all-sufficient (Genesis 17:1), eternal (Psalm 90:2), unchangeable (Malachi 3:6, James 1:17), incomprehensible (1 Kings 8:27), everywhere present (Psalm 139:1-13), almighty (Revelation 4:8), knowing all things (Hebrews 4:13, Psalm 147:5), most wise (Romans 16:27), most holy (Isaiah 6:3, Revelation 15:4), most just (Deuteronomy 32:4), most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth (Exodus 34:6).

- Question 7, *Westminster Larger Catechism*

God's Simplicity

"God is not made up of parts; he is not composite or a compounded being. He is simple; all that is in God *is* God" (Matthew Barrett).

God does not *have* attributes. He *is* his attributes.

It's faulty to think that God is a Being who has certain attributes attached to him or that he can put on his attributes like separate pieces of clothing. His attributes are his essence. They cannot be separated.

God's Immutability

"Immutability means God does not change in any way; he is unchanging and for that reason perfect in every way" (Matthew Barrett).

God's Impassibility

"Impassibility, a corollary to immutability, means God does not experience emotional change in any way, nor does God suffer" (Matthew Barrett).

"This conception of God [as impassible] represents no single biblical term, but was introduced into Christian theology in the second century. What was it supposed to mean? The historical answer is: Not impassivity, unconcern, and impersonal detachment in the face of the creation. Not inability or unwillingness to empathize with human pain and grief, either. It means simply that God's experiences do not come upon him as ours come upon us. His are foreknown, willed, and chosen by himself, and are not involuntary surprises forced on him from outside, apart from his own decision, in the way that ours regularly are" (J.I. Packer).

God's Eternality

"God has no limits of duration or time. It is not simply that God lasts forever, as though He were merely capable of enduring without end the unceasing succession of moments. Rather, God's eternity means that He is not subject to time, does not move through time as a creature must. ... He stands above and before everything. When the beginning began, He already was. When the end comes, He shall endure unchanged" (David Strain).

God's Glory

"God's glory is the greatness, beauty, and perfection of all that he is" (Tripp, 70).

"Glory is not a part of God; it is all that God is. Every aspect of who God is and every part of what he does is glorious" (69).

GOD IN EVERYDAY LIFE

“[God] made his presence inescapably visible. ... He reveals himself freely so that we would acknowledge him, seek him, trust him, and live in service to him” (Tripp, 81).

The Gift of Sight:

- **For Others:** “[L]ook for ways to function as an instrument of seeing in the lives of others. ... Talk with your neighbor about the God behind the roses and the sunset. Tell your friends that every time you go to the park and walk through the woods, you think about the one who created it all. Do everything you can to give blind people eyes to see, and pray that as they begin to see God, they will seek him” (Tripp, 81-82).
- **For Ourselves:** “[H]umbly remember that you need this glory display every day too, because you have a heart that is still prone to wander” (Tripp, 82).
- **About Ourselves:** “You will only ever get a true picture of who you are when you stand in the light of the holiness and glory of God. ... Only in the shining light of God’s existence and glory can you see yourself as you actually are. Acknowledging God’s existence and his inestimable glory humbles us and causes us to plead for his forgiving, transforming, and delivering grace” (Tripp, 83-84).

How To Tune Our Hearts Daily:

Gaze. Stop to behold and focus intently on God and his attributes. “Fight familiarity that would cause you to take for granted what once amazed you” (Tripp, 91).

Search. “Search for your Lord of Glory in the pages of his word. ... It is not enough to come to know the word of God; the goal of all Bible study is to come to know, love, worship, and serve the God of the word. Your Bible is a narrative of his glory” (Tripp, 92).

Worship. Learning about God is not about gaining head knowledge. Learning about God is meant to expand our understanding of how worthy he is of our worship.

Surrender. Respond to his greatness, beauty, and perfection by “[giving] back to him the ownership of your personality, your mentality, your emotionality, your spirituality, your physicality, and your sexuality” and “[placing] your relationships, your money, your time, your energy, and your hopes and dreams on his altar for his using” (Tripp, 92).

Examine. "In the light of God's holy glory, examine yourself once again. You will only see your heart and life with accuracy when you examine them in the searching light of his holiness" (Tripp, 92).

Confess. "As you examine your heart in the light of God's glory, speak humble, specific, and heartfelt words of confession. Bring humble words before the Lord, free of excuse, free from shifting the blame, and free from self-atoning argument" (Tripp, 93).

Cry Out. "Cry out to your glorious Lord for the one thing, no matter how spiritually mature you are, that you cannot provide for yourself, that is, that he would rescue you from you. Cry out for sight-giving, convicting, grief-inducing, confession-producing, rescuing grace. Start your day with a confession of spiritual poverty and neediness to the one who is rich in grace" (Tripp, 93).

Celebrate. "Celebrate not because you are healthy, successful, likeable, and financially secure, but because the Lord of glory exists and has become your Father by grace. Rather than starting your day by grumbling about what the day may bring, start your day by jumping for joy because the King of kings has welcomed you into his family forever" (Tripp, 93).

Repeat. Again and again and again...

"There is nothing you could give your mind to that is more important than the theology of God as unfolded in his word" (Tripp, 93).