

# Like Father, Like Son

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Date: 01 June 2025

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Amen. John chapter 14, verses 7 through 11. Hear now the word of God. Jesus speaking. If you had known me, you would have known my father also. From now on, you do know him and have seen him. Philip said to him, Lord, show us the father.

And it's enough for us. Jesus said to him, have I been with you so long? And you still did not know me, Philip. Whoever has seen me has seen the father.

How can you say, show us the father? Do you not believe that I am in the father and the father is in me? The words that I say to you, I do not speak on my own authority, but the father who dwells in me does his works.

Believe me that I am in the father and the father is in me. Or else believe on account of the works themselves. That is the word of the Lord.

[ 1 : 1 1 ] Please be seated. Over the course of many years, I've heard Christians say all too often, why all this talk about doctrine?

Lately, the trend has been to deconstruct one's faith. And that seems to me to question everything you've been taught about Christianity and see what sticks.

I hope that it means going back to the Bible and looking at what sticks. I hope it means that. It's not always true, I guarantee you. It's like throwing mud against the wall and see what stays up there.

I wonder if the Trinity will make it for many. It's a good doctrine. But is it essential?

Is it important? We believe God the creator and sustainer of the universe has taken the initiative to reveal himself. He doesn't say, come find me.

[ 2 : 2 5 ] I'm over. Catch me if you can. Instead, he says, here I am. So we speak of God's revelation.

He has revealed himself to us. If God has revealed himself as triune, then to think of him some other way and to worship such a God is to worship a false image of God.

And if we worship a God of our own design, then we lose all hope of salvation. Here is the exciting, thrilling, marvelous truth.

God has come to us. Revealing himself to us in the person of his son. If that don't excite you, nothing will.

What the doctrine of the Trinity teaches us is simply this. Like father, like son. This is the true God.

[ 3 : 3 6 ] Let's turn to the word and see what we can learn about this above my head doctrine of the Trinity. You know, our Lord Jesus is the consummate teacher, the greatest teacher ever.

And he's responding to questions and comments in this section of the scripture. First of all, John had a question in chapter 13. Peter had a question in chapter 36.

Thomas had a question in chapter 14, verse 5. And now in 14, verse 8, another disciple has a comment and a request.

It's kind of like a question too. Philip, verse 8 says, show us the Father and it is enough for us. I think that is a request, but in some sense even a question.

How do we know the Father? And Jesus has just finished uttering the most powerful, exclusionary statement in all of history.

[ 4 : 4 2 ] I am the way, the truth, the life. And no one comes to the Father except through me.

He just said that. And now he wants to deal with Philip's question. First of all, Jesus says to know Jesus, to know him is to know the Father, verses 7 and 9.

Now our Lord, again, you have to go through him to get to the Father. That demonstrates, therefore, a strong connection between the way to the Father and the destination of the Father.

The way and the destination are very closely aligned. He is describing the intimacy of his relationship with the Father.

On a similar scale, we have seen that human sons can look and act like their biological fathers. He's just like his father.

[ 5 : 54 ] And that's right. But with Jesus and the Father, it goes even much deeper. First, what our Lord is not saying.

He is not saying he is the Father. He's not saying that. Within the Godhead of the Trinity are three distinct divine persons at all times.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And they are not interchangeable. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Spirit. The Spirit is not the...

You get the idea. Let me show you a biblical statement of the Trinity in our own documents. The Westminster Larger Catechism. Three questions there. Watch this.

Come up on the screen. Question nine. These are very clear. Very good. How many persons are there in the Godhead? Answer. There be three persons in the Godhead. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

[ 6 : 52 ] The Holy Spirit. These three are one true eternal God. Listen. The same in substance, equal in power and glory, although distinguished by their personal properties.

What the hell? What's the next question then? What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead? Answer. It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.

Question eleven. How does it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God, equal with the Father? Answer. The Scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God, equal with the Father.

How? How? Ascribing unto them such names, attributes, works, and worship, as are proper to God only.

So when we look at the Scripture, what we find is that when we talk of the Son and we talk of the Holy Spirit, we give them, we see them described with attributes just like the Father, and abilities just like the Father.

[ 8 : 07 ] Therefore, they have to be God. For many years, a very popular preacher held to the view of the Trinity called modalism. And because he's popular and charismatic, most Christians didn't care about his doctrine.

Modalism is a heresy. It denies the Trinitarian doctrine of God as three distinct persons. It proposes that God is one person who then manifests himself in different modes or different functions throughout history.

Like this. In creation, God is the Father. Then he changes clothes. In salvation, God is the Son. Changes clothes again. In the church age, God is the Holy Spirit. Here's the problem. He's never all three at the same time.

Well, that's not what the Bible teaches. And by the way, the preacher is T.D. Jakes. He now has come to a better understanding of the Trinity.

[ 9 : 25 ] I think. I've heard her interview. I think he's come over. But no one cared that he did not believe in the Trinity. He believed what I just told you.

Paul Tripp, in his wonderful book, *Do You Believe?*, says, God is a trinity of three persons, but all of one substance. God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit. These are not the delineation of three functions or three forms, but are three distinct persons.

Thank you, Paul. And our Lord Jesus is saying what John wrote in chapter 1. In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God.

And the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. Verse 18. No one has ever seen God. The only God who is at the Father's side.

He has made him known. Jesus, the Son of God, who is also called the Word. He comes to make the Father known.

[ 10 : 35 ] But he comes as the one who was with the Father and at the Father's side. You see, by having an intimate relationship or union with Jesus through the Holy Spirit, you and I are able to know what the Father is like.

We're able to know the Father because we know the Son. You see, the Father seems so far away sometimes. You know, in the Old Testament, there was a distance between, even though he came, there was a distance between God and his people.

But in Jesus, the Father is revealed in all of his character. Jesus' love is the Father's love. His compassion is the Father's compassion. His grace is the Father's grace, etc. You know, believe it or not, some people think that the Old Testament God is different from the New Testament God. One early teaching said this, The Old Testament God is a cruel, vengeful creator, while the New Testament God reveals a benevolent Savior in Jesus. Thus, the Old Testament God and the New Testament God revealed in Jesus were actually different gods. Now, this was taught in the early church by a theologian named Marcion in 144 AD. [12:01] This was something that was seeping into the church and had to be destroyed, had to be put down. Of course, it denies the Trinity, right? Then in 325 AD, the teaching of the theologian named Arius was defeated at the Council of Nicaea.

I know this is a little history. I hope you like history, but it's important history. If we don't know our history, a people who do not know their history are doomed to repeat it. And that's exactly what's happening with us right now. In 325, Arius was defeated at the Council of Nicaea. Arius believed that the Father and Son were of similar substances, but Jesus does not share in the same divine substance of the Father.

Jesus was not fully divine in the same way as the Father. Arius denied both the personality and deity of the Spirit. He considered it to be God's force, not personal and not God, but the power by which God worked in creation.

That still lives today. And people show up on your doorstep and they come off a little booklet and they say to you, Do you know who the 144,000 are?

[13:20] It is the teaching of the Jehovah's Witnesses. It still lives. And so many Christians, I hate to say it, but so many Bible-believing, church-going Christians are becoming Jehovah's Witnesses because we don't know our history.

We don't know the Scriptures well enough. So Jesus, being of one substance with the Father, can now say in verse 7, If you know me, you would know the Father.

And from now on, you do know him and have seen him. Two times in that verse, he speaks of knowing him is knowing the Father.

Then he says seeing him is seeing the Father. Knowing is based upon experience here. Listen, having friends on social media is not the same as knowing them in person.

In person, you get to experience them. It's a much deeper and truer knowing. Because you get to know what they're like. In Jesus, we are experiencing, as we know Jesus, as we grow in our knowledge of Jesus, we see the Godhead.

[14:34] We experience all that God is. Father, Son, and yes, Holy Spirit. As you live your life with Jesus, by faith according to the Scriptures, you are enveloped in God.

Later, our Lord will say, John 17, 3, this is eternal life. That they know you. He's praying to his Father. That they know you, the only true God.

And Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. Jesus is praying for us. You understand, if he's praying this for us, we need to own it.

It's our heritage. We need to grasp it. He's praying for us that we would know the Father. And that we also would know the Son. And the only way to know them is to know Jesus and embrace the doctrine of the Trinity.

Because God is at work in us. And for us. Secondly, to see Jesus. And I hinted at this already, but I want to deal with it a little bit clearly. To see Jesus working is to see the Father.

[15:48] Verses 10 and 11. I'll let you read it. Jesus says twice here that seeing him is seeing the Father. Now, our Lord is not saying his physical appearance is that of the Father's.

But when we see Jesus working in the Gospels, we're seeing the Father working too. The Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father.

There's a mutual indwelling. So that you can't truly separate, listen, the works. Not the person. You can't separate the works of the Son from the Father totally.

Some have only taught the Father is like he's ready with a lightning bolt to wipe out humanity. He's standing there. He's ready to blast you. And then Jesus comes in and says, no, Father, stop.

I love him. That's not, that's, boy, that's never, that's never been the truth. The Son makes a willing sacrifice of himself because it was the Father's plan to save us in love.

[16:58] The Son carries out the will of the Father. In the Son, we see the Father working to save his people. The Son heals. It's the Father in him doing it.

The Son stops the wind and the waves. It is the Father in him doing it too. The words that Jesus speaks, he tells us here, including the gospel, that his words are the Father's words.

The Father has come in the Son to help us, to save us, to deliver us. Remember last week I said that the Jewish people were ridiculed because they had an invisible God?

All the race and nations around them had gods they could make statues of. See, we can see our gods right here. And the Jewish people would disdain.

You're a god's invisible? What's wrong with you? Well, that's because God forbid images of him in the second commandment.

[18:03] Exodus 20, 24. You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth.

He's talking about no image of himself, of him. He refused to be put on the same level as the idols of the nations. You see, when you give yourself to materialism, when you're all about what you can get, you can't get enough.

You've got to have more. You've got to have that person. You are creating idols in your life. And God is saying, I am not like that.

I'm not like what you worship. When you don't find your identity in Christ, but in other things, you're denying him.

He says, I'm not like those things that you worship, that are idols. You see, he defies material imaging.

[19:10] That's another reason that all images of God were forbidden. Because how could they capture an accurate image of the Trinity?

How could an image made by fallen, finite, sinful people do the God of glory justice?

It's even harder than drawing the wind. We can draw the effects of the wind, but try drawing the wind. It's even harder to draw God.

But now, woo-hoo! Now, in Jesus, the Lord of glory, the I am that I am, has become visible.

God supplies his own image in his son. He said, you don't make an image of me. I'm going to show you. And so, when Jesus shows up, the image of God that we could not draw, that we could not make with our hands, God sends.

[20:22] So that we can ooh and ah and worship. To see the son is to see the father. I had an old pastor years ago. He's one of my heroes.

He's gone to Jesus now. He married my wife and I. Dr. Horace Shepard Sr. He used to always say to us, Jesus is the best picture God ever took. Sounds cool.

But it doesn't go far enough. It's not truly accurate. But I loved him for saying it. I know what he meant. You see, a picture is only a representation of an object.

It is not the object itself. As the image of God, Jesus is the exact representation of his person.

Hebrews 1.3. He, speaking of Jesus, is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature.

And he, Jesus, upholds the universe by the word of his power. And after making purification for our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

[21:31] It is finished. Woo! First of all, Jesus is God's glory.

His majesty is perfectly seen in the nature, in the essence of Jesus. In other words, all that Jesus is, is the glory of God.

Second, when it speaks of the exact imprint of his nature in Hebrews, it's speaking of an engraving tool. Not the image the engraving tool makes, but that which is engraved on the tool.

Jesus is not an imprint, like a stamp, and there he is. No, he's the actual tool. He is truly God's image, God's person.

Co-equal with the Father. Jesus expresses God in a way that only one who is of the same substance of deity could. All the prophets, they image God in a very beautiful way.

[22:49] Just like we image God, but God used them in profound ways. But they are nothing. They think the greatest of all the prophets, Moses. One of the greatest men, Abraham.

They fail to image God in a way that Jesus does. Jesus is more than a picture.

He is God come among us. You see, in verse 11, our Lord then ends with two reasons to believe this. Why should we believe this? He says it. Because believe me.

That's one thing. Believe me. In other words, believe this, Philip. Believe this, everyone. Because he said it. That should be enough for us.

Because we know who Jesus is. And he does not speak with a forked tongue. Secondly, he says believe your eyes. Philip and the apostles were eyewitnesses to the life and works of Jesus.

[ 23 : 51 ] He says, look what I've been doing. It's the Father in me doing the works. Can't you see? Can't you see the resemblance? I stop when?

I walk on water. What does that say to you? It's my stuff. It's my nature.

It's my creation. It's my Sabbath. You can do what I say do on the Sabbath. Oh, man. Jesus.

Our faith. Listen. When he says that you've seen the works, he's telling us something. This is

important for you to guess. He is saying that our faith, your faith, is built on the eyewitness news.

The eyewitness testimony of these men and others who, this is humanly speaking, who looked and saw what Jesus did and heard what Jesus said.

[ 24 : 52 ] Now, listen. It takes the work of the Spirit, too, to make for us to believe. But don't miss out on this. Your faith is grounded on eyewitness testimony.

And in the court of law in this country, eyewitness testimony by credible witnesses is considered

what? True. True. And you will go to jail if two people show up and say, we saw Freeman.

We saw him with his hands in the till running out the gas station with a bag of money. It's so unlike Freeman, so I'm having fun with this.

We saw him. And if two people say they saw him, the judge will say, guilty. Listen, I hope you read some of this guy's books.

It's really fascinating. J. Warner Wallace in his book, Cold Case Christianity, who's a former homicide detective. He uses those skills to look at the Gospels, to see who Jesus is.

[ 26 : 06 ] He was not a believer, and he wanted to tear it apart, but he ended up becoming a believer when he did it. He says, once you come to trust an eyewitness, you eventually must come to terms with the testimony that eyewitness has offered.

So if we trust the apostles, if we trust these men who died for the name of Jesus, if we trust their testimony, then we have to come to grips with what they said.

Unless someone somewhere, and no one ever has, can discredit these men, your faith is based on strong historical evidence.

Now, here's the question, and I'm going to finish with this. Why is our Lord belaboring this point? I mean, in chapter 5, he says similar things in chapter 5. He's going on and on, repeating himself here in chapter 14.

You see me, you see me in the Father, I and the Father are one. I mean, you know, in chapter 10, he says, I and the Father are one. A huge statement. Why is he going through so much trouble to belabor this point?

[ 27 : 15 ] Why is the doctrine of the Trinity so important? And to a lot of us, it's not. We say, we ask the question, is it practical?

Is the doctrine of the Trinity, is it relevant? Those are two very egocentric questions. Why do we say that? Because really what we're saying, is it practical to me?

Is it relevant for me? That's what that means, usually. We're not just acting in general. We're saying, is it practical for me? All this, Pastor, you just spent all these minutes, 25 minutes, talking about the doctrine of the Trinity.

And what does it mean for me? I don't even, what does it, what does it? Here's a question to you.

Can I give you an illustration? Is a parachute relevant? Well, if you're walking around Chattanooga with a parachute on your back, it ain't very relevant, is it?

But if you're in a plane and it's going down, and you've got to jump out, believe me, your parachute has become very relevant and very practical. So what we end up saying is not, is it relevant, period.

[ 28 : 28 ] That's what we're not saying. We're saying, is it relevant only when I need him? When I need God to be Trinity, is he relevant? Or is he relevant as Trinity, period.

And the period is where we're going. First, it is relevant that we see God as Trinity because it differentiates Christianity from all other religions in the world.

Everything else falls short. Monotheistic faiths like Judaism and especially Islam.

This is very important here. Because so many Christians are saying that God is the same as Allah. That ain't even close to being true.

The only thing about that that's true is that the word Allah means God in Arabic. And so you can refer to God as Allah when you mean just God.

[ 29 : 28 ] But the God of the Bible is not the same God of the Quran. The God of the Quran doesn't exist. But the God of the Bible is triune.

Listen, it's like saying this. Do you believe that Tennessee has a capital? We always say yes. Now, this side says the capital is Nashville.

This side says the capital is Chattanooga. But they all believe that Tennessee has one capital. But only one of them is right.

They're not saying the same thing. They're not saying they said we believe in a capital, one capital. But they're both saying two different things about the capital.

That's Islam and Christianity. We believe in one God. But we got two different views. The God of the Bible is triune.

[ 30 : 33 ] Even the Quran says God does not have a son. So don't fall for that. I've seen too many Christians believe that. And it gets kind of sickly because people get confused.

God is different from anything else. Hinduism, the multiplicity of gods. Atheistic things like Buddhism. Well, that's easy. Taoism and different types of spirituality where God is the universe and God is everything.

None of them come close to what we're describing here. God is Trinitarian. See, you do not worship the one true God if you do not worship him as triune.

For that is how God has revealed himself. And we don't get to change his self-description. Imagine you introduce yourself to people at New City.

Hey, my name is Broderick Burke. And Broderick begins to tell you all about his life and who he is. And he describes himself to us. He's a good-looking guy, isn't he? I want to be bald like him. It's good stuff.

[ 31 : 36 ] It's kind of shiny, too. And we all go, wow, Burke, he's a great guy. And then somebody stands up and says, no, this is Broderick Burke. And starts describing a different person.

Behold it. He just describes himself. Who are you to then tell him that's not him? Unless, of course, he's crazy. You don't get to describe, you don't get to change God's description of himself.

If he says he's Trinity, then that's how we accept him and worship him. Second, it's relevant because we do not have a Savior if we do not have a Trinitarian God.

You see, if God is not Trinity, he remains aloof from us. And he's not personal anymore. God came to his people in the Old Covenant.

Like I said, there was a distance still. In the sun, Jesus, more than any other time, comes close to us as possible. He became one of us and dwelt among us.

[ 32 : 44 ] If Jesus is not God, then he's just another Moses. And Moses sinned. Without the Trinity, we don't have a personal Savior who's come close.

And third, if God is not Trinity, then the God of the Bible is a monster. More like Satan than anyone else if he's not Trinity. He would be the ultimate El Dictator.

He would have unlimited power. An eternal life. But without being Trinity, he would not have community. He would not have those like himself, as it were.

To whom he could fellowship. You see, in order to love, you have to have a community. You can't be loving by yourself. I am just so loving.

Oh, I just love everybody. And then you get out of bed. Then you come to church. And now we find out if you're really loving. You go to work.

[ 33 : 54 ] You go to school. That's when we found out how loving you are. It's not when sitting in your home by yourself, claiming to be loved. You have to have community in order to be loved. And that's what God is.

By being Trinity, God is an eternal community. God is an eternal community. Father, Son, Holy Spirit. The one in together in all eternity. In a love and care and personal relationship.

That's why we love community. That's why we need love. Because we were created in his image. Matter of fact, the Trinity is family.

Father. Son. That's where we get it from. Family. A family of love. Tripp says it best. The Trinity is the ultimate community.

Functioning in perfect unity and love. Without argument, debate, or disagreement. The perfect family. Because love must have an object. Love must have a community.

[ 34 : 54 ] If God is just one being, he would not have anyone to love. He would not have anyone like him to love. What about the angels?

They were created. We don't know how long God was all alone in all of his matchless glory. The eternity passed. Way before the angels he ever created angels, there was God.

Alone in his glory. And in perfect happiness, contentment, and unity. He didn't have to create. He already had community.

But love tends to overflow. And so we have creation. Listen. Colin Gutton and Michael reads, Delighting in the Trinity Neville great book, Mercy is the outworking and fallen time in history of the action of a God for whom love of the other is central to his being.

If God were not personal, he would not be merciful. But if God were just one person, then love of the other would not be central to his being. There would have been nobody in eternity for him to love.

[ 36 : 11 ] And the Bible says, God is love. I hope that helps.

But let me just list a few more things. Prayer is Trinitarian. The fact that you can pray is Trinitarian. You pray to the Father in the name of the Son and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Evangelism is mission. It's Trinitarian. The Great Commission. Baptized them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The word name, singular, not plural.

One name, one God, three persons. Our mission, our evangelism, is built on the Trinity. The benediction, the blessing that God gives upon his people.

2 Corinthians 13, 14. May the grace, you hear me say it all the time, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

[ 37 : 16 ] It's the blessing of the Trinity. Our experience in fellowship with God is based upon Trinitarian teaching and truth. If anyone loves me, Jesus says, he will keep my spirit, my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

How does the Lord come to us in the presence and power of the Spirit? Fred Sanders, the deep things of God, which I commend to you.

The gospel is Trinitarian and the Trinity is the gospel. Christian salvation comes from the Trinity, happens through the Trinity, and brings us home to the Trinity. And if you want to read for yourself, read Ephesians chapter 1, 3 to 14.

Read that for yourself and notice how our salvation is from the Father through the Son and sealed by the Holy Spirit. Well, is the Trinity, is it practical and relevant?

I hope you see that it is. But more than that, it's who God is. To deny the Trinity, is to deny who God is. And brothers and sisters, to worship the Trinity, is to be amazed at the glory of God.

[ 38 : 36 ] Can you explain it all? No. But can you embrace who he is and be strengthened in your faith and your perseverance?

You are wrapped in the love of the triune God. You are grasped and held by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. You are safe. You can't be lost.

You can't be lost and your life is safe with him. Whatever comes, remember, you are Trinitarian gripped. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. And so worship him. Be in awe of who he is. The I am, that I am, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Father, will you take these feeble words of mine? Help our people to be amazed at who you are, to be in awe of who you are.

[ 39 : 38 ] There's nothing like you. We have nothing in all of creation that images you as triune. We stand before you in awe of your majesty and glory.

glory and of your eternal love that dwells within you and that eternal love that now has been showered upon us. We have been blessed and absorbed into your love.

We are made one with you even though we are mere creatures. Blessed be your name. And may you work in us that which is good in your sight.

Amen. Amen.