



*How to Be Sure About Your Faith
and Shamelessly Share It*

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1. The Scriptures

Opening Questions

Have you ever had to send a message to another person but been unable to do so because of a communication mess-up? How did you feel? Share the story.

Suppose you have a twelve-year-old child. You have two minutes to pass on to him or her information that will be most helpful for your child's future survival and happiness. What will you say? (Write out your advice.)

Opening Story

I'm not a sensational guy when I speak to young people. One time, though, I couldn't resist the urge to be edgy. As I began the sermon I announced, "Enough of this—this is so ridiculous! What are we all doing here, anyway? What does this book have to say that's relevant to us?" I began ripping random pages out of my Bible, crumpling them roughly and throwing them to the ground. I even had the guts to stomp irreverently on a few crumpled pages beneath my feet.

Talk about getting their attention! Gasps exploded through the chapel like gunshots on a battlefield. Students gazed at me in horror, amazed by my blasphemous treatment of the Sacred Scriptures. Older adults in the back of the room began murmuring about how to get rid of me before I inflicted any further damage on innocent young minds.

"Relax," I said finally. "Anyone who knows me

knows I would never tear up a Bible. I simply took a cheap Harlequin romance novel and put an old Bible cover on it." (I have no problem defacing romance novels.) The tension eased a little, but before I lost the crowd's attention, I posed a question to the squirming group: "Which is worse—openly defacing God's Word or quietly ignoring it day by day?"

It is a shocking way to approach the Scriptures, but think about the words John penned years ago. The Bible writers chose the sayings and stories of the Bible because they communicate what is vital to know about God.

Life of Christ

John 20:24–31. "Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord!' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it.' A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.' Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!' Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have

not seen and yet have believed.’ Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

Read, mark, or discuss these passages about the Holy Scriptures:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| a. 2 Peter 1:20, 21 | f. 2 Timothy 3:16 |
| b. Hebrews 1:1, 2 | g. Hebrews 4:12 |
| c. John 5:39 | h. Psalm 119:105 |
| d. Proverbs 30:5 | i. 1 Thessalonians 2:13 |
| e. James 1:22–25 | |

Which verses above especially speak to you about God’s Word in your life? Why?

We Believe

The Scriptures. “The Holy Scriptures . . . are the written Word of God, given by divine inspiration through holy men of God who spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.”¹ Everything we need for salvation is available in the Bible. The Bible is really about God revealing to us who He is and who we are in relation to Him. It reveals a trustworthy picture of God and becomes the authoritative guide for people as they follow Him.

I Believe

Write what you believe about the Bible, based on your study so far.

Way to Pray

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path” (Psalm 119:105).

Write a prayer to God about a part of your life that really needs insight and guidance from His Word.

More Than Words

Interview someone you know about his or her experience in trusting God’s Word. Here are a few questions to ask:

- When in your life did you come to trust the Bible as God’s Word for you?
- When has the Bible been a real source of strength to you? Have you had times when you had doubts about God’s Word?
- If you could tell only one story from Scripture, which one would you choose to help a friend know God? Why?

Soil Check. What soil represents your life the most (Matthew 13:3–8, 18–23)? How can you make the soil of your heart more receptive to God’s Word in your life?

In the Mirror

If God has only two minutes to get a message through to you on paper, write what you think He might say to you—keeping in mind what you know about the purpose, person, and power of His Word.

2. The Trinity

Opening Questions

Which member of the Trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) do you relate to the most? Why?

How do you think your best friend would describe you? How well do you think he or she knows you? On the continuum below, indicate the degree to which the person who knows you the best really understands you.

1 2 3 4 5
Knows very little Knows you completely

How would you like to be Moses and get this response from God?

“Moses said to God, ‘Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, “The God of your fathers has sent me to you,” and they ask me, “What is his name?” Then what shall I tell them?’ God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: “I AM has sent me to you” ’” (Exodus 3:13, 14).

“I AM.” What kind of answer is that? Why does this have to be such a mystery? *Just give me a nice, neat definition of who You are and what I should call You and we’ll be OK*, you may be thinking to yourself. But God reveals not only what we *need* to know but what we *can* know. Why the mystery? It is not because God is hiding. He is using every way possible to make His character clear to us. In looking at who God is, it is important to note two facts:

1. God has revealed Himself plainly enough that we can love and serve Him.

2. God’s desire is to reveal more of Himself to us personally each day.

Opening Story

When a group of us were in Africa holding meetings and conducting a free medical clinic, Jaci prayed a remarkable prayer. Exhausted from the constant drain on her strength and her spirit, she begged, “God, I don’t feel like I have anything to give today. Father, lend me Your heart today, and I will give that away.”

While Jaci doesn’t claim to know all about God, she knew enough about Him to recognize that she needed Him at that moment. Maybe all she knew was that God was the great “I AM”—and that would be enough. For the rest of the day her service to others mattered more than her own comfort, more than her inner cares and conflicting emotions. If you had asked her, she would not have claimed to know everything about God, nor would she have said she was always close to Him. But she knew enough about God to know what He is like: selfless, compassionate, and heartbroken at the sight of suffering people. The list of His traits could go on and on. Why? Because God is still revealing who He is to us. But for the moment, compassion and selfless service can become the way to live. Jaci has never been the same since that experience.

The *Trinity* is a word to describe God—the Father,

Son, and Holy Spirit. Like us, God has personality. He has a character. But all we can know about Him is what He reveals to us. The problem with understanding the Trinity comes when we try to define or completely explain or describe the nature, personality, and person of God. Instead of “figuring it out,” try letting God reveal Himself to you through His Word. Let Him show His heart to you. You will be confused if you focus on the “what” of the Trinity, but you will find yourself changed when you see the who of the Trinity.

Life of Christ

Matthew 28:18–20. “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”

We Believe

Read the following verses about the Trinity and briefly paraphrase them in your own words. Think about what they say about who God is and what we can know about Him.

- a. Deuteronomy 6:4
- b. Matthew 28:19, 20
- c. 2 Corinthians 13:14

The Trinity. “There is one God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a unity of co-eternal Persons. God is immortal, all-powerful, all-knowing, above all, and ever present. He is infinite and beyond human comprehension,

yet known through His self-revelation. He is forever worthy of worship, adoration, and service by the whole creation.”²

Read the following verses about the Father and briefly paraphrase their meaning in your own words. How does God’s Word describe the Father?

- a. Genesis 1:1
- b. John 3:16
- c. John 14:8–11

As you have read and marked the verses in your Bible, what three characteristics of God the Father are most meaningful to you right now? Which passages describe those qualities?

The Father. “God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father.”³

Read the following verses about the Son and briefly paraphrase them in your own words. Think about what they say about Jesus, the Son of God, and what we can know about Him.

- a. John 1:1–3, 14
- b. Luke 1:35
- c. Colossians 1:13–20
- d. John 10:30

As you have read and marked the verses in your Bible, which three characteristics of God the Son are most meaningful to you right now? Which passages

best describe those qualities?

The Son. “God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God’s power and was attested as God’s promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things.”⁴

Read the following verses about the Holy Spirit and briefly paraphrase them in your own words. Think about how to relate to the Holy Spirit.

- a. Genesis 1:1, 2
- b. John 14:16–18, 26
- c. Acts 1:8
- d. Ephesians 4:11, 12

As you have read and marked the verses in your Bible, which three characteristics of God the Holy Spirit are most meaningful to you? Now note which passages describe those qualities.

Think about how you would describe the person and the work of the Holy Spirit to a child. What illustrations or analogies would you use?

The Holy Spirit. “God the eternal Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in Creation, incarnation, and redemption. He inspired the writers of Scripture. He filled Christ’s life with power. He draws and convicts human beings; and those who respond He renews and transforms into the image of God. Sent by the Father and the Son to be always with His children, He extends spiritual gifts to the church, empowers it to bear witness to Christ, and in harmony with the Scriptures leads it into all truth.”⁵

Way to Pray

Write a prayer to each person of the Trinity based upon what you know about Them. Ask God to reveal Himself more fully to you this week.

More Than Words

Invite someone you know who has thought and studied about the Trinity to share with you in a short interview. Ask:

- How do you describe the different members of the Trinity?
- What other ways might you explain Their relationship?
- Why do you think the Bible describes God in these three ways/personalities?

In the Mirror

Take a few moments to reflect on what you discovered this week about the Trinity that you had not understood before. What do you want to say to God today about who you think He is?