



## Blueprints for Belief

Laying the Theological Foundations for Constructing Your Faith

Westminster Confession of Faith 2.3 – April 9, 2025

**2.3 In the unity of the Godhead there be three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: the Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the Holy Ghost eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son.**

### Scripture References

- “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” – Matthew 28:19
- “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
- “And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” – Matthew 3:16-17

### Summary of the Doctrine

- There is one God.
- God exists in three persons.
- Each person is fully God.
- The three are distinct.
- They are one in essence.
- The Son is eternally begotten.
- The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.
- This is a mystery. No human illustration fully captures this doctrine.
  - Water – Ice, Liquid, Vapor (Modalism)
  - Sun – Star, Light, Heat (Not Equal)

### Objections from Non-Trinitarians

- “The word Trinity is not in the Bible.”
  - Many essential doctrines are not labelled in Scripture (incarnation, omnipotence).
  - Trinity is just a word we use to describe a Biblical doctrine.
- “Jesus said the Father is greater.” (John 14:28)
  - Jesus willfully submitted to the Father in His earthly role. In His divinity, the Son is equal to the Father. (Phil. 2:6-7; John 10:30; Col. 2:9)
- “The Trinity teaches there are three gods.”
  - False. The one *what* (God) exists in three *whos* (Persons), not three separate *whats*.
- “Jesus prayed to the Father. How can He be God and pray to God?”
  - Jesus is fully God and fully man.
  - Prayer doesn’t imply inferiority, but relationship. The Son’s eternal love and communion with the Father are revealed in the Incarnation.

- “The Holy Spirit is just God’s power, not a person.”
  - The Spirit speaks (Acts 13:2), intercedes (Romans 8:26), can be lied to (Acts 5:3-4), can be grieved (Eph. 4:30).
- “Jesus was created—‘the firstborn of all creation’ (Col. 1:15).”
  - The context makes it clear that Jesus is preeminent, not created. By him “all things” were created. Did Jesus create Himself? He is “before all things”.
- “Trinity was invented centuries after Jesus.”
  - False. Early church fathers *before* Nicaea (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian) affirmed the deity of Christ and the Spirit.
  - Nicaea didn’t *invent* the Trinity—it clarified and defended it against heresy (like Arianism).

### The Filioque Controversy

- The original creeds did not include the phrase “from the Son” when speaking of the Holy Spirit. The phrase was added in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and officially adopted by the Catholic Church in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, leading to the Great Schism. Eastern Orthodoxy rejects the addition of this phrase as a doctrine and they oppose the unilateral addition of a phrase to an ecumenical creed without a council.
- “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father...” – John 15:26
- “God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts.” – Gal. 4:6
- “If I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.” – John 16:7
- “Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.” – Romans 8:9
- The Son clearly participates in the Spirit’s origin.
- The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, not as from two separate sources, but as one united source.
- It’s not just a technicality—the *Filioque* affirms the unity of the Trinity and the full divinity of the Son. Without it, you risk subordinating the Son or isolating the Spirit.

### Final Thoughts:

The doctrine of the Trinity is one of the primary reasons I’m a Christian. It’s why I don’t believe Christianity is a made-up religion. Humans would prefer to describe God in neat, simple terms, but the Trinity is not something we would invent. It’s something that humbles me. It’s not simple. It’s not intuitive. But it’s beautiful. The Trinity isn’t a math problem to solve—it’s a mystery to receive. It’s not a wall that keeps us from understanding God; it’s a window into the kind of God who is not just real—but relational, self-giving, and deeply knowable.

### Small Group Questions for April 9

1. How does knowing that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit affect the way you relate to Him personally?
2. Which person of the Trinity do you tend to focus on most in your spiritual life—and why do you think that is?
3. What does the Trinity teach us about love and community?
4. In what ways does the Trinity challenge your tendency to simplify or control your view of God?
5. How might understanding the Spirit as proceeding from both the Father and the Son deepen your trust in His work in your life?
6. How does the unity and equality of the Trinity shape your understanding of Christian unity in the church?
7. What difference does it make in your prayer life to know that you pray to the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit?