

Collide

God's Heart and Yours!



*"God raised us
up with Christ
and seated us
WITH HIM in
the heavenly
realms in
Christ Jesus"
(Ephesians 2.6)*

Camper Guidebook

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Welcome!

Welcome to camp! We're delighted you are here. This guidebook will lead us on a journey here and guide us back home as well. Feel free to write in this guidebook—journal your thoughts, record information about your friends, draw pictures. Make it your own.

Journey of discovery

Here at camp we'll be traveling a *journey of discovery*—exploring what it means to know who God is as Father, Son and Spirit – the One God that we know as the Holy Trinity. And we'll be looking very closely at who we are because God in His love shares His life with us.

First we'll look at the heart of Triune God. And then we'll look at our hearts in the Light of Jesus—the heart that was renewed in Jesus and given to us by grace. We'll also discover how Jesus shares his heart with us so that we can participate in his love and life. Our theme, *Collide*, speaks about God's Heart colliding into our hearts in Jesus Christ!



In the life, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, God has, through the Spirit, embraced and included all of humanity in the relationship shared by the Father and the Son. It is the most *encouraging and reassuring truth in the world!* When we embrace what God has done to us in Jesus, we know that God loves and likes us all!!!

The Passionate Heart of God



I John 4:16b (New Revised Standard)

The imagery of the heart is everywhere around us: in music, literature, movies, television and advertising.

Why is the “Heart” image so widespread?

Because God is Love (I John 4:16).

God is _____, and those who abide

in _____, abide in God

and God abides in _____.

The idea that “God is love” makes perfect sense when we understand that God is Father, Son and Spirit. This is why the Church holds so strongly to the doctrine of the Trinity:

Genesis 1:26

- *Then God said “Let us make mankind in our image, according to our likeness;...”*

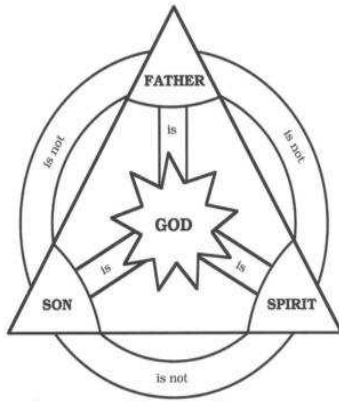
2 Corinthians 13:13 (or 14)

- *The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of You.*

John 15:26

- *When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.*

Whenever the Bible speaks of "God", it does NOT mean a single, individual "old wise man with a white beard" called God. When it speaks of "God" it is talking about three distinct divine Persons in a loving relationship – the Father, the Son and the Spirit (Matt 3:16-17, 28:19.)



This does NOT mean that there are three Gods, because there is only one God, but it does mean these three distinct divine Persons are one and only one God (Mark 12:29). Because of this truth about God, God is sometimes called the "Holy Trinity" or the "triune God." To think of the three Persons of God as anything less than one is to betray God's unity and intimacy!

God's relational heart of passion is the reason for:

- Cell phones! Best friends! Love notes!
Dances! Pets! Families! Camps!



LOVE:
From man's heart?
Or, from the heart of
God the Holy Trinity?

Acts 17:24-29
Message Bible

The

Our Triune God's relational heart of passion is the reason we don't like:

- Isolation! Break-ups & Divorce! Being ignored! Being discriminated against!

A good question to consider: Are Christians the only ones who share in these expressions of God's passionate heart?

Absolutely not!!

"The God who made the world and everything in it, this Master of sky and land, doesn't live in custom-made shrines or need the human race to run errands for him, as if he couldn't take care of himself. He makes the creatures; the creatures don't make him. Starting from scratch, he made the entire human race and made the earth hospitable, with plenty of time and space for living so we could seek after God, and not just grope around in the dark but actually find him. He doesn't play hide-and-seek with us. He's not remote; he's near. We live and move in him, can't get away from him!"

Created in Jesus For Adoption



Last time we learned that God is three distinct Persons who are so close and intimate that we must say that God is one. We also learned that God's love is the starting point and foundation for all loving acts and relationships everywhere!

Today, we want to talk more specifically about the amazing thing God did that enables us to participate in his love!

Young ladies: is your greatest desire to have a fake diamond wedding ring? Or a real one? Young men: is your great goal to earn loads of fake money? Or real money? You get the point. Most of us aren't interested in fake anything! We want the real deal!

We get this motivation for "realness" from God the Holy Trinity!

God doesn't want us to share in an imitation of his love or a mere copy of his joy and peace. No, he wants us to share in the REAL DEAL—his own love, joy and peace.

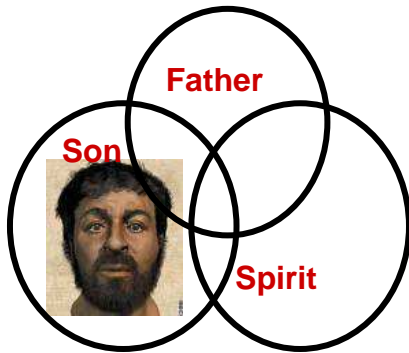
BUT...what did God the Holy Trinity do to accomplish that for us? The Apostle Paul referred to it as our "adoption!"

Ephesians 1:3-5

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

1:4 just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love.

1:5 He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will,



According to this passage:

- v.3 in Christ we were blessed with every _____

- v.4 in Christ we were chosen before the world to be _____

- v.5 In Christ we were destined for _____

We were adopted before the Foundation of the World



How does this sign help us think differently about what God means by *believe*?

God's plan to adopt us in Jesus BEFORE the foundation of the world means that Jesus was going to become one of us even if we had never sinned! God created us in order to "adopt" us, to make us his own children!

- God created us to _____ us. God did not create us to save us from sin, (even though God DID save us from our sin!)
- God created us to _____ us. This means that Jesus Christ is NOT Plan "B" or just a band-aid from God covering up our problem of sin.
- God created us to _____ us, and Jesus is God's first and ONLY thought for bringing us into the loving relationship the Father and the Son share in the Spirit!

Jesus is Plan "A" from before the creation of the world.

Do we have to believe before we belong to God? OR do we believe because we already belong to God?

Do we have to believe in our families before we become a part of them?

The only way for us to get into the relationship shared by the Father and the Son was for Jesus to get into us. When Jesus became human, he took us into himself and his relationship with the Father. This is called "adoption" and this is what God was doing in & with humanity from the very beginning. God settled this purpose for us, in Jesus, before we were even created. Just think of it as Plan "A" for "Adoption."

Gal 4:4-7 “And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

Questions to think about

1. If God already adopted us in Jesus Christ, and we don't have to do anything to get into a relationship with God, why are we still encouraged to believe?
2. What keeps us from believing that everyone is already adopted in Christ as children of the Father?
3. What kind of response do you think people would have if they believed they were already adopted and accepted by God before they were born?
4. What kind of response do you think people would have if they didn't believe they were already adopted and accepted by God when they were born?



Our Adoption and Our Suffering

Adoption is why we are here! God adopted all of us as his own children in Jesus Christ. We could say it like this: When Jesus died, we all died. When Jesus was resurrected from death, we all were resurrected from death. When Jesus ascended back into heaven, we all ascended with Him. Take a look at how these verses teach us that:

2 Corinthians 5:14

- For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died.

I Peter 1:3

- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

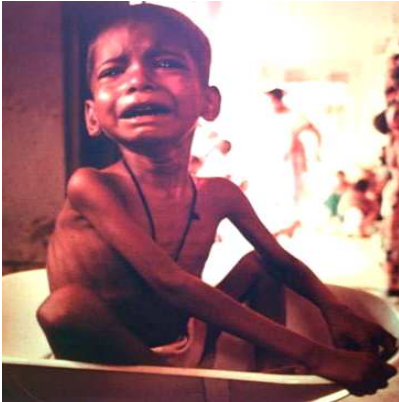
Ephesians 2:4-6

- But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved - and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...

The scriptures are clear; whatever happened to Jesus, also happened to all of humanity through Jesus, who through his Incarnation is fully God and fully man!

Jesus did something TO us, WITH us, and FOR us!

Houston, we have a problem!”



Although it is encouraging and assuring to know that we are included in Jesus’ relationship with His Father, in the Spirit, something is still wrong isn’t it? There is still the problem of pain and suffering among human beings, and in creation.

We are adopted in Jesus but we still lie to one another. We continue to steal, kill, and cheat one another. We destroy the animals and environment, and often think the worst of one another. We seem to be mostly “selfish to the core!”

What is going on and what is the problem?

Have you ever felt the pain of being burned by something very hot?



Why were you able to feel the heat? (circle the answer that fits best).

- a. The Boogey man told you about the heat
- b. Your hand screamed “Ouch, you dummy!”
- c. Your body is “wired up” with nerves that communicated “flame” to your brain.

Unless you are from another planet, the obvious answer for most humans is C – “your body is wired up with nerves that communicated “flame” to your brain.”

Understanding how the nerves in our body function can also help us understand why we experience pain & suffering in our union with Jesus. You know what heat is because your body is wired and connected to nerves. You know what pain is because you are wired up and connected to Jesus Christ.



You can demonstrate this with your own human body. What happens when you twist your arm too far? That’s right – you experience pain. You experience pain not because your arm is disconnected from your body, but because your arm *is* connected to your body.

Our pain in sin comes because we *are* connected to God and something is being twisted!

- Families hurt in divorce because Jesus is sharing his love and it is being twisted.
- We hurt when people call us bad names because Jesus is sharing his good name with us.
- We know what “bad” is because Jesus is sharing God’s good with us.
- We know what lost is because Jesus is sharing his home in the Father with us!



Romans 8:31-39

God the Holy Trinity does not ever want you to think that you are separated from God because you experience bad situations!

You are permanently connected to God in Jesus!

- *“for he has said, “I will never leave you or forsake you.”.*
- *“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

We suffer when our arm is twisted because our arm was only meant to operate in a certain way. We still suffer in our adoption because when we don't know who we really are in Jesus, we keep twisting things up!

- When we start believing who we really are in Jesus, we will start experiencing more pleasure and less pain.
- When we start believing who we really are in Jesus, we will start treating our family, friends and neighbors better!
- When our family, friends and neighbors start believing who they really are in Jesus, they will start treating us better.
- When we all start believing who we really are in Jesus, we will take care of creation better and everything will improve!!

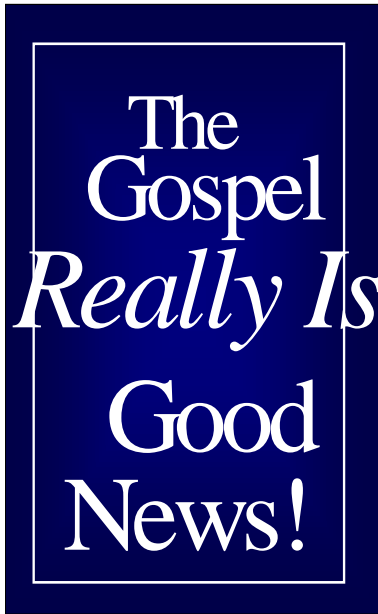
God's Love is No Longer a Secret



2 Corinthians 5:18-19

As we saw last time, God the Trinity has adopted us and lives in each one of us despite our sin, pain and brokenness!! In Jesus, God lives with us in our darkness!! Talk about a collision! This is the collision of all collisions! Our sin is NOT a barrier between God and us, and the Father, Son and Spirit still love and like each of us the same as they always have! In fact, it is in our sinful flesh that Jesus actually made us friends with God and made God's connection with us even stronger!

- *“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.”*



The Gospel Really is Good News!

Think deeply about what this scripture is really saying to each of us. God wants us to know that we do not have to ask Jesus to come into our hearts before he will love and accept us. Christian author Baxter Kruger puts it this way:

"We do not ask Jesus into our heart, rather Jesus has created us and asks us to participate in his universe and life, all the while he is holding our heart together..."

The Good News says that we do not have to try to get God into our lives; rather, God has gotten us into his life in Jesus!

Doesn't this Good News flood your heart with hope, assurance and delight? Isn't it thrilling to know that in Christ you are accepted, wanted, loved, liked and celebrated passionately by God the Holy Trinity! This is the kind of peace, joy and fun your heart was created to be filled with, and rest in, forever!

I Embrace the Good News, Now What?

Some of you are probably thinking, "I really believe this truth about my life in Jesus, so now what?" That is a common response to hearing the Truth about Who Jesus is, and who we are in our union with him! The answer to this question has many answers but let's start with a parable from Jesus that perhaps hits most accurately on what you should do, now that you embrace the truth!

The Treasure and Pearl of Great Price

Matt 13:44
The Message Bible



"God's kingdom is like a treasure hidden in a field for years and then accidentally found by a trespasser. The finder is ecstatic - what a find! - and proceeds to sell everything he owns to raise money to buy that field. Or, God's kingdom is like a jewel merchant on the hunt for excellent pearls. Finding one that is flawless, he immediately sells everything and buys it."

Jesus is letting us know in these parables that when we see that he is the hidden treasure, we will not only be excited, but we will sell everything we have to keep that truth in our possession!

Before we do anything, we come to realize that Jesus has been the pearl of great value in us our lives! We see that Jesus has been good and kind toward others in us. Jesus has been sharing his time, talents and treasures in and through us. Jesus has even been having fun at camp in us!!

God wants you to celebrate what he has been doing in you! Jesus is the hidden treasure and the pearl buried in your life! Enjoy thinking about that truth! Enjoy sleeping in that truth! Work in that truth! Play in that truth! Most importantly, relate with others in that truth!!

Embracing Jesus will undoubtedly lead to a lot of creative and positive responses in your life, but here are a few more things the Bible says you can do...



Heart strengthening scriptures

Acts 2:41-47

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

John 15:15-16

Mark 9:23-24

John 15:9, 12

Ephesians 6:10-20

Ephesians 4:4-7

2 Corinthians 5:18-19

1) You can be baptized and share in Communion! Baptism demonstrates that you trust Jesus with your life! Communion demonstrates the truth of your participation in the very life and love of God—the life and love shared by the Father, Son, and Spirit!

2) You can pray to God and say “Thank you! I’ll have more of this Good News please!” God’s Good News is so hard to believe that sometimes we will find ourselves doubting it. It is Good News in that we can call out to God and say, “I believe! Help my unbelief!” and God will help us!

3) You can let God the Trinity love you! When you share in Jesus’ unconditional love for you, it will be easier for you to let him share his love through you toward others!

4) You can ask God to protect you and others from the evil! There are beings that can discourage you from believing the truth about your life in Christ, but Jesus has already defeated them! Ask God for help!

5.) You can rest in God and let God live in you no matter where you are in your spiritual journey! You are unique, and Jesus shares his special talents and distinct personality with you! Humbly accept the Jesus in you and share in his confidence toward you! He really does like YOU!!

6.) You can share the Good News (and probably won’t be able to resist doing so!).

**Questions to
think about**

1. What thrills you about God's Good News? What concerns you about it?
2. What more have you learned about the love and heart of the Father, Son and Spirit??
3. How have you seen the love of God in yourself and others, who may or may not go to church?
4. Seeing that we are already included in God's life before we get baptized and take Communion, what is the purpose of baptism and Communion?