

Doctrine 1: God (part 1 of 2)

So our doctrinal statement has ten parts. It's the same as Evangelical Free Church of America doctrinal statement, the community that were part of.

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Doctrine
(truth)

We believe in one God: (nature and character / actions)

- Creator of all things, without God, there is nothing
- holy, → morally perfect & distinct
- infinitely perfect, → complete

Devotion
(relationship)

Worship

Duty
(action)

Grow in holiness

Complete

We're starting with the first one looking at God, and we have three pages that we'll walk through. Initially, we're looking at his nature and character. So, we believe in one God, and this is often expressed as monotheism: "mono" meaning one, "theism" meaning God. And so we believe in one God. And the question is, what does that mean?

Well, a key part of understanding who this one God is, is He's the creator, that He is the source of the world that we know, the universe that we know. And it's key that He's creator of all things. So without God, there is nothing, and that means that there's not even empty space. Without God, there's not even space to be empty. So whatever there is, whether it's material like the table or the Internet or people, or immaterial like spiritual beings like angels or evil spirits, all of these things have been created by God. There is nothing without him. So He is the unique God.

He is the holy God. And this means that he is morally perfect and so there's nothing not good in him. He is entirely good. And He is distinct. And you can see how these items relate to each other. If He's the creator of everything then He is separate from those things that He created. And He's morally perfect without any flaw whatsoever.

And He is also infinitely perfect. And so another way to think about perfection is "complete". So God is not limited in any way. A key part of this is that He didn't need to make us. He didn't

need to make the world. He wasn't bored. He didn't lack something. It's an overflow of His generosity rather than an expression of need.

Now one of the things that we'll do in looking at these things is we think about doctrine, devotion, and duty. And **doctrine** is most obvious: this is the truth; these statements that we have here are statements of truth.

So how does this relate to **devotion**? And one of the key ways that we think about that is worship. So our devotion, our worship of God is because He is holy, because He is infinitely perfect, He is worthy of worship.

And a **duty** that flows from this understanding of God is that we also are to grow in holiness. Because He is holy we also are to grow to become more like Him.

So that's the first part: God the creator of all things, holy, and infinitely perfect.

1. God

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Doctrine (truth) We believe in one God: (**nature and character** / actions)

- eternally existing → without beginning and without end
- in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: Fellowship
- the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Trinity

Devotion (relationship) Fellowship with God & people

Duty (action) Effort

→ Jesus → Person

So now continuing the nature and character of God, we look at this idea that He is **eternally existing**, that we believe in one God who is eternally existing, so without beginning and without end. And there so there's not a time when He was not, and He is outside of time, at least as we know it.

So He was eternally existing and a key part of the nature of His eternal existence is a **loving unity of three** equally divine persons. And so this is where we get the idea of the Trinity, so the tri-unity. So we've got one God in monotheism, and in this unity there are three persons, in a mysterious way. I can't fully describe it. Which in one way, we keep trying to figure out, how do

we describe this? In another way we say, it wouldn't be surprising that we would encounter things in God that are hard for us to understand. He is so much greater and bigger. So there's a loving unity. God lived in fellowship forever. So He was giving. He was generous forever.

And the **three persons of the Trinity** are equally divine. So they are all just as much God as the others, and so we have the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. And so key things that flow out of this is that the Son of God (who when he became human took on the name Jesus), the Son of God is just as much God as God the Father is. And this distinguishes Christianity from other religions that honor Jesus, that say he was a prophet that He became God. And so central to Christianity is the understanding that the Son of God always was, and is just as much God as God the Father is. And also the Holy Spirit is just as much God as God the Father. And a key thing in this is that the Spirit is a person. He is one whom we can relate to. He is not just an impersonal force.

So how does this relate to our life? So obviously, we have this **doctrine**. A key part of the **devotion** is fellowship. This is a part of the nature of God, and so we have this fellowship with people, with God first and with people. This is the nature of God and God has made us like Him, so we are to pursue fellowship. We are never to be without the connection with God's people.

And that also then is a **duty**. So that pursuing fellowship, it does take effort, it takes commitment, it takes courage. The journey of life together is not a simple one, and yet it's a rich one because it is like God.

So this is the first part of our understanding of the nature and character of God.