

Good

The very existence of the Trinity illustrates, in a manner of speaking, our own inability to grasp the full panoply of God's personality. The necessary atonement of Jesus aside, were man able to intellectually comprehend the totality of God, the three distinct members of the Trinity would not be necessary. God is already spirit; He is able to be and do everything of the Holy Spirit. God is already everything of the Son;

He already possesses all the compassion, empathy, servanthood, and self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Man, however, is not able to comprehend the totality of God. Indeed, we have sufficient struggles with each member of the Godhead. So its fullness is displayed and demonstrated for feeble humans in its component parts: the Father, the Spirit, the Son.

Given that, what is the role of God the Father?

The Standard

God the Father is the root of all that is holy. He is not just holy; He is holiness. If we could only say, "God is holy," and no more, then that would permit the interpretation that God is in part what someone else is in whole—that He is what someone else has defined.

If my neighbor made the statement, "David Lampel is good," you would understand that to be shorthand for, "Some are very, very good. Some are bad. He is no

Mother Teresa, but he is also no Saddam Hussein. David Lampel is somewhere in the middle. He is not the best or the worst. He is good." Implicit in my neighbor's statement would be the suggestion that though David Lampel is good, there are others who are better.

When we say "God is holy," we speak the truth, but we leave open the possibility that others may infer that someone else has set the standard for God's holiness—that His holiness is only a subset of the whole. Which, of course, is not true.

Holy is the way God is. To be holy He does not conform to a standard. He is that standard. He is absolutely holy with an infinite, incomprehensible fullness of purity that is incapable of being other than it is. Because He is holy, His attributes are holy; that is, whatever we think of as belonging to God must be thought of as holy. (A.W. Tozer)

The Face of God

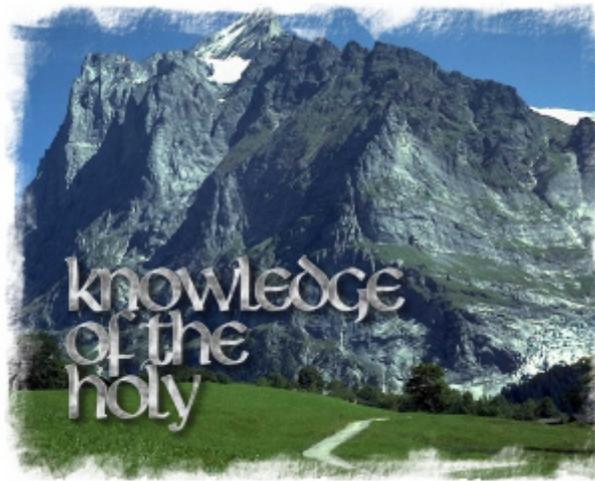
It is not enough to say that God is holy. We must quickly follow on with the fuller truth that God is holiness.

Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels who had seven plagues, which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished.

And I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, holding harps of God. And they sang the song of Moses, the bond-servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying,
 "Great and marvelous are Your works, O Lord God, the Almighty;
 Righteous and true are Your ways, King of the nations!
 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
 For You alone are holy;
 For all the nations will come and worship before You,
 For Your righteous acts have been revealed." (Revelation 15:1-4)

Once we have grasped the difference, we are then left with the troublesome problem of defining that level of holiness. If God sets the standard for holiness, just how holy is that?

Neither the writer nor the reader of these words is qualified to appreciate the holiness of God. Quite literally a new channel must be cut through the desert of our minds to allow the sweet waters of truth that will heal our great sickness to flow in. We cannot grasp the true meaning of holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable



of God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely bettered. We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable. (Tozer)

If we consider every attribute of God the Father in the same way that we have His holiness, we realize that God is the source—the irreproducible standard—for every quality ascribed to Him. Righteousness, integrity, purity, wisdom, justice, love, wrath, grace, goodness, mercy, omnipotence, omniscience, generosity—all these and innumerable more dwell in their absolute state in Father God.

For this reason man in flesh cannot look upon the face of God. The experience would be too intense, too destructive to

beings as fragile as ourselves. To look upon the face of God and survive would be the same as to plunge one's face into burning, liquefied iron and withdraw it whole. The physical laws of God's creation say that this would be impossible; the flesh would be destroyed in an instant. Just so, the physical and spiritual laws created by Him dictate that sinful flesh cannot survive looking upon the face of the living God.

Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!" And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the

Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" Then the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen." (Exodus 33:18-23)

For the Godhead to have a relationship with man, the Father is as necessary as the Son and the Spirit. Because of his sinful bent, were man to have only the Son and Spirit, he would soon forget the utter, untouchable holiness of God. His disciples lived with Jesus day after day for three years; they soon forgot—even though they used the right words—that He was more than just flesh, but God. Man too easily forgets the inconvenient truth. We need God the Father to remind us of God's sovereignty, His unimaginable power, His holiness.