

### Beginnings – ORIGIN (*Where did we come from?*)

- Only Two Choices
- Realize the Significance
- Is it Faith or Science?
  - LAB - Lookable, Accessible, Breakable
- Guess at the Evidence
- Inspect the Evidence
  - Universe = "Decay"
  - Age of the Earth = "Can't Say"
  - Origin of Life by Chance = "No Way"
  - Evolution of Species and Man = "Lacks Genes and Tweens"
- No Compromise
  - DON'T - Death, Orders of Creation, Names in genealogies, Ten Commandments refer to seven-day week

### Intent of Life – LIFE (*Why are we here?*)

- Love - GOD and MAN
- Increase - GROW
- Faithfulness - Time, Talent, Treasure
- Eternity – Past, Present, Future

### Authority – POWER (*Who's in charge?*) A God Who is:

- Personal and Loving
- Omnipotent
- Wise and All-Knowing
- Everywhere and Eternal
- Righteous and Reliable

### Standards – RULES (*What are the rules?*) God's rules are:

- Revealed supernaturally, not derived by reason
- Universal and apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time
- Loving
- Enforced
- Steadfast

## P - Personal and Loving

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*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.* Genesis 1:27

*This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.* 1 John 4:10

These are some of the most distinctive characteristics of God when compared to other gods.

## Personal

**God is a person, actually Three Persons in One.** While other worldviews talk about universal powers and impersonal gods ruling over them, God the Creator chooses to have personal relationships with His creatures. He calls certain people His “friends” and His “children”. The personhood of God is an amazing and unique characteristic. God made man “in His own image” and the fact that we are persons with personality is simply the result of God transferring to us something that He has Himself.

## Loving

**God is the source of all love**, and the Bible even says that God is love (1 John 4:16). So not only does God have all authority over us, but He actually **loves** us even though He knows all the reasons that we don’t deserve to be loved. This is most evidenced by His mercy to us in salvation.

*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. **But because of his great love for us, God**, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, Ephesians 2:1-6*

What an amazing demonstration of love we see in this passage:

- The creatures God made rebelled against Him...
- ... and were dead in their sins deserving His wrath...
- ...yet He sent His son to die for those dead sinners...
- ...and raised them up to a favored place in His kingdom!

God makes it clear that the loving mercy He gives us in salvation is totally undeserved and is not based on works at all. He loves because it is His nature, not because we deserve it.

Related attributes of God include:

- **Patience** – His willingness to delay His judgment
- **Grace** – His giving to us good things that we don’t deserve, particularly forgiveness of sins and adoption as His children
- **Mercy** – His compassion toward us by not giving us the consequences of sin that we rightfully deserve.

Within Appendix B there is a chart that contrasts a Christian worldview with some other major worldviews. The following excerpt illustrates the uniqueness of God’s personal and loving nature:

	<b>The Nature of God</b>
<b>Christianity</b>	<b><i>Personal and loving Trinity</i></b>
Hinduism	Impersonal force
Buddhism	Impersonal force
Roman Catholicism	Personal and loving Trinity
Confucianism	Impersonal force
Judaism	Creator and Ruler of the World
Islam	Impersonal being
Atheism, Agnosticism, Skepticism	Deny existence or don't know
Marxism	Deny existence
Secular Humanism	Deny existence or unimportant
New Age Movement	God is all and we are all God
Mormonism	Evolved man – not a Trinity
Jehovah's Witnesses	Personal god – not a Trinity
Transcendental Meditation	Impersonal – all is God
Unification Church/"Moonies"	God is dual – male/female
Christian Science	God is creation itself

# The Trinity - Three in ONE

The Personal nature of God includes the concept of the Trinity, a unique and wonderful and puzzling concept. I can't fully understand it and certainly can't explain it. Every analogy I've heard is flawed. But God tells us that He is One in Three Persons so I've outlined the key points with the acrostic "ONE":

## O - Only One God

The Bible clearly teaches that there is only one God. *"You were shown these things so that you might know that the LORD is God; besides him there is no other."* (Deut 4:35, also Deut 6:4, Mark 12:29)

## N - Numerous Nature of God in Three Persons

The Bible teaches that there are three distinct personalities within the nature of God. Scripture doesn't try to explain how God could have three persons and be one God – it just says that it is so. For example, we can see the three personalities at work:

### In the resurrection of Christ

- God the Father raised Christ from the dead (Romans 6:4)
- Jesus was raised by his own power (John 10:17-18)
- Jesus was made alive by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11)
- The Three Persons work as One (Matthew 28:19)

### In creation

- God created the universe (Genesis 1:1)
- God the Father created (Matthew 25:34)
- God the Son created (Colossians 1:15-16)
- God the Spirit created (Psalm 104:30)

## E - Equality of Persons - They are all God

The Bible teaches that all three of the persons of God are equally God.

- God the Father is God (Gal 1:1)
- God the Son is God (John 1:1)
- God the Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4)