

Life Group Discussion Guide

2.7.21

ONE Series

One God

Genesis 1:1a; Deuteronomy 6:4-9

In the beginning, God . . .

OPEN

February begins a series of interrelated sermons that will focus on the basics of the Christian faith – God, Scripture, salvation, the church, discipleship, worship, sexual ethics, etc. What need do you see for this sort of periodic examination of core biblical teaching?

NEXT

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is central to the faith of Jews and Christians. Called the *Shema* (Heb, “Hear”), why is it such a critical affirmation? How did it distinguish Israel from the pagan nations surrounding it?

The Christian doctrine of Trinity (one God in three persons) confuses many people because of a failure to distinguish *numerical oneness* from *covenantal oneness*. Pre-Christian Judaism discussed the nature of Israel’s Deity in terms of the latter in view of such texts as Genesis 1:26 and Daniel 7:9. How would these texts have raised the issue?

The simplest way to understand the “oneness” of the Trinity is to think in terms of biblical teaching about marriage and family. What does Scripture teach about two separate persons becoming one in marriage? Is this numerical or covenantal oneness? How does the same notion of multiple persons being one apply to the church – the family of God? See Paul’s language at 1 Corinthians 12:12-14.

The word “god” or “God” is not a personal name so much as a *category* or *class* term – like “human” or “man(kind).” Perhaps it helps to think in terms of “family” again. The Jones family is “one” family made up of separate individuals – Mom, Dad, Son, and Daughter. Similarly, the Divine family is “one” family made up of separate individuals – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

What critical insight to this subject do you see in John 17:20-21?

The fact that we are created in God’s image means, among other things, that we are meant to be “one” in human community. How important is this fact to culture (i.e., race, gender, nation, language, etc.)? Families? The larger Body of Christ? The Harpeth Hills Church?

CLOSING

How does your reflection on the nature of God influence your self-understanding? The nature of unity in the divine scheme of things? How will this influence your prayer as this study ends?