

The Power of One

I remember attending the wedding of my daughter's best friend. In the pastor's homily he stated that the word "one" could possibly be one of God's favorite words. One is a very powerful word. At many weddings we hear the familiar words, *and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh (Mark 10:8)*. Through Holy matrimony two lives are joined together to become one. Weddings often symbolize this with the lighting of the unity candle.



Even our country, the most powerful nation in the world, features the phrase "one nation, under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. President Eisenhower added it to the original pledge in 1954 saying, "There was something missing in the pledge, and that which was missing was the characteristic and definitive factor in the American way of life." Eisenhower cited Lincoln's words "under God" as defining words that set the United States apart from other nations. I cherish the thought that our spiritual relationship with God is a defining characteristic of the United States. Even our name, the United States of America, signifies the oneness, thankfully under God.

One of the world's largest non-profit organizations, the Young Men's Christian Association (more commonly known as the YMCA) has a traditional logo featuring John 17:21, which says: *that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.* The Y strives for its broader community to be one with the Father. It was originally established (1844) to encourage people to believe in the one true God, and for that to be the guiding principle in their lives.

In great contrast to the many gods of Greek mythology and Roman culture, the Christian faith worships one true God. The Greeks system of gods, goddesses, demigods and mythological creatures is fragmented, mortal and fallible. The Christian faith is simple, single and everlasting. *"This is what the LORD says— Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God (Isaiah 44:6)*.

The Christian faith features the Trinity as God in three persons. But, it is one God. *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one (Deuteronomy 6:4)*. When we become children of God at baptism, we are baptized with Holy water "in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

What could be stronger than uniting as one? As people of God, two Christian people become one flesh through Holy matrimony. Our country unites its people to be one nation, gaining its success and power because we are a nation "under God." The YMCA is a large faith-based organization with a goal of bringing together people from a variety of backgrounds to be one with the Heavenly Father. All of the examples are the creation of the one God, with three distinct roles – as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is nothing more powerful.

Question: Have you ever felt that God spoke to you through the Holy Spirit?

Prayer: We thank you Lord for creating us and giving us all we have. We thank you for the example your son, Jesus Christ, gave to us, so we can seek to live a godly life. And we thank you for the Holy Spirit, who guides us in our everyday decisions and awakens others to come to faith. Amen.

Appendix – The Trinity

My goal with all devotions is to be clear and simple in the presentation of a Christ-based faith lesson from everyday life experiences. I try to avoid some spiritual terminology that is understandable to people of strong faith but confusing to others. The Trinity is a complicated, but important topic. Below are some scriptural references that explain the role of each part of our one true God.

God the Father

- *Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." John 10:30 ESV*
- *Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness. Gen 1:26*
- *"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." Rev 4:11 NIV*
- *There is...one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Ephesian 4:5-6 NIV*
- *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Hebrews 1:3 NIV*

God the Son

- *Jesus said....I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me (John 8:28 ESV).*
- *Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works (John 14:10).*
- *Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven (Matthew 16:16-17).*

God the Holy Spirit

Probably the most difficult concept to understand is the Holy Spirit. We know God is the creator of the universe, and the Bible goes into great detail about the earthly life and teachings of Jesus, God's son. Jesus is tangible and we understand God's miraculous role in creation. Jesus often refers to God as His Father.

It has been said that the Holy Spirit is the most active and prevalent in our day-to-day lives today. He turns or transforms our lives. How does He do this? The Holy Spirit settles into the hearts of believers, and guides their lives. The Holy Spirit also turns non-believers into believers. During His earthly life Jesus reached as many people as possible, speaking to large crowds, healing the sick, and training his earthly disciples. Sometimes we overlook the introduction of the Holy Spirit. As Jesus was preparing for the ascension to Heaven, He introduced the Holy Spirit, who would minister to all believers.

- *"And now I will send the Holy Spirit, just as my Father promised. But stay here in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power from heaven" (Luke 24:49 NLT).*
- *God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Romans 5:5 ESV).*
- *And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6 NLT).*
- *I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever (John 14:16 NIV).*