

This I Believe

A JOURNEY THROUGH THE APOSTLE'S CREED

Week 1: I Believe in God, the Father
Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth

Day One

Have you ever been in darkness so complete that you literally couldn't see your hand in front of your face? No amount of time can allow your eyes to adjust when you're in total darkness. Now imagine a full moon on a dark night. It allows you to see the world around you in a way that would otherwise be impossible. Now imagine being in that same spot in the middle of a sunny day. You have a clear, more complete picture.

The Apostles' Creed is like the moon. It's not the source of light. As the moon reflects the light of the sun, the creed merely reflects the truth of Scripture. God's Word is the sun-our source of truth. Remember that you aren't studying the creed. It's a summary of what we believe. You're studying the Bible. It's the totality of what we believe. The creed should point you to the truth revealed in God's Word.

The creed starts where the Bible starts: with God.

Read Genesis 1:1

The Bible begins with one of the most stunning, reality-shaping phrases possible.

What's the first thing we learn about God from this verse? Why is this an important starting point for the entire Bible?

God created from nothing. He didn't simply fashion preexisting creation into new shapes and forms; He brought creation into being by His word (see Gen. 1; Heb. 11:3). By the incomparable power of His will, God spoke everything into existence. He's Almighty.

READ PSALM 8.

Where do you see God's power and creativity on display in the world today? What's impresses you most about God's creation?

How should believing that God created you as uniquely valuable shape the way you see yourself? How should this reality shape the way you think about your purpose in life?

As the Apostles' Creed states, God the Father Almighty is the "Creator of heaven and earth." Referring to Christ, theologian Abraham Kuyper said, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'" These words beautifully capture the fact that every bit of every created thing rightly belongs to God.

Why is it important to believe in the fact that God is all-powerful and has authority over all things?

What areas of your life are you most tempted to deny as being under God's supreme authority? Why?

What actions will you take to acknowledge that everything belongs to God?

Prayer

Father, by Your mighty word, You've brought all things into existence. I can rightly call You my Maker and Creator. Everything belongs to You, my Father. Continually give me eyes to see Your beauty and ears to hear Your marvelous truth. Thank You that not only are You my Creator, but You're also my Father. Draw me ever closer into fellowship with You, through the work of Your Son and by Your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Day Two

Although God is the Almighty, holy Creator of all things. He isn't a generic deity. The God of the Bible has given Himself to us as the Trinity. We believe God has eternally existed as one essence and three distinct Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each Person is fully God, yet at the same time, there's only one God. Specifically, this part of the Creed addresses the first Person of the Godhead-God the Father.

The first line of the Apostles' Creed confesses that we believe in God the Father. This line clearly indicates that we don't believe in a God who's far off and distant, but a God who's infinitely powerful yet intensely personal.

List as many characteristics as you can that describe a good father.

READ EPHESIANS 1:3-14.

In what ways does God act like a father to us, His children? List the different descriptions of God in this passage and identify what He has done for His children.

Why is it important to believe that God had a plan for your life since the beginning of time?

How should it affect the way you live today, as you face different decisions, circumstances, and relationships, to know that God has a plan for the future?

Consider the meaning of an Inheritance from your parents. How does this concept apply to our relationship with God? What's the inheritance for people who've been adopted by God to be His children?

Have you wrestled with any obstacles to trusting that the Father's care for you is best? If so, list them here.

How has God the Father shown faithfulness and love to you and your family?

With whom can you share what you've experienced to be true about a relationship with God through faith in Christ?

Prayer

Thank God for His generous, sacrificial love for you, expressed in the giving of His Son, Jesus, and of His Holy Spirit. Confess any areas of your life in which you aren't trusting His will and glorifying His name as your good Father. Ask God for wisdom to recognize opportunities to share the good news of salvation from sin, adoption through faith in Christ, and the hope of eternal life as a coheir in the family of God.

Day Three

Because every believer enjoys a personal relationship with God, the creed reminds us that we're also in fellowship with the millions of Christians around the world and from every age who believe these truths about God found in the creed.

Our belief in God is more than a theological point of agreement about correct doctrine. A right understanding of God is foundational to right living. It has practical implications for our relationships with God and one another. Let's review this week's points of symmetry, clarity, community, and counsel that arise from belief in God.

1. SYMMETRY

First, as our Creator, God knows what's best for us. He made us. A creator of something knows how it works best, right? God created everything. He created the heavens and the earth and everything in them-including you. Everything has a purpose. The design is intentional, detailed, and beautiful. Throughout the story of creation, the common refrain in Genesis 1 is "It was good." The Bible is vocal and loud about God's delight in you, His pleasure in you, and His desire to be with you. in other words, He loves you.

How does it affect the way you relate to God when you believe that He created you and wants what's best for you?

2. CLARITY

Because a father is wiser than his children, he wants what's best for them, even if they don't understand or like it at the moment. As part of God's family through belief in His only Son (see John 3:16), we have to take seriously the consequences of rebellion.

Sin is rebellion against the good design of our Creator and the loving desire of our Father. We need to realize that sin destroys us and our relationship with God. Because God knows and wants what's best for us, He hates sin. Because He loves us, He pours out wrath on that which destroys us and our relationships with Him and one another.

READ HEBREWS 12:5-11.

How does viewing God as Father affect the way you think about sin? The way you view correction and discipline?

3. COMMUNITY

READ GALATIANS 3:26-28 AND 1 JOHN 3.

How should belief in God as a good Creator and a loving Father change the way you view and treat other people? Whom have you not been treating as a brother or a sister, created and loved by God?

4. COUNSEL

By the authority of God's word at creation, we've been made His children. What He says to be true is true. A right belief in God also gives each person in the family of God the responsibility of reminding one another of the seriousness of sin. If our Father's love includes wrath toward sin, then we should love members of His family enough to address sin and to welcome correction from others when they confront our sin.

Who will speak truth into your life as a brother or a sister through faith in Christ? Whom do you need to remind of the goodness of God or of the seriousness of sin?

Prayer

Take a few minutes to let the profound reality of 1 John 3:1 sink into your heart.

In this one simple statement you can see God as both a powerful Creator and a loving Father. Pray that this truth will reorient your life, giving you a confidence in and conviction of the awesome privilege of being a child of God.

