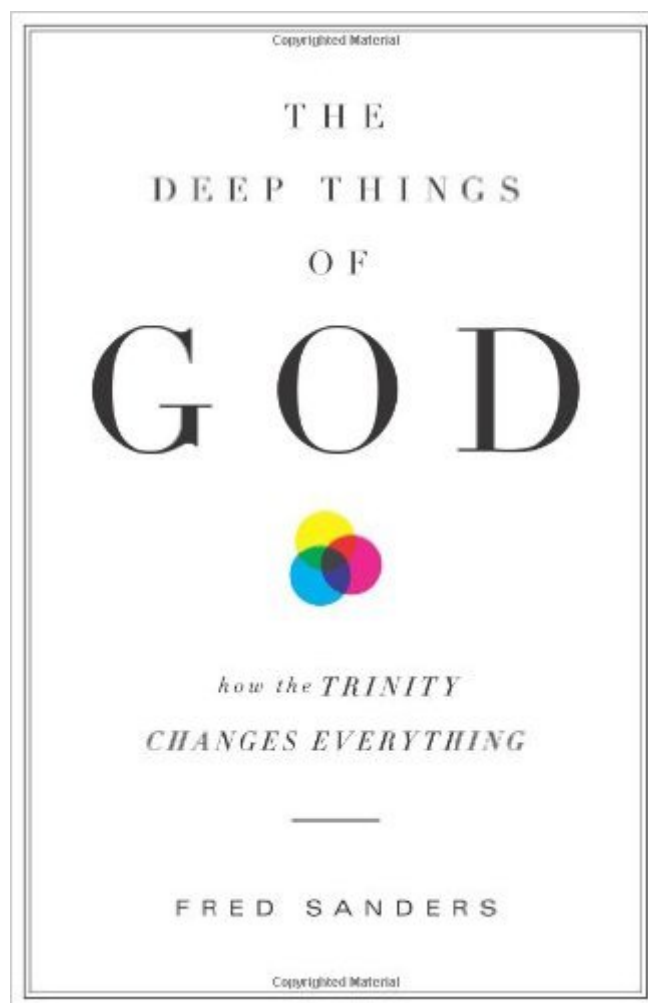


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The Deep Things Of God: How The Trinity Changes Everything



Synopsis

The doctrine of the Trinity is widely taught and believed by evangelicals, but rarely is it fully understood or celebrated. Systematic theologian Fred Sanders, in *The Deep Things of God*, shows why we ought to embrace the doctrine of the Trinity wholeheartedly and without reserve, as a central concern of evangelical theology. Sanders demonstrates, with passion and conviction, that the doctrine of the Trinity is grounded in the gospel itself. Written accessibly, *The Deep Things of God* examines the centrality of the Trinity in our salvation and the Trinity's presence in the reading of the Bible and prayer. Readers will understand that a robust doctrine of the Trinity has massive implications for their lives. Indeed, recognizing the work of the Trinity in the gospel changes everything, restoring depth to prayer, worship, Bible study, missions, tradition, and our understanding of Christianity's fundamental doctrines.

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Customer Reviews

As kids, learning to swim, most of us were intimidated, even scared, by the "deep end" of the pool. I can remember vacationing with my family in the Wisconsin Dells, and it taking me hours on end, beside the hotel pool, to muster the courage to jump into water I knew would be over my head. Though my dad was right there to catch me, and provide instruction as to how to accomplish the seemingly insurmountable task successfully, something in me just couldn't do it. But then, after pacing back and forth, assuming a pseudo-confident jump position (holding my nose, of course), and then backing out for a couple of hours...I finally did it! Then, after awhile, I didn't even need my

dad there to catch me. And something that once seemed so intimidating, proved to increase my enjoyment of swimming all the more. That's a bit like what diving in to the doctrine of the Trinity can be like for many Christians. They know it's there. They've heard about it. However, something in them just can't muster the courage to really go after it, even though it would provide an increasing depth to their understanding, enjoyment, and appreciation of all that God has done for us in the gospel of Christ. Fred Sanders, associate professor of theology at Biola University's Torrey Honors Institute, in his recent book, *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*, aims to help Christians learn to "embrace the doctrine of the Trinity wholeheartedly and without reserve, as a central concern of Evangelical Christianity". "Why?", you may ask. Sanders says, that we must embrace a robust Trinitarianism because, "the doctrine of the Trinity inherently belongs to the gospel itself".

For many Christians today, the Trinity is a doctrine to which we give almost no thought. While we certainly affirm it as being true, we don't really know how it makes a difference in our lives. So it gets easier for us to start thinking that maybe it doesn't matter. The seeming paradox of God being one, yet three is a huge stumbling block to many people looking at the Christian faith... and maybe it wouldn't change anything if we just let it go. Fred Sanders, associate professor of theology at Biola University's Torrey Honors Institute, disagrees. "Deep down it is evangelical Christians who most clearly witness to the fact that the personal salvation we experience is reconciliation with God the Father, carried out through God the Son, in the power of God the Holy Spirit," he writes (p. 9). But we've lost something as a movement; we've settled for a theological and spiritual shallowness, especially in regards to the Trinity. "Our beliefs and practices all presuppose the Trinity, but that presupposition has for too long been left unexpressed . . . and taken for granted rather than celebrated and taught" (p. 11). That's why he wrote *The Deep Things of God: How the Trinity Changes Everything*. In this book, Sanders hopes to reawaken an understanding of, and desire to celebrate, the deeply Trinitarian nature of Christianity. Because the Trinity is so overwhelming in its otherness, it's tempting for us to avoid even attempting to speak to it. But as Sanders writes, "We . . . should not let ourselves be trapped into thinking that everything depends on our ability to articulate the mystery of the triune God" (p. 36). The reality is we are tacitly (implicitly) Trinitarian in innumerable ways.

It's not like we are hurting for books on the Trinity. There was a time when the subject was covered rarely and, often, poorly. Today, though, we have a host of excellent options. This is a good

thing, of course. No doctrine is more unique to Christianity or more central to Christian faith and worship. But for a new book to stand out, it needs to be goodâ ”really good. It needs to offer something unique. Fred Sandersâ™ The Deep Things of God is just such a book and easily becomes one of my favorite books on the Trinity. I have long observed that books on the Trinity make the best and the worst of Christian books. The boring ones simply teach factsâ ”facts from the Bible, facts from ancient church history, facts from the dawn of liberalism, almost as if understanding the Trinity was a project that leads to some kind of Christian maturity. â œWhat goes wrong in so much popular discussion of the Trinity is that Christians approach the doctrine as if it were their job to construct it from bits and pieces of verses, arguments, and analogies. The doctrine itself seems to lie on the far side of a mental project. If the project is successful, they will achieve the doctrine of the Trinityâ ¡â • The beautiful ones teach facts, but wrap those facts in worship and wonder. They do not simply teach the whoâ™s and whatâ™s of the Trinity, but they draw the reader to the persons and work of the godhead. It makes all the difference. Sandersâ™ joy and delight in the Trinity is evident on every page and it is powerfully contagious. The Deep Things of God is a book about the Trinity, but it is far more than that. â œThe central argument of this book is that the doctrine of the Trinity inherently belongs to the gospel itself.

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