



**Jenny Randle and
Brayden Brookshier**

**flash
theology**

**A Visual Guide to
Knowing and Enjoying
God More**



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Knowing and Enjoying
God More**

DAVID  COOK™

transforming lives together

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Dear reader,

We dedicate this book to your local church.

In doing so, we celebrate your church's dedication to building disciples and strengthening the faith of generations. We see you as you learn to love like family, lead within your community, contend for miracles, and serve in a way that brings God glory.

May the Church be unshakable with the truth of who God is.

Contents

A Note from Jenny & Brayden

What Is *Flash Theology*?

Part One. What Is God?

1. God Is the Author of Life	2
2. God Is Triune	7
3. God Is Relational	12
4. God Is Savior	17
5. God Is Dwelling	22
6. God Is Inherently Holy	30

Part Two. Who Is God?

7. God Is Our King	36
8. God Is Our Father	42
9. God Is Our Mediator	48
10. God Is Our Friend	52
11. God Is Our Protector	56
12. God Is Our Healer	61
13. God Is Our Rabbi	66
14. God Is Our Liberator	73
15. God Is Our Guide	80
16. God Is Our Spouse	85

Part Three. What Is God Like?

17. God Pursues Us	91
18. God Is Love	99
19. God Is Creative	105
20. God Gives Grace	110
21. God Is Rich	116
22. God Is Merciful	122
23. God Is Just	128
24. God Listens	135
25. God Is a Promise Keeper	141
26. God Is Peace	145
27. God Is Happy	149
28. God Is Wise	155
29. God Is Kind	163
30. God Is Glorious	168
31. God Is Sabbath Rest	174
A Liturgy for Theologians	181
Promises of God	183
Notes	185
Acknowledgments	187
About the Authors	189

For free resources geared toward personal devotion or group discussion, and for downloadable church materials, visit flashtheology.com.

A Note from Jenny & Brayden

A. W. Tozer famously wrote: “What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”¹ In other words, nothing is more important than knowing God—and nothing even comes close. But there’s a problem. Many Christians think theology is only for scholars or the spiritually elite. But this simply isn’t true. While theology is, in one sense, an academic discipline, it can also be understood as the art of knowing God. God invites us to know him, as we are fully known by him (see 1 Cor. 13:12).

We wrote *Flash Theology* for your joy and delight in God, so that you may abound in the truth and wonder of who he is! Who are we anyway? We are two friends who happen to be related (we both married into the Randle family). Brayden is an academic theologian and spiritual contemplative, and Jenny is a Bible teacher with a creative and relational bent in ministry. Check out our author bio for more information. We’re both passionate for God to use these words to inspire action toward your relationship with him.

It is our conviction that *theology* is more than a fancy word for smart people to use. While it includes intellectual knowledge, it is far richer and more satisfying. Theology goes beyond the study of the character of God to the art of knowing the One who already knows you intimately and loves you still. Our prayer is that you connect with a personal God (**Father God**, **Lord Jesus**, and **Holy Spirit**) throughout the pages of this book. You may notice we find him to be so personal that we drop the “the” before Holy Spirit within our communication.

The more you know God personally, the more you can enjoy and appreciate him for who he is. That’s why in this book we lead you through thirty-one bite-size truths, highlighting key aspects of who God is. Our hope is that these flashes of truth will bring to light any false beliefs or preconceived notions you may have about God and will strengthen your relationship with him!

Instead of feeling confused about theology or wondering if it even matters, it’s time to gain greater confidence and wisdom and to foster deeper intimacy in your relationship with God. Theology matters because God matters. We hope you experience wonder and awe as you discover theological truths about the Trinitarian God of the Bible!

Jenny Randle & Brayden Brookshier

What Is Flash Theology?



Theology is important for everyone, but if it is too dense, it can be hard to digest. *Flash Theology* is our way of giving you crucial theological truths in readable, digestible chapters without compromising quality or depth. Each of the thirty-one readings makes a complicated truth about the character of God simple and understandable.

How to Use This Book

There are two key ways to use this book.

For free resources geared toward personal devotion or group discussion, and for downloadable church materials, visit flashtheology.com.



Personal Devotional

You can use this resource in your personal devotions to strengthen your faith, not only as a onetime read, but by referencing it again and again. Each chapter starts with an **In a Flash** statement that is foundational to our faith, and concludes with an **Apply This**, which is *just one example* of how to put these God-truths into action.



Group Discussion

You can discuss this book as a group, using an eight-week format. Since we believe this book is excellent for a book study, we have created downloadable resources to guide those who choose to facilitate group discussion around the content.



WHAT IS GOD?

When we ask what God is, we are inquiring about his triune nature. If this concept is new to you, stick with us! If you are already familiar with this concept, we hope to unpack God's nature in a fresh way. But first, it's important to establish that all theology is revelation and an invitation to be in an intimate relationship with God! This is where we will begin!

01

God Is the Author of Life



IN A FLASH God is authoring the greatest love story ever told.

Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJV)

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,

Ephesians 4:22

1 Corinthians 9:24

*who for the joy that was set before
Him **endured** the cross, despising
the shame, and has sat down at the
right hand of the throne of God.*

Stories are connectors that cling straight to the soul. We believe God's story—shared in Scripture and overflowing into our own story—is the greatest love story ever told, as well as the most action-packed, suspense-filled, supernatural thriller ever written. And it's all true! To understand this story, you first need to know the author of the story.



Basic storytelling has three acts:

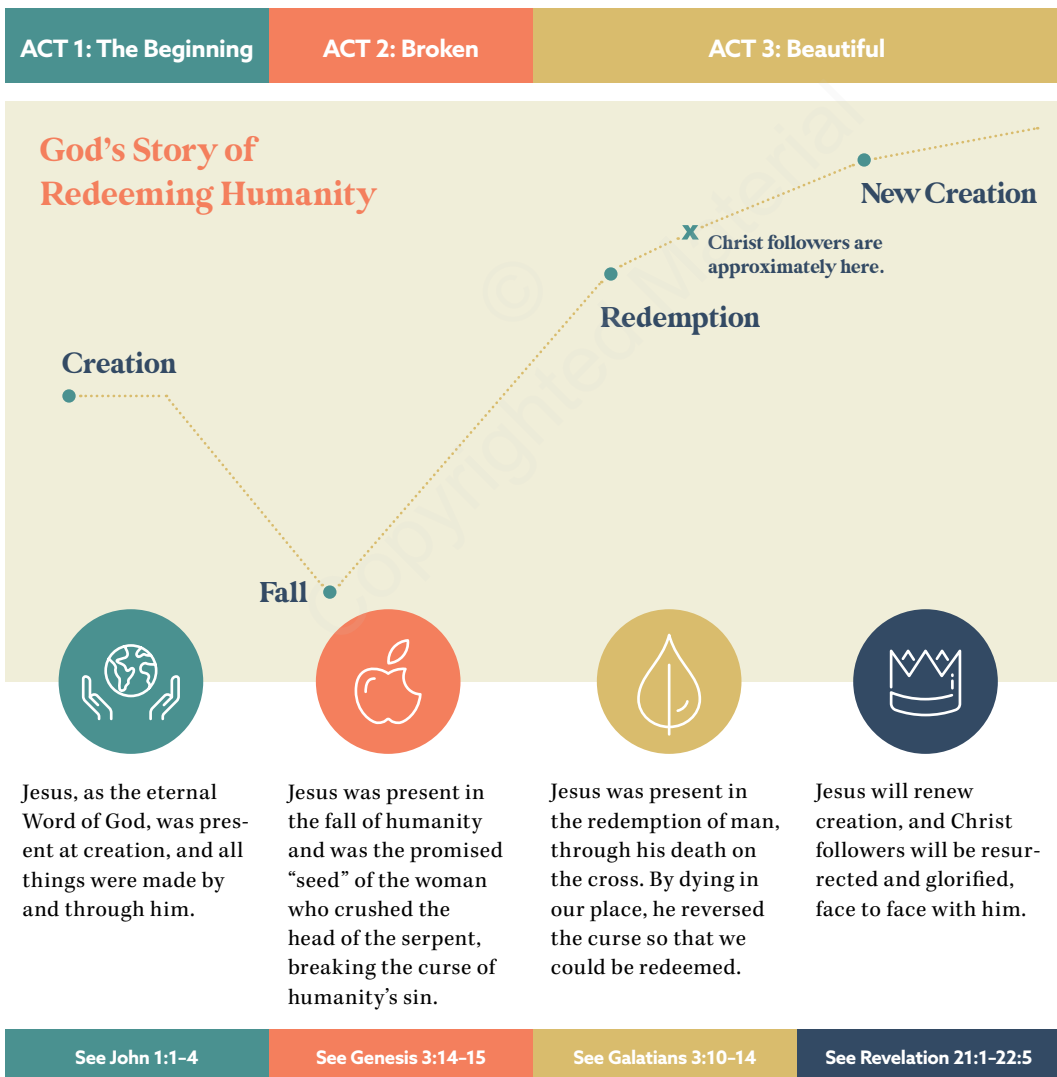
- **Act 1. Setup:** Establish the location and the characters.
- **Act 2. Confrontation:** Encounter plot twists and problems because of opposition and conflict.
- **Act 3. Resolution:** Resolve problems and bring closure.

God's love story uses the same structure:

- **Act 1. Beginning:** The stage is set with the pure design of creation and humanity.
- **Act 2. Broken:** The original design is tainted by disobedience to God, and the world falls into sin.
- **Act 3. Beautiful:** Brokenness is addressed and resolved through the death and resurrection of Jesus. The fullness of this redemption is found when Jesus returns and brings about the new creation.

The Whole Story of the Bible Points to Jesus

The triune God (**Father, Son, Holy Spirit**) is the main character and author of the greatest love story ever told. The story of Scripture contains this chain of events: creation, fall, redemption, and new creation; the overarching theme of the story points to Jesus.



WHAT HE IS

God reveals himself as the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega (Rev. 22:13). **As you read the Bible, it's imperative to realize that each story is part of one grand narrative. When you experience different chapters and journeys within your life, recognize that your life story *also* makes up one grand narrative.** To live your life abundantly well, you need to know the end of the story. Jesus is the hero of that story, and God is already restoring and will fully restore the broken things through him.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

Each day we live in the tension of a broken world that is already and not yet redeemed; we turn the page of a story written by God. The Old Testament demonstrated the need for a Savior and prophetically pointed to the Messiah. The New Testament showcases the life of the Messiah—the protagonist who conquered sin and death and sends Holy Spirit to build and strengthen the church. Yet here we wait for the end of the story, in this place of living out and sharing the gospel in a broken world. In the waiting, Christ followers ache for the second coming of Christ. We endure plot twists and pain points as we turn each page of God's redeeming story. Yet even as the story unfolds, we know it is already complete. *And Jesus wins.*

May we not wander from the truth written in Scripture or be distracted from its mission of *reconciliation* through connection with God, who holds the power to fully redeem the brokenness of the world and connect his people with his beauty. Christ sustains and empowers us to persevere in our faith, even as his promises come to pass. Yet we endure in God's strength, not ours. God, not us, is the main character.

However, we are not born into a blank narrative. We are born into an evolving love story where we are the object of the author's love. He keeps writing our story, even through the trials and triumphs of life. Hardship and heartache strengthen us and invite us into deeper intimacy with him. We reflect on the moments of triumph because they reassure us, in times of crisis, that God is faithful, trustworthy, and good. God is inviting us toward himself daily as his story comes to resolution.

It is a beautiful thing to consider how our individual story relates to God's grand narrative. Our lives interweave and are interdependent. Each one has a divine purpose. When we understand our story in this way, we stand on holy ground and experience the sacred space God intended for us. As we actively participate in God's story, we have moments to demonstrate godly character and manifest his gifts to a world desperate for his transformative love. He invites us to be an instrument of promise and hope.

The narrative of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation parallels our individual need for the Savior. *We are designed to rely on him.* The weight of the world is too much for our shoulders, but not his. When our earthly story seems broken, under God's authorship, we can know that it is beautiful. **God will finish what he started, as he authors the greatest love story ever told.**



APPLY THIS: Set aside time today to meet Author God by practicing the spiritual discipline of praise and worship. Worship him in whatever circumstance you are experiencing in this season. Worship God simply because he is worthy and is authoring a redemptive story.

02

God Is Triune



IN A FLASH Triune God is one divine being in three distinct persons: **Father God**, **Lord Jesus**, **Holy Spirit**.

John 1:1 (NKJV)

Alluding to Genesis 1:1

Jesus

In the **beginning** **was** the Word,

The Greek preposition infers face-to-face relationship *Before everything was, Jesus was*

and the Word was **with** **God**,

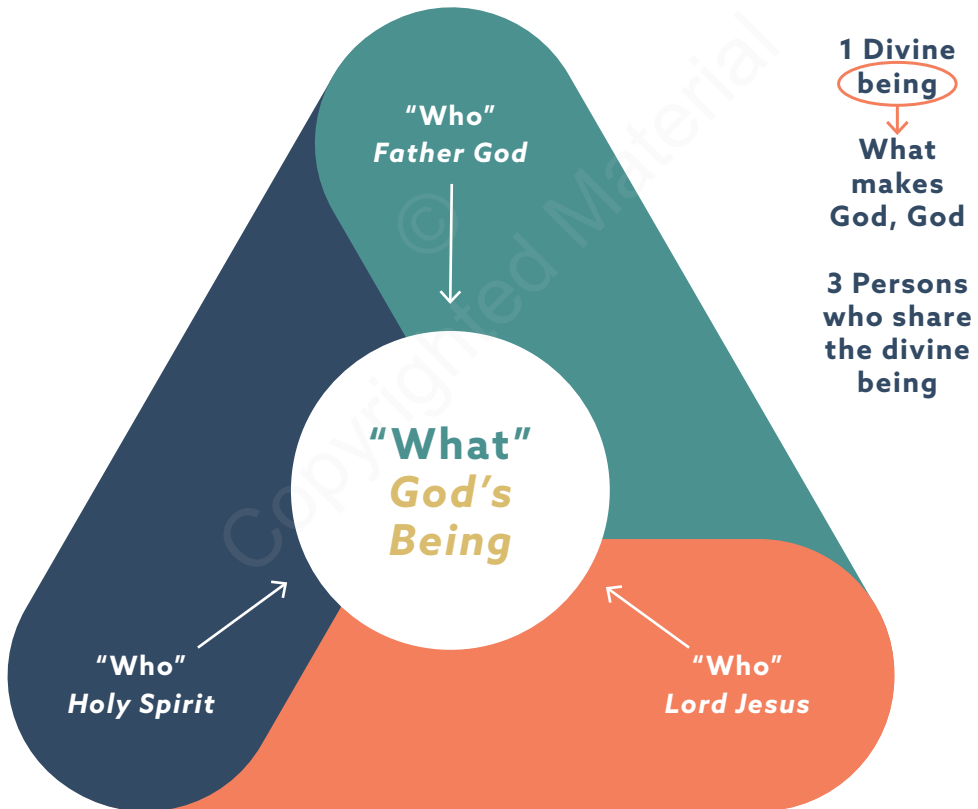
Jesus *Same word, different function* *The Father*

and the Word was **God**.

Jesus *Qualitative Term "God" or Deity*

WHAT HE IS

The Trinity is a tricky topic! Some use inadequate analogies, such as water or an egg, to describe the triune God. Neither of these describes the Trinity accurately, though. The following are two representations of the Trinity—a drawing and a table chart. Both visual aids show the same concept. We hope they help you understand the triune nature of God, since it is both edifying and foundational to our faith.



TRIUNE GOD

Triune God's "what" is *his one divine being made up of multiple qualities.*

Note: Jesus's "what" is God's divine nature and a human nature, due to his incarnation.

Triune God's "Who" is *three distinct persons who equally share in the divine being.*

- "Who": *Father God*
- "Who": *Lord Jesus*
- "Who": *Holy Spirit*

Father God is *not* Jesus, Jesus is *not* Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit is *not* the Father. The three "whos," however, *are* all one triune God, who are distinct in person.

There is one divine being called "God."

Let's time travel back to ancient Israel. For many centuries, Jewish people have made a practice of reciting the *shema*, found in Deuteronomy 6:4–5, which says: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

The *shema* is the heart of Jewish liturgy. The Hebrew word translated "one" in this passage is not the same word used for the number one. Instead, the word *ʾehād* speaks to God's unique being or essence. He is unique, unrivaled, and unparalleled. In other words, there is no one like our God! Ancient Israel was surrounded by nations who believed in many gods. At the time, the idea that God was ***God alone*** was counterintuitive. But Yahweh, the God of Israel, was determined to reveal himself as the one true God. *There is one God, and no one is like him!*



FUN FACT

The oneness of God is summarized in the word *monotheism*. While biblical authors do speak of other gods—perhaps referring to false gods or real spiritual powers of darkness—these so-called gods cannot rival the one true God in power or ability. They are not in any sense peers with Yahweh.

The being of God is shared by three distinct persons.

John 1:14 offers another astounding disclosure: “And the **Word** became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only **Son** from the **Father**, full of grace and truth.”

The verse asserts that **Jesus** has existed throughout eternity with **God the Father** and became a human being at a specific point in time. Christian tradition refers to his becoming human as the *incarnation*. **Jesus** is God incarnate; he is Yahweh having become human. The miracle of the incarnation is that Jesus became everything we are (human) without ceasing to be everything he is (deity). He is the God-man. God personally entered his creation to rescue it! Part of his plan included sending his **Spirit** into the hearts of redeemed believers.

Many New Testament passages showcase the involvement of each distinct person of God in our Christian journey. Read the following passages to see some clear examples: Ephesians 4:4–6, Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:14, and 1 Peter 1:2.

Each person of the Trinity is equally God.

These truths and more are the essence of what makes God, *God*, and each person of the Trinity (**Father God**, **Lord Jesus**, and **Holy Spirit**) equally possess and participate in the divine being. What makes God, God? Here are a few examples:

- **God is eternal.** He exists before all things and has no point of origin. He stands outside of space and time yet interacts with his creation. He is transcendent (above and beyond it all), yet he is immanent (present and pervasive in it all).
- **God is the Creator.** He created everything, both the visible and the invisible. The Creator is self-sufficient and self-sustaining, whereas his creatures are contingent. That is what his revealed name in the Hebrew Bible, Yahweh, means—the “I AM” is the self-sustaining One who has no

beginning and no end. He *is*. He is I AM. As the Creator, he is the sovereign Lord over all creation. No one bosses him around. He is in charge!

- **God is infinite.** His essence, character, and attributes are not in progress and do not need improvement. If God were given an annual review of how he can improve his character, it would contain no suggestions, because he is perfect and without limitation. Whatever God is, he is limitless and flawless, even beyond what language can describe or define.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?

Understanding the triune God in the proper way will grow your faith from generic to personable, as you fully encounter the different persons of the Trinity. And if nothing else, get this: you experience the Trinity even if you can't explain the Trinity. You interact with the persons of the triune God—consciously or subconsciously—even if you don't have articulate language to complement your experience.

Remember these three truths about the Trinity:

1. There is one divine being called God.
2. The being of God is shared by three distinct persons.
3. Each person of the Trinity is equally God.



APPLY THIS: Grab some colored markers (no-bleed markers work well for Bible pages). As you study your Bible, highlight the persons of the Trinity using the same color-coded technique you see throughout this book.

03

God Is Relational



IN A FLASH The core of God's essence is relational because he is three in one.

John 14:20

In that day you will

*know that **I** am in **my** **Father**,*

*and **you** in **me**, and **I** in you.*