

Discussion Guide: The Dance of Eternity

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Acts 2:42 (NIV)

January 19, 2003: "The Dance of Eternity" by Rich Vincent - Pastor Singles Ministries College Park Church. Opening his Bible to John 17:20-26 Rich painted an illuminating portrait of God from the prayer of Jesus for his disciples and all believers who would follow, and masterfully cast the vision of the shared life of eternal love between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and how it is God's desire that we participate in that shared life of mutual indwelling and mutual delight...the "Dance of Eternity."

As participants in this dance, we can draw near to God in a personal experiential relationship with God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and when we do we can begin to grasp what "real authentic life" is all about.

²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ 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. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ "Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them." John 17:20-26 (NIV)

As you prepare for your discussion, here is a summary of the contents of Rich's PowerPoint slides:

Foundation Truths

God is Triune and God is Love. The shared life of eternal love between the Father, Son, and Spirit is the "Dance of Eternity"

Why is it Important?

The unity (shared life) and love of God is our pattern for unity and love.

"that the world may believe...that the world may know" (21,23)

Only by participating in the life and love of God can we participate in God's ministry to the world!

The life of the Trinity is...

- A shared life of mutual indwelling, "You, Father, are in Me, and I in You."

Theologians define this as "*circuminsessio*."

"I and the Father are one... know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." John 10:30,38

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father... John 1:1, 18

"Do you not believe that I am the Father, and the Father is in Me? ... the Father abiding in Me does His works." John 14:10

- Shared love of mutual delight, "You love them, even as you love Me... You loved Me before the foundation of the world... that the love with which You love Me may be in them." (v26)

Theologians define this as "*perichoresis*" from which we get the word choreography. The "Dance of Eternity" is a living dance that is dynamic and full of life and love.

"Glorify Me together with Yourself, Father, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.. for You loved Me before the foundation of the world." John 17:5, 24

"The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand" John 3:35

"For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing" John 5:20

The Dance of Eternity

The Dance of Eternity is a shared life of mutual indwelling and shared love of mutual delight in which we are invited by God to participate.

- Love is at the heart of reality..."real authentic life"
- We were created by love for love to give/receive/share love in relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Sin is relational also --- turning from life and love of God, resulting in death
- Salvation is participation in the life and love of God in Christ through the Spirit.

Participation in God

We are called to participate in the "Dance of Eternity."

"They may be in us" John 17:21

"you love them, even as you love me" John 17:23

John calls it "eternal life" cf. John 17:3; 14:16-20

Paul calls it life "in Christ." "Christ in you" of Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27
The writer of Hebrews writes, "bringing many sons to glory" Hebrew 2:10
Peter declares that we are "partakers of the divine nature" 2 Peter 1:4

Reflection on the Trinity

As we reflect on the marvelous life we have in Jesus may our lives show forth...

- Unity

Unity in diversity...we are all different but one before God
A visible Unity (v21, 23) through which the world may believe and know God
A reality and process/goal: "be one" (v22) and "may be perfected in unity" (v23)

- Love

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. John 13:34

As the song goes, "They will know we are Christians by our love."

- Evangelism

By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."
John 13:34-35

Discussion Questions:

- A. What three underlying themes did Rich identify in John 17:20-26 and why are they important to us today?
- B. What would Rich like to name his next born child? Why?
- C. What are the characteristics of "real authentic living"?
- D. If the only Bible people have is you, what would you like for them to see?
- E. What is God's plan for evangelism according to John 17:20-26?
- F. How will this study effect the way you live in the weeks to come?

*I am come that they might have life,
and that they might have it more abundantly.
John 10:10 (KJV)*