



## **Six Times Four Is One**

### ***Do You Know Who You Are?***

I had for several years loved sports, but I had never played for an organized team, not in grammar school or in middle school or in high school. As I entered high school, I began to really like basketball. My sophomore year I started to play it more and more against kids who would show up at the local playground. I was always the tallest kid on the court, but I was pretty uncoordinated, and I had never been coached by anyone, so I was just picking up the game from playing against others. Before I began my junior year, I decided I wanted to try and make the varsity basketball team. I started training on my own in earnest. I stopped doing my homework so I could have more time to play. The closer I got to my senior year, the more seriously I took my basketball workouts. I used five pound ankle weights to jump rope and jog, lifted weights and played day and night. I would bike from one playground to another looking for others to play. By my senior year I had gotten pretty good. I was able to dunk the basketball with two hands and beat nearly everyone I played one-on-one. The varsity basketball coach my senior year invited anyone who wished to try out for the team and me so a couple other guys and I who had never played for our high school gave it a shot. For a week I practiced with the varsity, and I held my own against the other big players who were on the team. On Friday, the coach pulled me aside and told me I did not make the team. I was devastated. I had ruined myself academically to pursue that dream, even thinking at one point I might play in the NBA. But I was not good enough to make my high school team. In fact, that was how I began to see myself. Not good enough!

There are millions, maybe even billions who have that same opinion of themselves. They are not good enough. Yet, our passage for today argues that for every person who has been born again, that is not the case. **I am writing to you, little children, since your sins have been forgiven on account of his name. I am writing to you fathers, because you have come to know the one who is from the beginning. I am writing to you young men, because you have conquered the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you have come to know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you have come to know the one who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, God's word remains in you, and you have conquered the evil one.** (1 John 2: 12-14 CSB) Let's unpack this carefully as it may be one of the most important passages you will come across in your life with God.

There are four different groups of people addressed by John: little children, fathers, young men, and children. Each of these are specific eras in a person's life as to the spiritual development of those who are born again. Little children is literally a term of endearment, a little child; those who are young in the faith. Fathers is just as it sounds, those who have reached full maturity and are now tenured souls in the home and in the church. Young men are all those in the prime of life, who have reached adulthood and are establishing their place in the home and in God's Kingdom. What is translated children is literally baby or infant; those who are newly born again.

John is presenting the stages of life and documenting what each developmental period uncovers for the one who has believed in Christ for salvation. There are four stages in life listed. There are six benefits to salvation. Here they are in order. 1. Your sins are forgiven. 2. You know the One who is from the beginning. 3. You have conquered the evil one. 4. You have come to know the Father. 5. You are strong. 6. God's word remains in you. Let's consider each of these. Your sins are forgiven. Literally it means, your sins have been sent away. The verb translated "sent away" or "forgiven" describes something that happened in a moment in time and the effect of it continues forever. When Jesus died on the Cross, He took your sins

from you and they are gone, all of them. They will never be held against you, never condemn you, never be used in judgement against you by God. Job's friends got it absolutely wrong when they insisted that the reason Job had it so bad was because the Lord was holding a grudge against him for bad things he had done in the past. That is absolutely never the case for the Christian. Once you receive the salvation of God, you are forever set free from the guilt of your sins and God never, ever holds them against you.

Let's combine three of the benefits and discuss them together. When you have salvation, you come to know the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This knowledge is one of intimacy, of special and precious oneness that begins when you are born again and continues forever. It is closeness between you and the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that is as intense and personal as any relationship you have ever had, and even far beyond that. The Father is mentioned in the passage but where does John speak of the Son and Holy Spirit? The **"one who is from the beginning"** is Jesus. In the book of Revelation, Jesus speaks of Himself this way. **I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.** (Revelation 22: 13 NIV) The same word translated "beginning" in Revelation is how John describes the one you have come to know. **because you have come to know the one who is from the beginning.** (1 John 2: 13a CSB) When John says, **"God's word remains in you,"** (1 John 2: 14d CSB) he is referring to the Holy Spirit. Remember, this is what Jesus says of the Holy Spirit. **But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.** (John 16: 13-15 NIV) The Holy Spirit is the one who keeps intact the word of God in you and illuminates the Scripture so you can live by it. Forever, from the moment you gain salvation, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit live in and through you and you develop a personal relationship with them for eternity.

There are two more effects of salvation listed. You are strong. We see this mentioned in other ways in the Bible. **I can do everything through him who gives me strength.** (Philippians 4: 13 NIV) **No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.** (Romans 8: 37 NIV) **I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.** (Ephesians 1: 18-19a NIV) There are many more statements like that found in the Bible, but the point is clear. With Christ as your Savior, you have supernatural power residing within you and there is nothing God assigns you that you cannot do. Your power is far beyond your comprehension, and you can accomplish much more than you have imagined. Whenever you face it, when something comes up against you that begins to cause you to shrink in fear, just speak with the words of God, "I have much more power in me than I am aware and I can use that power now to overcome this that is before me!" A Christian should never shrink when facing the great trials of life. Be bold and go against them with confidence. You have the power of God leading the way and you will be victorious!

There is a sixth effect of salvation you must notice. You have conquered the evil one. The verb used indicates that your victory over Satan began in a moment in time and continues forever. This is astounding to consider. There are entire segments of religious people, Christian and otherwise who fuss over the devil and what he might be doing. You should never be among those. You beat down Satan and his threats the moment you put your faith in Jesus Christ for your salvation. He has absolutely no power over you so don't give the devil much thought. Keep your heart fixed on Jesus and just take your direction from Him. I love the statement the ancient king Jehoshaphat made when faced with the threat of a vast army that seemed far superior to his. Rather than fretting about the enemy and what he could do, he kept laser focused on God and looked to Him to bring them victory. **We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you."** (2 Chronicles 20: 12c NIV) Never shrink when tough times come. Raise your hands to God and repeat the prayer of ancient Jehoshaphat who knew far more than many do today. Lord, I do not know what to do, but my eyes are on you!" You have the power of Almighty God in you! Live like it!