

## The Path to Wholeness: FOURS August 12, 2018

Today we're going to look at two characters from the Bible that describe what we're going to call a FOUR.

Very few of you will be FOURS, because, unfortunately for us, there are fewer of this personality type in the church than any other, and that's not *their* fault; it's ours.

Good church people often don't understand or appreciate these people.

If you discover today you are a FOUR, let me tell you right up front,

I'm SOOO glad that you are here!

Even if you're not a FOUR, you may be *raising* one; or at least know one.

It's so important to listen today because we may actually be driving them away from us, from the church, and from God,

because we don't understand their natural bents  
and their tremendous contribution to the kingdom of God.

FOURs are sensitive, deeply attuned to the beauty around them.

They can be deeply creative, inspired thinkers who want to inspire others.

Many can see visions of what life can be that many of us miss.

They are emotionally honest

and have an uncanny ability to discern the feelings of others,  
as well as to sense the dynamics of a group of people.

They don't like religious categories,  
dividing the church into theological boxes.

In fact, they reject most all man-made categories.

They are often on the eccentric or exotic side – anything but ordinary.

To be called ordinary is the height of insult to a FOUR.

They often are seen championing fringe causes.

They are individualists who march to the beat of a different drummer.

It's for that reason, that they are often misunderstood.

They're the people good church people think need to be fixed, but we dare not,  
for they are a gift to us.

As with all personality types, they have a core motivation and a core temptation.

## **CORE MOTIVATION – I need to be special**

(significant, unique, one of a kind – anything but ordinary)

Whereas THREES love the designer labels on their clothes;  
FOURs put together their own exotic wardrobe.  
THREE's wants a traditional haircut that says success;  
FOURs want dreadlocks.  
THREES conform to what helps them win;  
FOURs spurn that conformity as dishonest.  
THREE are driven to succeed and make a lot of money;  
FOURs are driven by a cause, even if that cause is just to be different.

Because, however, of this preference for the “different” there is a danger,  
especially for young FOURs.

They are drawn to the fringes, to those who have a rebellious flare.  
They are drawn to places and people where there is real danger lurks.

I have seen young teens drawn into drugs or into to the dark side,  
just because it signified they were not just your average, normal (boring) person.  
The life-long damage of such experimentation can be tragic.

I have observed young teens experiment sexually.  
They may be attracted to the gay lifestyle, not because they are gay,  
but because it's on the fringes makes them feel like the rebel.  
But such experimenting at such an impressionable age  
and can create great confusion as they enter adulthood.

Another trap for an UNREDEEMED FOUR is that because they are visionaries  
of the world that could (and *should*) be,  
they are always focusing on what's missing,  
and they are tormented by the “what isn't”.

They can go through life playing a melancholy song.  
They are so painfully aware of what is wrong.  
What wrong with their parents.  
What's wrong with their teachers.  
What's wrong with the church.  
What's wrong with society.

And they get mad because others *aren't* mad about what's wrong!  
Perhaps teenagers all go through, and hopefully live through, a FOUR phase.

Sometimes to ease their angst, they create an alternate fantasy world.  
The Hippy movement of the 60s and 70s was a movement of FOURS.

They sang their melancholy song, “*When will we ever learn?*”

And then escaped into the bliss of being flower children tripping out on pot.

It’s not surprising that the rate of suicide for people with this personality type is very high.

Because a FOUR’s motivation in life is to be special and significant,  
(in fact, they want to stand out as being the *most* special and significant),  
their greatest temptation is . . .

### **CORE TEMPTATION – Envy**

OK, let’s go to the BOOK to see some real-life God-given characters  
That describe both of an UNREDEEMED FOUR and a REDEEMED FOUR.

**Our example of an UNREDEEMED FOUR is King Saul, the first king of Israel.**

Saul was unique.

When God scanned the available people to select a King,  
his eyes landed on Saul.

Listen to what it says about him in 1 Samuel 9:

Saul was as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel,  
and he was a head taller than anyone else. (*perhaps both literally and metaphorically*)

When Samuel finally introduces him to the people he says, (1 Samuel 10)

“Do you see the man the Lord has chosen?  
There is no one like him among all the people.”  
Then the people shouted, “Long live the king!”

He is a chosen FOUR because of his uniqueness,  
but it would be his core temptation – envy—that would be his undoing.

Saul has led his people in many great military victories; he was a successful King.

But then a giant comes to town, aka Goliath.

Who slays the giant? Not Saul, but David.

David begins to become hugely popular, especially with the ladies.

After a great victory with the Philistines, (1 Samuel 18:6-8)

The women came out of all the cities of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing,  
with joyful songs, and with tambourines and other musical instruments.  
And as the women danced, they sang out:  
“Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.” (*prophetic!*)

And Saul was furious and resented this song.  
“They have ascribed tens of thousands to David,” he said,  
“but only thousands to me.  
What more can he have but the kingdom?”...

Saul’s became obsessed with envy and obsessed with wanting David *dead*.

This illustrates another pitfall for this personality type.  
Envy is an emotion of the *heart*.  
And FOURS, being very emotionally attuned, can also be very emotionally driven.  
The emotion of the moment can feel like the reality for all time.  
and can drive their decision making.

As you recall, Saul became so vexed in spirit that he had to call for David  
to come play his harp for him to drive away the vexation.  
Of course, on the occasion that this just didn’t work,  
Saul ended up throwing javelins at David instead.  
UNREDEEMED FOURS can be a bit scary.

Because Saul’s FOURness was never surrendered to God.  
In a battle against the Philistines he was wounded.  
Knowing he would be captured by the enemy,  
and being unable to convince his armor bearer to kill him,  
Saul committed suicide.  
That’s a sad story that might make you wish you were NOT one of these people.  
But we can’t leave it there, because a REDEEMED FOUR  
(one who is being transformed by the Holy Spirit into the likeness of Jesus)  
is absolutely amazing  
and a tremendous gift to the Kingdom of God.

**A classic and amazing REDEEMED FOUR is John the Baptist**

Now here we have a genuine eccentric!  
There is nothing ordinary about John the Baptist.



He lives alone in the wilderness,  
wears clothing made of camel's hair  
and has a diet of locusts and wild honey.  
He proclaims a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sin  
and can point out people's sins with laser accuracy.

Listen to this FOUR in action.

### **Matthew 3:7-10**

When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them:

“You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

And do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’

I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.

The ax is already at the root of the trees,

and every tree that does not produce good fruit  
will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

That's just not the guy who fits nicely into polite society!

That's not the guy who's going to show up in synagogue on the Sabbath.

Can you imagine what the religious folks would say if he walked into church?

“You can't walk into church looking like that!

And you can't talk to people like that!”

Have some respect!

This is a house of worship!”

And yet John the Baptist is *exactly* who God created him to be.

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord.”

But here is where the story gets really awesome.

When *Jesus* shows up, there is someone even more special than John in town.

Does he let his core temptation (envy) drive him to insanity like Saul did?

Just the opposite.

He says to the religious leaders who are asking him, “Are you the Messiah.”

### **John 3:27-30**

“A person can receive only what is given them from heaven.

You yourselves can testify that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.’

The bride belongs to the bridegroom.

The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him

and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice.

That joy is mine, and it is now complete. He must increase; I must decrease.

John surrendered his core temptation to the Lord and fulfilled his destiny.

**Herein is the FOURs CORE CONTRIBUTION TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD –**

These are people who can see what's coming and prepare our hearts to receive it,  
*if* we will listen.

They can open our minds to new possibilities, coming from unconventional sources.

They are God's gift to us.

And talk about a commendation from on high?

Listen to the high praise of Jesus.

Matthew 11:7-11

As John's disciples were leaving

Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John:

“What did you go out into the wilderness to see?

A reed swayed by the wind?

If not, what did you go out to see?

A man dressed in fine clothes?

No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. (or in fine churches)

Then what did you go out to see? A prophet?

Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

This is the one about whom it is written:

“ ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you.’

Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater  
than John the Baptist;

yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Thank God for the FOURs among us.

Now if you are a FOUR, or want to know how to love a FOUR,

Here is a Scripture to post on your mirror.

**Psalm 138:14**

You are fearfully and wonderfully made.

You *are* special and unique, and God delights in your differentness.

God doesn't put these people in a box and neither should we.

Why would we want to kill their vital energy?

They are capable of a depth of feeling that most of us have no access to.  
Because they understand the dark side of life and are capable of great empathy,  
Many make excellent counselors for those with psychic difficulty.

A *REDEEMED* FOUR, instead of taking pride is just being different for different's sake,  
delights in originality, finding new, original solutions to old problems.

A *REDEEMED* FOUR will take up causes, *not* for the thrill of being rebellious,  
but to promote peace and justice.

They abandon their fantasy world to serve humanity in the real dirty, messy, real world,  
and find great satisfaction in doing so.

The path to redemption for a FOUR can start right here:

### **Philippians 4:8**

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right,  
whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or  
praiseworthy—think about such things.

### **1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NKJV)**

In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

The Lord leads them to the discipline of focusing on the positive  
and giving thanks in all things.

This is their protection from focusing on what's missing and what's wrong,  
and singing only their melancholy song.

And because FOURS are prone to give too much importance to their feelings,  
the path to REDEMPTION includes being continually reminded:

### **Jeremiah 17:9**

The heart is deceitful above all things,  
And desperately wicked;  
Who can know it?

### **Proverbs 28:26a “He who trusts in his own heart is a fool”**

It's so interesting that when John the Baptist is in prison,  
He gets to feeling pretty discouraged.

*“Why hasn't Jesus come to my rescue?  
Is Jesus really the Messiah at all?”*

So he sends messengers to Jesus asking,  
“Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?” (**Matthew 11:2**)

What’s interesting is that Jesus doesn’t even comment on John’s *emotional* state,  
but only gives him *facts*.

“Go and tell John the things which you hear and see:

The blind see and the lame walk;

the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up

and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.” (**Matthew 11:4-6**)

That’s exactly what FOURS need.

They need to base their life and their decisions on facts and faith,  
not on feelings.

This final verse is especially for FOURS, but this morning it is for all of us.

In Paul’s letter to Timothy, he writes, (**1 Timothy 1:15-17**)

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance:

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners,

Christ Jesus might display his immense patience

as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.