

The Choice to Walk with God

Enoch's remarkable story – Genesis 5

In the last stages of leukemia, 67 year old Agnes Collard said,
Almost 18 months ago, this cancer came back. I've always believed in God, and nothing has shaken that belief until now. I was shocked and angered. I didn't feel that my time has yet come. I feel I deserve to live longer.

Kristi Pflanz, a 7 year old second grader in Iowa said,
God makes peoples' lives better. But sometimes, God's sort of not nice because one time He made this machine where you try to set it to grab that stuffed animal. He didn't give us luck on that, and we spent 4 dollars just for that. Four dollars in quarters just for that! And we didn't get any stuffed animals.

Jean-Paul Kauffman, 46, a journalist who spent 3 years in Muslim captivity, shared
I knew that God was with me in my ordeal. I can't tell you how I knew; I just did. I felt in that solitude that I had no one to speak to but God. I feel further removed from God now that I am back with my family in comfortable surroundings. In that prison, I was face-to-face with God. Suffering like that burns away all impurities, I don't feel God in church, so I don't go. I have lost the intimacy with God. But I had it once. Once you experience God, you are forever changed.

Sheikh Ahmed Ibrahim, 38, a refugee in Gaza
It is difficult to describe Allah. Allah is the Director General. Having created the world, He has absolute predominance. Nothing, no one, can disobey Him. The universe has only one Master, to whom all human beings are slaves.

Lynda Sparrow, a Hollywood producer, mother of a 3 year old.
I do believe in a God, but I don't know how to be a Jew and I don't even know what my soul is. I can't make a connection to God. A hopeless feeling that I'm all on my own. It's been this way for 20 years...I'm not sure He watches over me. Hannah's my evidence that God exists. He-She-It-Whatever gave me this incredible gift. God brought me Hannah, then vanished again.

Roger Rosenblatt, editor and columnist for *LIFE* magazine –
God is allusive. Allusive and elusive. Sometimes when I reach for my God, He isn't around. Other times, as on Sunday mornings, when I was a boy, He is all over me like a comforter made of sunlight. I feel Him close as a whisper. And then, I do not feel Him at all. The face of my God is a veiled face.

Finally, 14 year old baseball fan Rakesh Shah, a Chicago High School freshman.
There's lots of gods in Hindu. Goddesses too. It depends what you want to believe in because there are different stories for each one. I have pictures of 25 gods in my cabinet. Each one serves a different purpose. I have like a baseball pitching rotation with them. I do one on one day, a second one on the next day, like that. I have 4 gods and 2 goddesses, but I left two of them out because I didn't think they were doing their job. It would be pretty boring sticking to one god every day and doing the same thing over and over.

Life magazine¹ asked people, "Who is God?" It listed 153 different gods people around the world worship. When I purchased the magazine, the checker said to me, "Hey, this is interesting – really gets you to think, I bet!" People, it seems, generally have 4 ideas about God.

- #1 Some sort of God exists
- #2 experience greatly shapes your understanding of God
- #3 God has probably tried to reach out, make contact
- #4 We're not really be sure how exactly a relationship with God is supposed to go.

He may show up for the special events or the hard times in our lives, or not. *Perhaps* God makes life better, *perhaps* you can get Him to help, *perhaps* you might even be able to manipulate Him...but

He darts in and out of life rather indiscriminately. That's just the way He is.

So much speculation; so little certainty. Let me ask you: *Do you think God intended our relationship with Him to be so cloudy, so full of uncertainty?*

There is in the Bible a surprising story – a short story about a single man – that argues otherwise. His name was Enoch. His intriguing story is tucked away in Genesis, chapter 5, and his briefly described life illustrates a huge Biblical lesson:

In the midst of widespread confusion
(about a relationship with God)
anyone can experience a personal
life-shaping walk with God.

Find Genesis 5 and let's unpack this idea. First, Genesis 5 teaches that far too often...

I. SOME CHOOSE TO MERELY GO THROUGH THE
MOTIONS OF LIFE Genesis 5:1-29

Notice how the Holy Spirit describes generation after generation of early humanity.

^{5:1} This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. ² Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created. ³ When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth. ⁴ The days of Adam after he fathered Seth were 800 years; and he had other sons and daughters. ⁵ Thus all the days that Adam lived were 930 years, and he died. ⁶ When Seth had lived 105 years, he fathered Enosh. ⁷ Seth lived after he fathered Enosh 807 years and had other sons and daughters. ⁸ Thus all the days of Seth were 912 years, and he died. ⁹ When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Kenan. ¹⁰ Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan 815 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹ Thus all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died....*and so on.*

Genesis 5:1 through 6:8 traces the line of Adam through Seth. Seth, according to Genesis 4:25, was God's gift to Adam/Eve to replace Abel, who had been murdered by his brother Cain. Seth's line of offspring was a family, a line of men, which was given to *godliness*, at least initially. Genesis 4:26 says, "To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the Lord" (i.e., to worship and proclaim to others the name/character of the Lord).

And yet, sadly, after vs. 27 of chapter 4...well...that's just about the end of it. What I mean is, if you ask the question, *What was significant, what happened, from the days of Adam until the time of Noah?*...the answer is: **practically nothing**. Certainly nothing noteworthy from God's viewpoint. Dr.

Allen Ross observes what we see, that “the prominent theme of [Genesis chapter 5] is death.”ⁱⁱ

⁹When Enosh had lived 90 years, he fathered Kenan. ¹⁰Enosh lived after he fathered Kenan 815 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹¹Thus all the days of Enosh were 905 years, and he died.¹²When Kenan had lived 70 years, he fathered Mahalalel. ¹³Kenan lived after he fathered Mahalalel 840 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁴Thus all the days of Kenan were 910 years, and he died. ¹⁵When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he fathered Jared. ¹⁶Mahalalel lived after he fathered Jared 830 years and had other sons and daughters. ¹⁷Thus all the days of Mahalalel were 895 years, and he died.

In the early centuries of humanity, a person’s lifespan back then was an average of 907.5 years (12 times longer than our present lifespan).ⁱⁱⁱ Yet here’s Scripture’s summary: Men had their first sons at a certain age; they had more children. After that; they died. Nothing noticeable – life, marriage, a son, more kids, death. The only other Biblical description we have of this period is from Paul in Romans 1 (p.939, ESV):

Romans 1:19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Claiming to be wise, they became fools, ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

What happened through so many early human centuries?? After Adam and Eve ushered sin into the world? Living and dying, and increasing (note: *chosen*) confusion about God. Back then each obituary read about the same as the next...just like in our own papers.

I don’t mean to be unnecessarily harsh...but why are cemeteries filled with “I went through the motions” kind of people? In his book on discipleship, Bill Hull noted the executive who, disillusioned near life’s end, lamented,

I’ve learned much in the last 40 years; unfortunately, most of it is about aluminum. Hull adds, “One of man’s greatest fears is that his life will not count, that he will look back at his investment of time and effort only to conclude that it was a waste. Men’s hearts are not set aflame by the mundane.”^{iv}

In the midst of the confusion, some choose merely to go through the motions of human life. But, there is a monotony-breaking second lesson in Genesis 5. In a world where many merely live and die and that just about it...Despite the confusion...

II. SOME CHOOSE TO WALK CLOSELY WITH GOD

Genesis 5:21-24

Genesis 5:21 When Enoch had lived 65 years, he fathered Methuselah. ²²Enoch walked with God after

he fathered Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. ²³ Thus all the days of Enoch were 365 years. ²⁴ Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

Will you notice, perhaps circle, what the the Holy Spirit repeats it twice – vs. 22 *Enoch walked with God after he fathered Methuselah*, and vs. 24, *Enoch walked with God*. What would you give to have that on your gravestone? “(Your name)...walked with God.” Inscribed there because it was really true. Here, God underscores two truths about Enoch.

A. **Enoch did more than live & die; he WALKED with God.**
Genesis 5:21-23

Walking is basic to living for most every person. The word “walk” itself is a favorite Biblical description to describe the essence of a person’s life – what marks or dominates someone’s lifestyle. (e.g., when you think about “-----” you think...that is his/her “walk”).

- Psalm 1 asks you to evaluate who you regularly walk with (with the wicked or the godly)
- Proverbs 1,2,3 asks you discern where you regularly walk (on straight paths or crooked ones),
- Daniel 4:37 urges you to consider how you regularly walk (in pride or humility)

After his 1st son was born, “Enoch walked with God 300 years.” This from Marcus Dods.

Enoch walked with God because he was God’s friend and liked God’s company, because he was going in the same direction as God, and had no desire for anything but what lay in God’s path. We walk with God when He is in all our thoughts; not because we consciously think of Him at all times, but because He is naturally suggested to us by all we think of...so with the godly man, everything has a connection with God, and must be ruled by that connection.^v

What caused Enoch to march to the beat of a different drummer is not directly indicated. Perhaps it was the birth of his first son, his first child. That should get a man’s attention, though for so many, a sin-shaded outlook can devalue even that incredible experience.

And yet, God’s Spirit does provide one more glimpse into the heart of Enoch, one found in the NT book of Jude (p.1027, ESV), verses 14-15:

It was also about these^{vi} that Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his holy ones, to execute judgment on all and to convict all the ungodly of all their deeds of ungodliness that they have committed in such an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things that ungodly sinners have spoken against him.”

What kind of era did Enoch live in? As humanity was rapidly growing, as hundreds of thousands were being born and the human race was multiplying, the “dark side” was emerging (cf. Romans 1).

Humanity was increasingly given to ungodly deeds. Men spoke openly, frequently, rebelliously against God. Sin's sewage flowing out of the hearts of most early humanity.

Enoch swam upstream. His walk with God meant he called out sin and warned of what was coming. "The Lord will come with thousands of his holy ones, and will execute judgment on [that sewage]!" Walking with God, Enoch had a very clear understanding about how THE LORD would deal with history, with the human race selling out to sin, and with individuals who rebel against Him. Enoch was not afraid, nor was he ashamed, to make that known to his generation.

Enoch did not merely live. He walked in the presence of God every day, and walked in the expectation of God's return. Secondly,

B. Enoch did not "die," he was TAKEN by God.

Genesis 5:24, cf. Hebrews 11:5

²⁴ Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.

By our standards, Enoch lived to be about 30 years old.^{vii} For 300 of his 365 years, he cultivated a close relationship with God. Suddenly God decides to sovereignly, climactically, profoundly **take him**. One man in the early world did not "return to the dust," did not experience the sting of the curse of death. Here's how Hebrews 11 puts it.

Hebrews 11:5 **By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.**

In history, 3 persons have arrived in heaven like this. Enoch was the first. The prophet Elijah was the 2nd (2 Kings 2:11-18). And Jesus the Son of God was the third (Acts 1). Taken up by God into His presence, **they could not be found**.

Why would God do that? It's because God desired to make a statement in history about the DELIGHT He takes in a man who so thoroughly walks with Him. Think about it! How special was Enoch to his Creator? Why? Enoch did not "live," he **walked with God**. Enoch did not "die," **he was taken by God**. Like what a good friend would do showing up on your doorstep saying, "Let's go!"

Genesis 5's Lesson #1 – many, perhaps most, simply go through the motions of a lifespan.

Lesson #2 – some choose differently, to walk closely with God. And Lesson #3

III. **ONE DAY, GOD WILL COMMEND AND REWARD THOSE WHO WALKED WITH HIM**

2 Corinthians 5, Hebrews 11:1-6, 13-16

² Corinthians 5:6 So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, ⁷ **for we walk by faith, not by sight.** ⁸ Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. ⁹ So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ² For by it the people of old received their commendation. ³ By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. ⁴ By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts.

And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks.

⁵ By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God.

⁶ And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

Will you ask yourself today, “Am I walking with God?” I mean really, truly, actually. You might say, “Hey, I don’t know. I’m just kinda like everyone else!” Let the Holy Spirit use Genesis 5 to teach your/my heart, “That doesn’t cut it. Not merely living, reproducing, dying. Learning much about aluminum, or construction, or micro-biology. That’s merely “going through the motions.”

Am I walking with God? Am I known by that intimacy? Does that intimacy shape how I think about what’s going on in the world? Does that closeness shape the truth – sometimes straightforward – that comes out of my mouth?” It’s a kind of living to which God calls you and me.

What does that look like? It **FIRST begins with a personal FAITH RELATIONSHIP** with Jesus Christ. To walk with God you set aside all the confusion about God and begin a trust-faith-believing-following relationship with Jesus. Do you today? It can start right now. It begins when you place your faith in Christ as your SAVIOR.

Father God in heaven,
Today I choose to place my faith and trust

in Jesus Christ alone.

I believe He died in my place to pay the penalty my sin deserves.
I believe You raised him from the dead by the power of your Holy Spirit.
By faith, I receipt the gift of His righteousness in the place of my sin.
Thank you. Help be grow in Christ. Amen.

SECOND, walking with God means “God making my day.” **CULTIVATING A DAILY**

RELATIONSHIP with the Lord. There isn’t a place you go, there isn’t a conversation you have, there isn’t an activity you engage in but that the Lord Himself wants to be with you in it, and make each thing count in eternity. For most of Jesus’ disciples, that daily relationship experience more readily happens

- when you start your day in conversation and prayer with God. Daniel prayed 3 times – once in the morning, once at noon, once at night. He was a spiritual stud in the godless generations and kingdoms in which he lived.
- When you dedicate a portion of each day listening to God’s Spirit in the Word
- when you *walk with others* who are pursuing the Lord too

. THIRD, walking with God may also mean **BEING OUT OF STEP WITH OTHERS.**

**In the midst of widespread confusion
(about a relationship with God)
anyone can experience a personal
life-shaping walk with God.**

Copyright 2019 © David A. Staff
All rights reserved

ⁱ 1990 Issue

ⁱⁱ Alan P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 171. “That death is in contrast to the divine blessing and due to the presence of the curse is clearly indicated by the beginning and ending of the chapter. Genesis 5 seems to be displaying the reign of death in contrast to the desire of God. The exegete must thus explain the significance of this theme by relating it to the earlier chapters of the book.”

ⁱⁱⁱ What accounts for such long lifespans?

^{iv} Bill Hull, *Jesus Christ Disciplemaker*, p. 70.

^v Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, p.175.

^{vi} Jude 1:10 indicates that “these” (of vs. 14) refer to people who in history “...blaspheme all that they do not understand, and they are destroyed by all that they, like unreasoning animals, understand instinctively.”

^{vii} “Taken” by God at age 365, he lived just over a third of the normal lifespan for a male during that age.