

More than Crackers for Legacies

The Enoch Example – Part I

Selected Scripture

Introduction

My wife recently bought a book for me, entitled, *The Best, Worst, & Most Unusual: Noteworthy Achievements, Events, Feats & Blunders of Every Conceivable Kind*. Marsha knows that I am constantly reading and looking for illustrations and found a great source in this book. On page 228, I read the unusual story of Sylvester Graham.

Sylvester Graham was born in 1794. His name would soon become a household name and his passion would become his highest calling. Even though he only lived fifty-seven years, his legacy is known all around this country and others today.

By the early 1830's, Sylvester had become a pastor and had established himself as a fiery temperance lecturer. Oddly enough, however, he became convinced that the way to cure alcoholism was vegetarianism. A strict diet of vegetables, he preached, would cure the longing for rum. He also taught that carnal desires could be cured by eating foods made from ground wheat flour – which came to be known as Graham flour. He would become known abroad for his love of wheat products and was called, in fact, “The poet of bran bread and pumpkins.”

Later, he switched from trying to get people to stop drinking, to trying to get people to stop eating bread of any kind other than that made of whole wheat. He caused such a stir in 1847 that a riot broke out in Boston. All the Bostonian bakers were intent on lynching this “madman,” which was the nickname they had given him. Sylvester Graham was hurting their business. The police were unable to control the

crowd that had formed outside the lecture hall where Graham was speaking. Finally, however, some of Graham's followers poured grease from the second story window on top of the lynch mob. That settled them and Graham escaped with his life. Undeterred, he continued to lecture on the evils of meat and the need to eat foods made from wheat.

His legacy? Even though Sylvester Graham was a Presbyterian pastor, his ministry bore little fruit. However, his passion for ground wheat flour lived on! In fact, it can still be bought today, in the form of a cracker – the Graham Cracker – invented by Sylvester and named in honor of himself.ⁱ

Sylvester Graham's legacy is a cracker.

Now before you think out loud, “What a weird man,” ask yourself, “What is my passion? What do I feel strongly about?”

Will your legacy be that classic car; a boat; a house; a business; a wardrobe; jewelry . . .? These things might be inheritances left behind, but what will your lasting legacy be?

Webster defines “legacy” as, “something handed down from an ancestor”.ⁱⁱ

A legacy can be property, riches, awards. However, more than anything else, the significant legacies in our lives have nothing to do with stuff – they have to do with a name, a character, a reputation.

No son or daughter will ever grow up to say, “My dad was the greatest because he was rich.” Or, “My father was a wonderful man because he owned three companies and had a thousand employees.” Or,

“My dad was a wonderful man because of the way he always brought home a paycheck and we never once missed a meal.”

It is possible for a child to be well fed, but starving for what really matters in life.

I speak today to those of us who call ourselves men. In fact, I am not going to speak just to fathers, on this Father’s Day, but to men in general. Ladies, you can have the day off. Actually, the word of God applies to everyone, even when someone else is being addressed.

I want to start by encouraging the men today. Let me say something about the job the average father in the church is doing in the home. Even the world is beginning to take notice.

USA Today rocked the community and drew heated reactions and criticism for an article entitled, “Do Evangelical Protestant Fathers Really Know Best?” The article went on to say, amazingly so in this politically correct environment where religion is not supposed to affect anyone,

Religious congregations give young families social support and enforce certain norms about what it means to be a good father. According to recent findings, evangelical Protestant men are more likely to show affection toward their children than religiously unaffiliated men; they are more likely to want to know what’s going on in their children’s lives, and committed Protestant men have the lowest rate of domestic violence of any singular group in the United States of America.ⁱⁱⁱ

Isn’t that great?!

So in a climate where the church going, monogamous father is usually the brunt of a crude joke or a disrespectful movie, let me say, “Congratulations on your commitment to your family, congratulations on your desire to know about your children’s lives, and congratulations on your protection of and care for the wife God gave you.”

A few weeks ago, I told my grown children to watch for television commercials (between the Stanley Cup and the World Cup, there are a lot of commercials) that invariably show a father; a man who is out of touch, or ignorant, or uncaring, or gullible, or unaware, or completely out of date. We have begun watching with that in mind and indeed, most of the commercials show just that.

Now men, it would help if you stopped wearing knee-high dark socks with your shorts when you cut

the grass or go to the pool; and there is nothing wrong with trimming away the hair that is beginning to grow out of your ears. At least do these things – that would help a little!

Gentlemen, in an ever increasing hostile environment to values and purity and morality and fidelity and true spirituality, the father who dares to buck the current and live the truth of God’s word, and shepherd his family, and refuse to be pulled into the undertow of secularism, deserves to be encouraged and applauded, especially on this day that we call Father’s Day. Happy Father’s Day!

The Legacy of a Father Named Enoch

I invite your attention to a father who left a legacy that was much more than a cracker. His legacy was nothing less than character – which matters.

Turn to the book of Genesis. God records, in the early chapters of Genesis, the very first family tree. In Genesis chapter 4, the line of Adam through his rebellious son Cain is recorded. In Genesis chapter 5, the line of Adam through Seth, his godly son, is recorded.

By the time the seventh generation of Cain is roaming the earth, this particular part of the family tree is utterly corrupt and wicked. The seventh generation of Cain is represented by Lamech, who sings, in Genesis 4:23, of his pride in killing someone. He brags that he is seventy times more evil than his forefather, Cain, who killed his brother Abel.

The line of Cain is corrupt and evil and as far away from God as can be. The other side of the family tree is very different. The line that comes from Seth is a godly line.

While the seventh generation from Cain is the epitome of murder, arrogance, lust, and evil, the seventh generation from Seth is a man named Enoch, whose name means “dedicated”. He will live up to that name!

Notice Genesis 5:21-24.

Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah. Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.

We cannot miss the double reference that Enoch “walked with God”. What does it mean to walk with God?

This phrase represents categorically walking in a way that pleases God. In fact, the verb is “euaresteo” in the Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint, which literally means, “to be well pleasing”. This verb is also used in Hebrews 11:5, which says that Enoch pleased God.

The phrase “to walk with God” is used many times in the New Testament for the godly believer.

Paul told the Romans to,

... walk in newness of life. (Romans 6:4b).

Paul reminded the Corinthians that,

... we walk by faith, not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7).

Paul warned the Galatian believers to,

... walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)

Whole wheat diets do not keep us from carnal, fleshly living. Holy Spirit directed lives keep us from following after the desires of the flesh.

We get up in the morning and say, “Father, by the power of Your Holy Spirit who resides within me, I want to walk in a pure and wholesome manner. When I trip up throughout the day, convict me and remind me of my walk, so that I will confess quickly and get back in step with You.”

Walking with God does not necessarily mean we sin less often, but it does mean we confess more quickly.

Furthermore, Paul told the Ephesians to,

... walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us . . . (Ephesians 5:2a).

The apostle John tells us that holiness is an ingredient of walking with God, when he writes,

This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another . . . (I John 1:5-7a)

Later, John the apostle, gives us the glorious visual picture of the heavenly city where the believer will,

... walk with [God] in [garments of] white . . . (Revelation 3:4b)

The verb “peripatew,” means simply, “to walk around; to walk about; to conduct oneself in the normal events of life”. This is not something to get dressed up for and come to church to do – this is life.

We walk through life with a heart of faith, an attitude of love, a surrender to the Spirit, in newness of life, and with a desire for holiness.

This is just the beginning. In order to walk with someone, there are several things that must be agreed upon ahead of time.

1. You have to agree on the place you are headed.

In other words, if we do not agree on where we want to go, we are not going to walk together. If you want to go to Marble Slab and I want to go to Goodberry’s for ice cream, we are going to have to split up, sooner or later.

2. You have to agree on the same path.

It is possible to have the same destination, yet take different routes.

My family takes several cars to the same destination because we take different routes. We go to a restaurant, but one is going to the craft store first and another is going to the bookstore and another is going early to save seats. We go to the same place, but by different paths – which means we do not travel together.

If you are going to walk with someone else, you have to agree on the place, you have to agree on the path, and you have to agree on a couple more things.

3. You have to agree on the same pace.

If you walk with someone, you are not two blocks ahead of them or ten steps behind them.^{iv}

4. You have to relate to the same principle of nature.

In other words, you have to have a corresponding nature to walk with someone else.

Think of the difference in light of this,

Some animals can become very good companions to people. They may have great loyalty and sensitivity to their owners, and a close relationship can develop over the years. But humans cannot fellowship with even the

smartest and most devoted animal. Our natures are different – they do not correspond. Animals can offer companionship, but not fellowship. We can take a walk with a dog, but we cannot “walk” with a dog, in the sense of having communion and fellowship with him.^v

Peter wrote that when we trust Christ,

. . . [we] become partakers of the divine nature . . . (II Peter 1:4).

We share in the principle of Christ’s nature – therefore we fellowship with God. Without this corresponding nature, we cannot walk with God. Our spirits are dead in trespasses and sins. We must be made alive in Christ, by the power regeneration and His nature coming to reside within our nature, so that we now have a new nature – the nature of Christ.

Now we can walk with God.

If I said to you, “Listen, why don’t I stop by your house this afternoon, and let’s take a walk together.”

For us to take a walk, the presupposition is that we have agreed on several things. We would have to:

- agree on the place we want to go;
- agree on the path we want to take;
- agree on the pace, or the speed, at which we want to walk;
- share the same nature in order to commune and fellowship along the way.

Enoch walked with God for three hundred years. What an incredible legacy!

I would think it remarkable for someone to say they have walked with God for thirty years. Try three hundred!

However, please note that this is not a race with God, or a run, or a quick hop, skip and jump. This is a walk.

Now, what caused Enoch, at sixty-five years of age, to change direction; to alter his destination? We are told in Genesis 5:22a.

Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah . . .

Something ignited in him a change from passivity about God to passion for God. He went from spiritual apathy to spiritual activity. Enoch became a father.

For some of you, becoming a dad made a difference in your life, didn’t it? That first sight; that

first cry; that first time you held your baby had an impact on you. If you were like me, the first thought you had, as you held your newborn baby, was the thought, what in the world do I do now? Then you probably prayed, “Lord, help me not only be the father You want me to be, but help me even know where to start.”

Perhaps Enoch recognized that for the first sixty-five years of his life, no one was really taking notes. However, everything changed with little Methuselah.

Perhaps Enoch realized, as many of you did, that he would become larger than life to his child. He would define the word “father”; he would shape, in Methuselah’s mind, the meaning of calling God, his Father.

The question is not whether your child will have a relationship with God; the question is what kind of relationship will he have with God?

What is your relationship with God like?

The question is not, “Will your children develop spiritually?”; the question is, “How will they develop spiritually?”^{vi}

How are you developing, Dad?

One author wrote,

Just this week

I read a newspaper account

Of a thirteen-year-old boy

Who saved his brother’s life;

By driving him to a hospital

In his father’s car.

Never having driven before

His explanation was simple,

I just did what I saw my father do.^{vii}

We could ask and expect the answers:

- How did you know how to drive a car? I had watched my father and just did what I saw him do.
- Why did you refuse to argue with that neighbor when he said some unkind things? I just did what I saw my father do.
- Why did you get mad and throw your wrench at the lawn mower? I just did what I saw my father do.
- Why did you get those adult channels on cable TV? I just did what I saw my father do.

- Why did you stick it out in that difficult job day after day? I did what I saw my father do.
- Why did you give the clerk back the money when he gave you too much change? I just did what I saw my father do.
- Why did you teach third grade boys, even when your sons were grown and gone? I just did what I saw my father do.
- Why did you pray and thank God for good times and bad? I just did what I saw my father do.

Perhaps at the age of sixty-five, holding his newborn son, Enoch knew he had been on the path of Cain, instead of the path of Seth, and realized someone was going to be watching him from that point on.

Enoch wanted to leave a legacy more significant than crackers made of wheat flour – Enoch wanted to leave a legacy of character made of sterling silver.

Now there is more to Enoch’s turn-around.

Enoch named his son Methuselah, not because he wanted to embarrass him every time he registered for classes, but because the name was a prophetic announcement. It meant, “when he is dead, it shall come”.

Simply put, Enoch had been given revelation from God that judgment was coming from God. It would come when his son died.

Enoch not only changed his direction in life, he changed his occupation. He became a prophet/preacher who preached for three hundred years that God’s judgment was coming.

In the little New Testament book of Jude, we are given the content of Enoch’s message as he prophesied,

. . . Behold, the Lord will come with many thousands of His holy ones, to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. (Jude 1:14b-15)

When will the judgment come on the earth? This is a prophetic reference to the second coming of Christ – but it will have a specific application in the flood that will come as soon as Methuselah’s grandson Noah finishes building the ark.

When Methuselah turned eight hundred fifty years old, Noah received word from God to begin

building an ark. He will pick up Enoch’s message of judgment and warning, “As soon as Methuselah dies, judgment will come.”

Can you imagine how odd that must have sounded to the sons of Cain and the sons of Seth? They will all disbelieve, including Methuselah’s own son. Building an ark was odd enough – but to tie God’s judgment to the death of an old guy like Methuselah seemed even more odd.

Imagine this with me. When Methuselah is:

- 967 years old – Noah is hanging the door of the ark;
- 968 years old – Noah and his family are packing the ark with food;
- 969 years old – the animals have arrived and the ark is finished.

Noah hears the message from God to board the ark around the same time he hears the message that Methuselah has just died. For the first time in human history, the sound of thunder is heard and rain begins to fall.

Methuselah was a living reminder of judgment.

Fathers, you do not need to be Enoch or Methuselah to deliver the same warning. It is appointed unto man once to die – and then the judgment (Hebrews 9:27). Have you told your children? Listen, after you die – you will stand before God. Are you ready? Have you received the forgiveness of God through Christ? Have you asked for the gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ alone?

Methuselah became, not only a living testimony of the coming judgment of God, but a living illustration of the grace of God. He lived longer than any other human being ever lived. It was no small irony that judgment came from God when Methuselah died – and God allowed him to live longer than anyone else ever lived.

Are you alive? Are you breathing? Then you can still get right with God! As long as you are alive, Jesus Christ can become your Savior – do not wait.

What was it like for Methuselah, being the son of Enoch?

- He was the son of an odd man – at odds with his world.
- He was the son of a passionate man.
- He was the son of a lonely man – his uncles, aunts, cousins, friends, and neighbors thought Enoch was crazy and none of them

believed him, just as they would refuse to believe Noah after him. Enoch was willing to stand alone!

- He was the son of a focused man who wanted to make the most of his son's life and the time that was left, for the glory of God.

For many fathers, it is the birth of their child that crystallizes their focus on what really matters.

I recently read in Ken Canfield's book on effective fathers, a story from the Olympics of 1924. It was the summer games in Paris. Bill Havens was selected to represent the United States that year in a canoeing competition – a single paddle and a single competitor racing against other nations. A few months before the Olympics, Havens learned that his wife was due to give birth sometime during the games. He had a decision to make: the opportunity of a lifetime or . . . the opportunity of a lifetime. He made his decision and stayed home. The team left for Paris without him and on August 1, 1924, his son was born – four days *after* the games. He could have gone after all, but had made up his mind not to risk being away.

Fast forward the Olympic tapes to 1952, the year the Summer Olympics were in Helsinki. Bill received a telegram from Helsinki that he would not have traded for any amount of gold. The telegram read: "Dear Dad, thanks for waiting around for me to be born in 1924. I am coming home with the gold medal you could have won. Your loving son, Frank."^{viii}

Methuselah's daddy was odd, passionate, courageous, and focused. There was one more thing that Methuselah experienced, being the son of Enoch:

- He was ultimately, the son of a missing man.

Genesis 5:24 tells us that God took Enoch; that God translated him without death into paradise. For Enoch, one author wrote, it was merely a change of location, not a change of company.

Enoch's family probably suspected foul play or an accident or an abduction. No one knew for certain. We do.

The old British expositor from the last century, G. Campbell Morgan, said,

Enoch was a man who used to go for long walks with God. How did it end? One day they walked on and on and on and when they had gone so far, God turned and said to him, "Enoch, you're a long way from home, why don't you come on home with me."^{ix}

Now, that is a legacy – a man who walked with God became a man who walked away with God.

That would be something to tell the grandkids, wouldn't it?!

In case you have forgotten, you can tell your kids that the same possibility exists for you too. Should Christ come for His church right now, every one of us would be translated to heaven – without dying. As we are told,

. . . [at the] shout . . . and . . . the trumpet of God, . . . we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)

Let us leave this kind of legacy of walking with God now – anticipating that we might walk away with God at any moment and knowing that we will one day walk with God in heaven forever.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 6/18/2006 by Stephen Davey.

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ⁱ Bruce Felton and Mark Fowler, The Best, Worst, & Most Unusual, (Galahad Books, 1976), p. 228.

ⁱⁱ Webster's New World Dictionary (The Southwestern Company, 1964), p. 428.

ⁱⁱⁱ Julia Neyman, "Do Evangelical Protestant Fathers Really Know Best?" USA Today (June 17, 2004), p. 9D.

^{iv} R. Kent Hughes, Hebrews: Volume 2 (Crossway, 1993), p. 77.

^v John MacArthur, Hebrews (Moody Press, 1983), p. 266.

^{vi} Ken Canfield, The 7 Secrets of Effective Fathers (Tyndale House, 1992), p. 169.

^{vii} Ibid., p. 102.

^{viii} Ibid., p. 12.

^{ix} Sam Gordon, Jude: Fighting Truth Decay (Ambassador, 2002), p. 89.