

Series: Family Portrait: A picture of God's design for the family.

#6 Methuselah's father

Genesis 5:22-27

Intro: Welcome EAG church today. Happy Father's Day to all you dads. It's an amazing thing to be a dad, and I've got the additional blessing of being known as Papi Bear to 7 little admirers known as my grandchildren.

A small boy said, "Father's Day is just like Mother's Day, only you don't spend as much on the gift."

Former MLB player, Harmon Killebrew, said, "my father used to play with my brother and me in the yard. Mother would come out and say, 'You're tearing up the grass.'" Dad would say, "We're not raising grass, we're raising boys."

In 1910 a lady named Senora Dodd in Spokane, Washington, was sitting in a church service on Mother's Day and as she was listening to the sermon, she thought about her father, a Civil War veteran. Her mom had died early in life so her, and her siblings, had been brought up by their father, who was a very devout and godly man. She thought it would be a wonderful thing to have a special time to honor her father and all fathers. Because he was born in the month of June, she was able to have a special day honoring her father on the third Sunday of June in 1910 in Spokane.

Many years later, in 1966, Lyndon Johnson signed the proclamation declaring that the third Sunday in June would be set aside as Father's Day, a day when we would recognize and honor and pay tribute to our earthly fathers.

There is something special about a whole family in church together, mother, father, and children. I heard about a kid who was sitting with his dad in church and the offering plate was approaching. He said, you don't have to pay for me, dad, I'm under five.

In school one day a teacher asked a little boy, What's the nicest thing your dad ever did for you? The little boy said, He married my mother.

I don't know if there is a dad who, in your heart of hearts, you don't want to be the best dad that you can possibly be.

The word "**father**" conjures up all kinds of memories. "Dad" is an immensely powerful word. The father leaves an enduring mark on the life of the soul of children and grandchildren.

It may be damaging; it may be enabling; it might be powerful. But it is incredible that this most powerful human position is conferred upon fathers.

Berry Brazelton, former chief of child development at Children's Hospital in Boston: "Of all human relationships, the bond between father and child is one of the most powerful and complex. We may look to our mothers for unconditional love. But rather we are men or women, we often seek to validate our existence through the approval of our fathers. If our father dies or in some way is absent before we earn that approval, we live the rest of our lives feeling cheated."

It is not that the love of the mother is unimportant. It is vitally important. But, in a way, the dad represents to the child what the outside world thinks of him or her. When the dad says to the child: "You can do it. You are special. I believe in you. I'm proud of you. I'm here with you, and I'm here to help you," then the child believes that the world is a place where a living can be made and where success can be had. But, the opposite can also be true.

They say that one of the first impressions children get of God is what they learn from their father. **[Story of my dad, uncle Paul] A big thanks to all you men who step in and step up like a father and make an impact in a child's life, whether as a stepdad, a family member, foster parent, adopted parent, coach, teacher, or church worker.**

When you read the Bible, you find that it has a great deal to say about fathers. You will find teachings and words of wisdom for fathers. You will find in the Bible many examples of fathers. We think about Abraham who was father of the Hebrew race and the father of the faith. We think about David who was a great king, but he was not a very good father. We think about Joseph who was the earthly father of the Lord Jesus Christ. He seemed to be the strong, silent type.

Consider the prodigal son's father. What a beautiful scene it was when the prodigal son said, I will arise and go to my father. It gives us a picture of the wonderful love of our Heavenly Father.

Jesus reinforced the fact about God being our Heavenly Father, in Matthew 6:9 when he said, "This is how you should pray [this is how you should talk to God] **Our Father** in heaven."

I have chosen an unusual biblical father that I want to talk to you about today. According to the Genesis, Methuselah was the oldest man who ever lived, at 969 years, but his father is more familiar to us. The title of my message today is **Methuselah's Father**.

This will not be a message you have heard before, at least not from me; but I believe it will inspire you. **Let's PRAY**

Turn with me to the book of Genesis, chapter 5. The fifth chapter of the book

of Genesis has been called the death chapter in the Bible. When you begin the fifth chapter and move down through these verses, you will notice that there is a recurring phrase.

It tells about a certain person. It tells how long they lived and then it says, "**he died.**" That's why we call it the death chapter. If I have counted correctly, eight times in this chapter it says, "**And he died.**"

That phrase is proof of the words of God to Adam and Eve in the Garden, when God said, "**you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for in the day that you eat of it, you will surely die.**"

It is also an illustration of our own mortality. The Bible says in the book of Hebrews, "**It is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment.**"

Some of these people lived for hundreds of years at that time in history, and yet, the Bible says about every one of them, "they died."

It is also an explanation of New Testament truth. In I Corinthians 15, verse 22, the Bible makes this interesting statement; "**For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.**" (NIV)

When you look at Genesis, chapter 5, verse 1, you will notice that the chapter begins with a statement, "**This is the book of the generations of Adam.**" Then, you look in the New Testament in the book of Matthew and it says, "**The beginning of the generations of Jesus Christ.**"

There is a physical family and a spiritual family. When you are born into your physical family, you are born into the family of Adam, and "**In Adam all die.**"

But in Matthew 1:1, instead of "And he died and he died and he died," you have all the begets. It is talking about the birth of people. Abraham begets Isaac and this one begets that one, all the way to Jesus.

By our physical birth we are born into the family of Adam, but all die. By our spiritual birth we are born again into the family of the Lord, and in Jesus Christ all are made alive.

But as you read down through these rather gloomy, mournful statements about death, in Genesis, there is a bright spot right in the middle of all of this. In verse 21 we are told about a man named Enoch, who is Methuselah's father. It starts off just like everybody else. It tells us about Enoch, and it tells us how long Enoch lived. But then you notice there is a difference. **Let's Read Genesis 5:21 "When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. 22 After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked**

faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. 23 Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. 24 Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away."

It doesn't say that Enoch died but rather the Bible says, "***Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away."***

We all know Enoch as the man who walked with God. But there is something in this text which I have preached many times before which has alluded me until recently. In verse 21 it says that Enoch lived for 65 years and became the father of Methuselah. Then in verse 22 it says, ***And Enoch walked with God.***

When you put it all together it **specifically says that Enoch began to walk with God after he became a father.**

You know, of course, that parenthood changes you.

STORY: Four expectant fathers were in a Minneapolis hospital waiting room, while their wives were in labor.

The nurse tells the first man, "Congratulations! You're the father of twins!"

"What a coincidence! I work for the Minnesota Twins baseball team!"

The nurse returns and tells the second man, "You are the father of triplets!"

"Wow, what a coincidence! I work for 3M Corporation!"

The nurse then tells the third man that his wife has given birth to quadruplets.

"Amazing says the third man! I work at the Four Seasons Hotel!"

At this point, the fourth guy faints. When he comes to, the other new dads ask what's wrong. "What's wrong?! He says, I work at the Seven-Eleven!"

I remember when our first child was born. Nancy had such a glow when she was pregnant, still does have a glow. I remember how excited we were, and I was looking to being a father. We didn't know if it was going to be a girl or boy.

When it came time for her to have the baby on December 23rd, the doctor said to Nancy, if you have the baby before noon, you can go home on Christmas Day. And sure, enough Caleb was born at 11:55 AM. Early on Christmas morning, Nancy called and said, "I'm the only one here, come and get us." What a great Christmas present that was.

I took them home. We put him in the little crib and went to look at him every ten minutes. Things were going quite well until about 2 o'clock in the morning when Caleb began to cry. I said, Nancy, it's time to feed your baby. Being a parent changes you. There is just something about it. Then you have more kids, and it changes you even more.

But it's interesting to watch parents when that first one comes along. That baby is so fragile. You don't breathe on the little one. You boil the pacifier if it falls on the floor. You wouldn't dare put the baby in the nursery at first. They would never take care of your precious baby like you would. Then about the time the fourth one comes along you go to the nursery and say, here catch!

What man of us, when children have come along and we have become fathers, have not prayed a prayer something like this. *"God, make me the father I ought to be. Help me to be the man that encourages my sons and daughters and live as an example so they will love and follow You."*

It seems to have been this kind of circumstances that caused Enoch to begin to walk with God. So today, I want to give some suggestions to you dads, that will **help you** and **inspire you** to be the dad that in your heart you want to be.

The first thing I want to say to all us fathers is this.

I. Make Sure you walk on the Right Path.

Would you be surprised if I told you the Christian life is never described in the New Testament as a "**work for God**," but as a "**walk with God**."

2 Cor. 5:7 "We walk by Faith, not by sight."

Rom. 6:4 "...we should walk in newness of life."

Rom. 8:1,4 "...we walk not after the flesh but after the spirit"

2 Cor. 6:16 "God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they will be my people.'"

Gal. 5:16 "Walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

Gal. 5:25 "If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

Col. 2:6 "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk in Him."

1 Thess. 2:12 "...you should walk worthy of God."

1 John 1:7" If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin."

3 John 1:4 "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

It's important that you get this, because many people live a Christian life that is primarily "**works-oriented**" rather than "**walk-oriented**."

Instead of: *Life in Christ...they labor for Christ

Instead of: *Walking with Christ...they busily work for Christ

Instead of: *Abiding in Christ...they are engaged with activities for Christ

And as a result--many Christians are entirely caught up in a works oriented, labor-intensive Christianity. And they are so busy working for God ... they have no time to walk with God!!

The Bible says that Enoch **walked** with God. That means that Enoch got on the right path. It was a difficult day when Enoch came along. It was a society very much like our society. In fact, it was a society that made it difficult to be the kind of man, he wanted to be and that we ought to be.

But when Methuselah was born, something happened to Enoch. The Bible says he began to walk with God.

Enoch opened his heart and his life to God. Have you done that? Have you been saved? The greatest thing you could ever give to that son or daughter, and of course to your wife, is to give them a dad who knows the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Are you on the road that leads to heaven? Where are you leading your family?

Illustration: An old country church in Georgia, used to have testimony meetings and a man by the name of Brother Willie Lee talked about when he was a lost man. He said one afternoon he was in his back yard and his little son was following him around. Every step he would take that little boy would try to stretch his little legs and take the same steps his daddy was.

He said God spoke to his heart and said to him, Willie, that little boy is following in your steps. Where are you leading that little guy? That is what brought Willie Lee to know Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

The father is the spiritual key in the family. I have found that if you can win the father to Christ, chances are you will win the wife and the children to the Lord.

You, dad, set the spiritual direction of your family. Let Jesus Christ be the center of your life. Get your life on the right path. Make sure Jesus is the

center of your life.

Some men make other things the center of their lives. Some men make their work the center of their life. Sports become the center in the lives of others. I heard about a guy that when football season was starting, he went over to the television, looked at his wife and said, do you have anything to say before the seasons starts?

A lot of things are acceptable the bible says, but not all things are profitable. Dad, don't let your work, don't let sports, don't let other things be the center of your life. Let Jesus be the center of your life if you want to be the kind of father and the kind of husband that you need to be.

I think of the story of the child psychologist who spent many hours constructing a new driveway at his home. Just after he smoothed the surface of the freshly poured concrete, his small children chased a ball across the driveway, leaving deep footprints. The man yelled after them with a flood of angry words. His shocked wife said, "You're a psychologist who's supposed to love children!" The man said, "I do love kids in the abstract, but not in the concrete!"

In Philippians 1:21, the apostle Paul said, "***For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.***"

Be honest about it. What would you say right there? For me to live is _____. What would it be to you? If you put anything there instead of Jesus Christ, you cannot say to die is gain. You would have to say that to die is loss.

Have you ever thought about it, when you bring a baby into this world, you have brought a piece of eternity into this world? You had everything to do with their being here and you will have a great deal to do with what path they will follow.

Just so you know, your children were born with a hereditary heart condition, they inherited from you. The Bible calls it a sinful nature.

All of us are born with it, thanks to our great...great... grandfather, Adam. And because of it, all of us need to repent and receive Christ into our hearts and lives. And, dad, you have the privilege and responsibility of leading the way for your kids.

Did you know that there was never a time that Methuselah did know that his father was walking with God? You say, preacher, you don't know the things I've done. You don't know how awful I've lived. No. I don't. But I know this. If you will receive Jesus Christ as your Savior your kids will remember their dad as someone who walked with God on the right path.

So, Dad, #1 - It should set you liberate you today to discover that the essence of the Christian life is "**walking with Christ**" and our works for Christ becomes a secondary, natural by-product or overflow of our walk with Christ?

*Dad, make sure you walk on the **right path**,*

II. Make Sure You Walk at the Right Pace.

Notice also that our relationship with Christ is described as a walk not a run. If you walk **with God** that means you are going at the right pace. It means you are walking at the pace God is going. **The Bible says, can two walk together unless they agree.** It means that you are living the way God wants you to live. It means that you are on the journey, walking the way God wants you to walk.

In the hall of fame of faith, [Hebrews 11] verse 5 records Enoch's epitaph. **"By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away." For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."**

Basically, it simply says "he pleased God." There is nothing finer that could be said of any person than that he or she pleased God. This testimony that we have of Enoch was not just something nicely spoken by the preacher at Enoch's memorial service (remember, there was no body). **Enoch had this testimony while he lived "before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God"**

What does it mean to "Walk with God at the right pace?" Hebrews 11:6 says: "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

From what we know about Enoch we can reach the following conclusion:

"People with faith please God
Enoch was a man with faith
Therefore, Enoch pleased God."

Enoch pleased the Lord because he was a man of faith. The most basic definition of faith is believing God; it is "taking God at His Word. There were at least three elements to Enoch's faith, that point to the life of a man who loved God, and who walked with God at the right pace.

1. First, Walking with God at the right pace involves Recognizing the Lord

Hebrews 11:6 says that the person of faith must believe that God exists, "that He is." At 65 years old (Gen. 5:22) Enoch became a father and came to a place where he believed God existed and he put his trust in the God he came to know. That is essentially what salvation is.

Salvation is coming to the place where you believe that God is for real, and you put your entire trust in Him. Have you acknowledged the Lord God as your Creator and Savior?

2. Second, Walking with God at the right pace means Responding to the Lord

Notice it says that the person of faith diligently seeks the Lord. Enoch heard from the Lord and responded to Him. Enoch had a dynamic and living relationship with the Lord. He was a doer of the word (Jas. 1:22). His faith worked! Enoch came to know the Lord when he was 65 years old, but he's not about to retire. He is just getting started. From the moment he met the Lord he "Walked with God." What about you? Are you "Walking with God?" Are you following Christ daily? Are you living in obedience to the Word of God? That is what it means to walk **with** God.

3. Third, Walking with God at the right pace means Receiving from the Lord

God "is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." The Lord is both the rewarder and the reward of our seeking. The best reward of seeking is to find that which you are looking for. If you are seeking for a lost child, the best reward is to find that child. This is how it is for the Christian who seeks the Lord. **The best reward that God, the rewarder, could give us is the reward of Himself!**

Enoch sought God and he found God! Enoch's reward was continuous communion with God which gave Enoch peace, companionship, and joy. This is our reward here on earth, communion, and companionship with Jesus.

I'm reminded about how our kids will live at the pace we model for them. Do you remember the song, "CATS IN THE CRADLE" by Harry Chapin?

My child arrived just the other day
He came to the world in the usual way
But there were planes to catch and bills to pay
He learned to walk while I was away
And he was talkin' 'fore I knew it, and as he grew
He'd say "I'm gonna be like you, Dad
You know I'm gonna be like you"

And the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon
Little boy blue and the man on the moon

When you comin' home, Dad
I don't know when, but we'll get together then
You know we'll have a good time then

My son turned ten just the other day
He said, "Thanks for the ball, Dad, come on let's play
Can you teach me to throw", I said "Not today
I got a lot to do", he said, "That's okay"
And he walked away but his smile never dimmed
And said, "I'm gonna be like him, yeah
You know I'm gonna be like him"

The third verse says...

Well, he came from college just the other day
So much like a man I just had to say
"Son, I'm proud of you, can you sit for a while"
He shook his head and then said with a smile
"What I'd really like, Dad, is to borrow the car keys
See you later, can I have them please"

And the last verse says...

I've long since retired, my son's moved away
I called him up just the other day
I said, "I'd like to see you if you don't mind"
He said, "I'd love to, Dad, if I can find the time
You see my new job's a hassle and the kid's got the flu
But it's sure nice talking to you, Dad
It's been sure nice talking to you"
And as I hung up the phone it occurred to me

**He'd grown up just like me
My boy was just like me**

You may remember Jim Bakker of PTL fame. He went to prison and his son, Jamie Charles, had a hard time. He got into drugs. He lived a rebellious lifestyle. Jamie Charles went to the prison and spent a day with his dad. At the end of the day, here's what Jamie Charles said.

"Dad, this has been the best day of my life. I've spent my whole life trying to get your attention, and be with you, and today I had you to myself."

A Day Wasted - Charles Francis Adams, a 19th century political figure and diplomat, kept a diary. His son, Brook Adams, also kept a diary, which is still in existence. One Charles took his son fishing, and Brook Adams made this entry: **"Went fishing with my father—the most wonderful day of my life!"** Years later

after Charles died, Brook looked up the day when they went fishing and wondered what his father had wrote. It said, "Went fishing with my son today—a day wasted." The father thought he was wasting his time while fishing with his son, but his son saw it as an investment of time.

The only way to tell the difference between wasting time and investing it, is to know what our ultimate purpose in life is. *Dad, lead your kids and on purpose...on the Right Path, and at the Right Pace,*

III. Make Sure you Walk to the Right Place.

God has a wonderful future prepared for those who walk with God. Genesis 5:24 records that "Enoch walked with God and was not for God took Him." Like Enoch our walking into eternity is to be a joyous and natural progression; a graduation to glory!

Imagine for a moment that you are going to a funeral. It's your funeral. What are your friends, what are your acquaintances, what are your business associates going to say about you? More important than that, what will your wife and your kids say about you? Where are you leading them?

ILLUSTRATION - Here is the sad confession of one father. "I took my children to school but not to church. I taught them to drink but not of the living water. I enrolled them in Little League but not Sunday School. I showed them how to fish but not to be fishers of men. I made the Lord's Day a holiday, rather than a holy day." "I gave them a TV, a computer and an I-phone, but not a Bible. I handed them the keys to the car but did not give them the keys of the kingdom of God. I taught them to make a living but failed to bring them to Christ who alone can make a life."

STORY: A little boy came home one Sunday morning and as some dads do, dad had stayed home to read the sports page and watch the game. The little boy came home, and he was kind of fiddling around his dad's knees and trying to get his dad's attention. After a while the little fellow just jumped up in his dad's lap. Dad held him and hugged him a little bit. Then the little boy looked at his dad and said, Dad, guess what the Sunday school teacher asked me this morning. He didn't even take his eyes off the game. What did the teacher ask this morning? the little boys said, the teacher asked when we died where did we want to go. That got the dad's attention. He looked down at the boy and said, Son, what did you tell them? The little guy crawled up a little closer and cupped his hands around his face and whispered, I told my teacher when I die, I want to go where my daddy goes. **God used that to GET that Dad's Attention and he started walking with God and leading his family to the right place.**

A little girl was telling her mother the story of Enoch that she had learned in

Sunday School. The little girl said "mamma, one day Enoch and God took a walk together. They walked and they talked, and they talked, and they walked, until Enoch finally said, Lord, it's getting late. I'd better go home. And the Lord said, Enoch, we've been walking so long together, I believe we're closer to my home than yours. Why don't you come home with me tonight?" So, Enoch went home with God. That is how God wants it to be for us; to keep walking with Him all the way to glory.

Enoch had this testimony that "he pleased God." What will be said of you one day? What will be your epitaph? Enoch had a good beginning but more than that he had a good ending. **When God was ready for Enoch, Enoch was ready for God.**

If you do not personally know God, why not establish a personal relationship with Him right now. Acknowledge that you need Him in your life, that you need His forgiveness for your sin; believe in the Lord and place your trust in Him; and commit your life to Him by giving Him complete control of your life. To walk with God in the present is to be ready for God in the future. Dad, make sure you are walking with God today. **Lead the pace to the right place.**