

Enoch Walking: Conversational Prayer

“Enoch walked with God” (Genesis 5:22). In these simple words we see the essence of prayer: it is being aware of the presence of God, it is talking to God. Prayer is conversation with the Triune God. It is the noblest and greatest act a person created in God’s image can do.

Genesis 5 begins by stating that God created man, male and female, in the likeness of God. Our personhood as image bearers is the ground of prayer. We can talk to God because we are persons created in His image. Prayer – conversation with God – highlights the status and dignity God has given to us as image bearers

But we are also image bearers of our earthly parents. Genesis 5 also teaches that we are also in the image of our first father and mother, Adam and Eve. We also bear the image of our earthly parents. What does this mean? In the genealogy, a phrase is repeated after each patriarch: “and he died...and he died...and he died.” Despite their long years, each patriarch succumbs to death, proving God’s warning to Adam and Eve that the wages of sin would be death.

You and I live between these two realities. On the one hand, created in the image of God, given the status of persons in the likeness of God, we can pray to God. On the other hand, given our status as sons and daughters of Adam and Eve, we are doomed to death. We live under the dominion of death.

What is so striking about Genesis 5 is Enoch. We are told that he “walks with God, and he was not, for God took him.” Enoch’s story opens a crack through which light shines in the dark story of humankind under the dominion of death. It shows that eternal life with the Triune and Living God is still yet a possibility for fallen man. In the New Testament this crack becomes a gaping hole, a gift of God: “for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

What does Enoch teach us about prayer?

First, Enoch teaches us that the greatest thing we can be about as people in this world is prayer. There is nothing greater, nobler, more worthy of our time, attention and devotion than prayer. In prayer we talk to the Triune God – Father, Son, Spirit – the Living God. All else in this world is dying. Life alone is found in God. When a boy or girl, a man or woman bows to pray, or speaks to God in their heart, they fulfill their highest calling: walking with God. So make it your aspiration, when all else is forgotten, that it will be said of you, “He walked with God”, “She walked with God.”

Second, Enoch teaches us how to pray. Prayer is walking with God. This means two things. First, it is being conscious of the presence of God throughout your day, being in communion with God. Second, it is talking to God, conversing with God. This talking does not have to be out loud. It is the walking with God of the heart, of the affections. This is why the Apostle Paul could exhort, “pray continually.”

For a couple of years in Indy, I walked with a friend 3-4 times a week in the morning from 6-7am. We met at a park near my house and walked. We shared our story with each other, caught each other up on the day to day realities of our life; but other times we just walked and were silent, watching the sunrise together. Prayer is being with God, walking with God like Adam and Eve did in the Garden before the fall (Gen. 3:8).

Third, Enoch teaches us to use the name of our Lord Jesus Christ when we pray. How is that? The closing verse of Genesis 4 says, “At that time people began to call upon the name of the LORD” (4:26). This is the Bible’s first reference to prayer (besides Adam and Eve walking with God in the Garden) and it shows that prayer is not to a generic spirit, or being-in-general, or some abstract deity. Prayer is by a person to a Person, namely to Yahweh, the LORD God. In Jesus Christ, Yahweh himself has come to us and walks with us. That is why Christian prayer is always done “in the Name of Jesus.” Through Jesus, God’s eternal life has come to us, through Jesus we have access to the Triune God, and so Christians pray “in the Name of Jesus”.

Individual Prayer Guide

Take time this week to slow down and be conscious of the presence of God in your life. Thank him for his gifts, talk to him about your sorrows, listen to His Word. You can be in a constant dialogue with God with your heart. Your heart can be lifted up to God throughout the day – in the hustle and bustle of family life, in the grind of the workplace, as you wake up and fall asleep, practice the presence of God in all these times and places and talk to Him as your Father who loves you.

Community Group Discussion and Prayer

1. What does Enoch's story teach you about prayer?
2. Where do you struggle in your "walking with God"?

Practicing Prayer in your Community Group

Take 20 (or so) minutes for each Community Group member to be alone. There may not be enough places to go in the home/apartment so some may have to walk outside, or find a nook or cranny, or just clean the kitchen. But during this time the purpose is for each person to practice being conscious of God, talking with their heart to God. After the 20 minutes are up, gather back together and discuss your experience.

3. What was hard/what was good about this time of "walking with God"?