

God Isn't a Checkbox

2 Kings 13:10-20

INTRO: Understanding checkboxes (rules) vs. a relationship

- God has given us great insight into the tension of rules vs. a relationship by providing us with this thing called the teenage years
- Our parents loved us even though we were idiots (and we love our kids too)
 - Wanted to spend time with us → hey, let's go to the mall
 - "Fine, I'll go, but don't expect me to walk near you..."
 - "Billy, you want some lunch?" // "Momm, you're so embarrassing..."
 - "Can you get me this? I did go to the mall with you after all..."
- Rule-based way of thinking says, "Just tell me what boxes I need to check..." // Relationships don't work that way
- BUT this is how so many treat God → attendance // giving // rescue dog (fortnite gamer) // YouVersion // "I never killed anyone..."
- What does God think about all this?

SCRIPTURE AND EXPLANATION:

2 Kings 13:10 In the thirty-seventh year of Judah's King Joash, Jehoash son of Jehoahaz became king over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned sixteen years. 11 He did what was evil in the Lord's sight. He did not turn away from all the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit, but he continued them.

- Remind people about Jehu, the kingdom being split and what the sin of Jeroboam was

12 The rest of the events of Jehoash's reign, along with all his accomplishments and the power he had to wage war against Judah's King Amaziah, are written in the Historical Record of Israel's Kings. 13 Jehoash rested with his fathers, and Jeroboam sat on his throne. Jehoash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

- He died, but someone else was about to die to. Now we backtrack a hair...

14 When Elisha became sick with the illness from which he died, King Jehoash of Israel went down and wept over him and said, "My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel!"

- Who is Elisha?
- Why is King Jehoash crying? Not b/c of Elisha... b/c they just got their butts whooped
 - Ex: Ever met someone who always brings it back to them? You have something serious going on and they somehow still make it about their stubbed toe?!
- How will Elisha respond to this 'great display of compassion?'

15 Elisha responded, "Get a bow and arrows." So he got a bow and arrows. 16 Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Grasp the bow." So the king grasped it, and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. 17 Elisha said, "Open the east window." So he opened it. Elisha said, "Shoot!" So

he shot. Then Elisha said, "The Lord's arrow of victory, yes, the arrow of victory over Aram. You are to strike down the Arameans in Aphek until you have put an end to them."

- Even though Elisha is about to die, he still is God's prophet. He could tell the King to go pound sand, but instead he is polite and even helpful
- All good news so far! Now remember, Jehu was only promised to a few generations...

18 Then Elisha said, "Take the arrows!" So he took them. Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground!" So he struck the ground three times and stopped. 19 The man of God was angry with him and said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times. Then you would have struck down Aram until you had put an end to them, but now you will strike down Aram only three times." 20 Then Elisha died and was buried.

- Dramatic exit on Elisha's part - If a chariot of fire isn't an option, this is how I hope I go
- In order to understand what is going on here, we need to speculate a little bit...
- Clearly something about how he struck the ground made Elisha upset
 - Maybe he was clearly disinterested, obeying but not really...
 - Ex: Like when you tell your child to not touch something and they hover
 - Maybe he was doing the bare minimum... Had five or six arrows in his hand but only strike (e.g. shot) the ground three times) and then his arm got tired
 - In other words, a lack of enthusiasm for obeying the prophet
- A lack of enthusiastic obedience. I think this is what is really going on here - his heart just isn't in it and this results in him 'obeying' but not with his heart
 - Can you relate? Obeying, but not with your heart? One cheeking it
 - Ex: I may be sitting down, but inside I am standing up!
- If you think about it, this is basically religious ritual vs. true worship
 - Do what I "need" to do rather than real awe in my heart
 - How much do I need to give? I guess I will do that...
 - How much do I need to sacrifice? I guess I can do that...
 - How much do I need to share my faith? I guess I can do that...
 - What's the minimum amount of energy I need to put in to making disciples of my kids? I can do that. My co-workers? I can do that.
 - See what I mean? Rules, ritual and religion say, "Let me define this"
 - A relationship of worship says, "I want to respond accordingly"
- Wives: Is it enough for your husband to "not have an affair and bring home a paycheck" or do you want to be romanced as if your hubby were captivated by you?
 - Of course the latter. Rules-based thinking says, "What do I need to do to check the box?" rather than "What do I want to do" or "What is the right thing to do?"
- In my assessment, King Jehoash was guilty of bare-minimum, rule-based ritualistic obedience rather than true obedience (which is born out of an enthusiastic heart!)
 - Elisha wants me to smack the ground? Okay, I can do that, but my arms are pretty sore from all those pull-ups I did the other day, so...

SUMMARY: King Jehoash comes to Elisha, not to honor him on his deathbed, but because he's exhausted all his other options. Once he's there, he really doesn't want to hear what Elisha has

to say, he just wants to know what boxes he has to check in order to get some of God's magic power. He obeys, but he does it half-hearted. God's not impressed.

SO WHAT DOES THAT TEACH ABOUT GOD?

- **God doesn't want to be a checkbox in your life.**
 - Fire insurance... Get out of jail free card... See you when I get cancer...
- **God wants to be King of your life, sitting on the throne of your heart.**

AND WHAT DOES THIS TEACH US ABOUT MANKIND?

- **Our default is to view our responsibilities like a checkbox and to worship our idolatries with enthusiasm.**
- Look at your life. What are you enthusiastic about? That's what you are worshipping.
 - Work... Sports... School... Kids... Saving... House... God? Making disciples?
- Look at your life. What do you view as some sort of checkbox? Your heart's not in it.
 - Time with God, time with kids, time with spouse, giving to God/Church, stewarding your body, doing the bare minimum at work

WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT IT (**CONNECT TRIANGLE**)?

- **HOW DOES IT RELATE TO THE GOSPEL?**
 - Ritual, rules and religion think that if I just check the boxes, then I will be right before God, but God says "I don't want your checkboxes, I want your heart"
 - Behavior modification thinks checkboxes save, they don't - your heart!
 - Jesus obeyed all the rules and had the right heart
 - Now, God offers a new heart to all who trust in Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection
 - All who trust get a new heart and, from that heart, comes the power to obey with enthusiasm!
- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR HOW WE CONNECT WITH GOD?**
 - God doesn't want to be a checkbox in your life or in your day.
 - When it comes to connecting w/ God, there's so much temptation to check the boxes - especially in a world where your Bible app literally has boxes to check
 - If you want to be a baby all your life, stick to the checkboxes w/ a 30 second devotional thought that someone wrote down and then two sentences from the Word of God
 - You checked the box, but chances are your heart didn't engage
 - It all begins w/ a new heart. If your heart isn't in your relationship with God, it will always feel burdensome. If this is how you feel, ask why?
 - Remember that we worship with enthusiasm and we check off our responsibilities. If your heart feels far away from God, you need to look at your life, ask God to convict, and repent
- **WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR HOW WE CONNECT WITH GOD'S PEOPLE?**
 - *Groups are our lifeblood here at Revolve. Simply stated, if you aren't in a group, then you aren't connecting with Revolve as you could or as we've designed it.*

- We need to spur one another on to obey enthusiastically and obey enthusiastically together (accountability, challenging, teamwork)
- A checkbox way of thinking says... Obedience born out of an enthusiastic heart says...
- In terms of the church corporate, what's enthusiastic obedience vs checkbox as it relates to: giving... serving... being engaging... being disconnected...

• WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR HOW WE CONNECT WITH GOD'S MISSION: MAKING DISCIPLES WHO MAKE DISCIPLES UNTIL THE WHOLE WORLD HEARS?

- **WHERE YOU LIVE, WORK, LEARN, & PLAY:**
 - Discipleship requires time - lots and lots of time.
 - 2 Timothy 3, Discipleship = Word + Spirit + Mentorship
 - Am I discipling my kids if I read the Bible a handful of times a week? // Is that discipleship? // Is it discipleship if I send them to Christian school and think "Glad someone's teaching them..." // Is it discipleship if we go to church on Sunday but then I never turn to God under pressure?
 - I'm not trying to be mean, let's just be honest. Can we check the boxes? Yea - easy. But enthusiastic obedience, born out of heart and conviction, looks much different
 - This is true in our homes... in our marriages... in our workplaces... schools... clubs...
 - A checkbox way of thinking says... Obedience born out of an enthusiastic heart says...
- **THE GLOBE:**
 - Something I was convicted about: talking about global missions more. Do I love missions? Yes, but do I enthusiastically remind you about it? No.
 - A checkbox way of thinking says... Obedience born out of an enthusiastic heart says...
 - We don't just aim for Cape May County, we aim for the ends of the earth
 - Grab Czech and Indo prayer cards & commit to praying w/ your family and for our teams
 - Write encouraging cards and we can get you address for mailing
 - Give financial support. Go on a trip.

Don't just check the box, obey God from an enthusiastic heart.

Discipleship Groups:

Do a discovery study on the calling of Peter (Luke 5:1-11) or Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10), spending special attention to enthusiastic obedience, wrestling through where you tend to check the boxes.