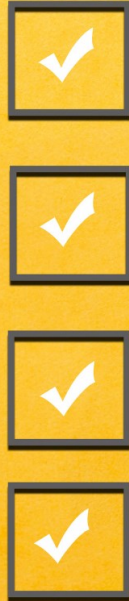




LIFE NEWS

The weekly newsletter article of Parkside Chapel

parksidevisalia.org



Checklist Christianity

GORDON LANPHER
Children's Pastor

I love a good checklist. I find them extremely helpful to make sure my brain isn't missing anything. It also frees me from stopping to worry about it because I know it is on my list. I have a checklist for my daily tasks. I have a checklist for the setup of different events.

I could go on and on about the different checklists I use at church and in my personal life. However, it is easy to make my relationship with God a checklist or a to-do list.

Does this sound familiar to anyone?

1. *Read one chapter of the Gospel each morning*
2. *Write in my prayer journal (at least 10 minutes)*
3. *Write down five things I'm thankful for to God*
4. *Read a daily Proverb at lunch*
5. *Fast lunch*
6. *Write my giving check for Sunday*
7. *Pray for meals*
8. *Read a Psalm before bed*
9. *Recite the Lord's Prayer before bed*

Maybe you are good at keeping your spiritual to-do list. It isn't probably as intense as this, and all the things listed are good. We know that isn't what gets us to Heaven, but it's by faith in Jesus Christ. Yet we often treat our ongoing relationship with him differently. We think that if we hit all the checklist items, then we are doing a good job in our friendship with God. We often think, whether intentionally

or unintentionally, "If I do this, then God won't let bad things happen to me. God will love me if I do more things. God will answer my prayers if I just read the Bible more and fast longer." However, what happens when you don't make it? You wake up late. The kids are sick. Your meeting got switched. The potluck happened during your fast. Then what? Do you feel like you failed?

Friends, the good news is that God doesn't have a checklist for you. God desires a **relationship**, not a checklist. God desires intimacy and not rigidity. God does not give us a new law when we enter a relationship through Jesus. It is for freedom Christ has set us free. Prayer, reading God's Word, fasting, and giving are ways to encounter God. They are ways that allow us to experience his presence. They are fruits of a growing friendship and hunger for the relational desire to spend time with someone who changes you. Spending time with God isn't about checking one more thing off the checklist.

Remember to daily come into the presence of God, not with your agenda of what it is supposed to look like so that you can cross it off your list and move on. You can put away the heavy checklist. Come in with an expectation that God is there waiting for you.

***"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest."***

Matthew 11:28