

ALL  
I WANT  
FOR  
*Christmas*



Touching Lives  
with James Merritt

# ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS

*Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt*

## ***Series Summary***

As we dive into this Christmas series, I am going to give you my Christmas list and I guarantee you it is going to surprise you. But I believe that after this series is over, you might agree with me that this ought to be on everyone's Christmas list. In fact, if every person on this planet made this their Christmas list and God gave them what they asked for our world would never be the same. You see, these three gifts that are on my list, money can't buy, and yes they will always satisfy everybody who receives them. You will never want to take them back or exchange them for anything else. They last forever – won't gather dust, never go out of style, never outgrow them and you will be forever thankful that you have them.



**A Redeeming Faith**

*All I Want For Christmas | Week 1 | Romans 10:11-17*

**INTRODUCTION**

**NOTES**

Do you know what a day trader is? These are high-risk investors who jump in and out of the stock markets often many times a day and they try to capitalize on price changes in the market. They have no interest in the companies of the stocks they are buying. They are just simply trying to make a buck. There are a lot of people in the church today who are day traders. They don't know very much about God. They claim to have made some sort of a decision about Jesus, but they have never really surrendered their life to Him. They jump into church when they feel like they need to and jump back out when they don't. They just want a God who will give them dividends in the form of blessings and leave them alone. That is exactly the kind of faith that is as worthless as a Christmas gift you got twenty years ago that no longer fits. I don't want that kind of faith. And I'm sure you don't either. Instead, I want us to have a redeeming faith, a renewing faith, a reviving faith. And I want to show you today the marks of a redeeming faith that we should all want for Christmas.

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**KEY POINTS**

**1. A Redeeming Faith Confirms My Salvation**

It doesn't matter what you have done or how long you have done it. You may have committed adultery, robbed a bank, you may have even murdered someone, but if you called on the name of the Lord, you will be saved.

I love the guarantee in today's key passage that says anyone who believes in Him will never be put to shame. When you stand before the God who created you and calls your life into account, you will not be ashamed or disappointed that you put your faith in Jesus. If you put your faith in the stock market it can crash. If you put your faith in a politician, he will fail you. If you put your faith in a sports team they can lose. If you put your faith in a boyfriend or a girlfriend, they can leave you. If you put your faith in Jesus, you will never be disappointed in what He can do and will do for you, because when you call on Him and place your faith in Him, you will be saved.

**A Redeeming Faith**

*All I Want For Christmas | Week 1 | Romans 10:11-17*

**2. A Redeeming Faith Compels My Witness**

If the faith that you say you have in Jesus does not compel you to share the Jesus you have faith in, you might take a second look at your faith. A dear pastor friend of mine made a statement that shook me to my core. “If you were lost and every Christian shared the gospel as much as you share the gospel would you ever hear the gospel?”

People have to believe in Jesus before they will call on Him to be saved, but they must hear about Him before they will believe. They will not hear about Him unless someone preaches to them, and no one will preach to them unless they are sent and they go. And what’s important for you to realize is that if you have a redeeming faith, you are sent. Your faith should compel you to witness and share the gospel with others.

**3. A Redeeming Faith Commands My Loyalty**

Paul is about to wrap up his argument for a redeeming faith and he says something that too many people miss but we must not. “But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?’” (Romans 10:16).

Do you see the word “obeyed?” A redeeming faith doesn’t just believe the gospel; it obeys the gospel. Do you know what you really believe in? It is whatever you live out. The rest is just talk. The word “believe” comes from the Old English word “by live.” What we believe, we live by. Therefore if we truly believe in Jesus, if we’ve placed our faith in Him, then He should have our loyalty and our obedience. We should live our lives fully surrendered to Him.

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# Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

## **A Redeeming Faith**

*All I Want For Christmas | Week 1 | Romans 10:11-17*

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. When was a time you put your faith in something other than Jesus, only to be let down? What did you learn from that experience?
2. When was the last time you shared the gospel with someone? How did it go? How did the other person respond?
3. How does the way you live your life portray what you believe in?

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A Resilient Hope

All I Want For Christmas | Week 2 | Titus 2:11-14

INTRODUCTION

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The biblical word “hope” means “certainty.” It doesn’t mean possibly or probably, but surely. It is a certainty based not on a feeling, nor an optimistic intuition, but it is based on God's Word. Having biblical hope means having a sound assurance in your heart that because of what God has promised, His plan for you will come to fruition and will not disappoint. With that in mind, in this message, I want to show you three things you can put your hope in knowing the seed of that hope will bear fruit and you'll be glad that it did.

KEY POINTS

1. Put Your Hope In The Saving Grace Of Jesus

A relationship with God is not based on our goodness; it's based on God's grace. Every part of our life is based on God's grace. We have lungs that can breathe, eyes that can see, ears that can hear, hands that can hold, legs that can walk, and lips that can speak simply because of the grace of God.

But more than all of that, God's grace delivers the one thing we all need, which is salvation. And the good news is that this grace that offers salvation is for all people. It doesn't matter who you are, where you come from, or what you’ve done, you can put your hope in the saving grace of Jesus and not be disappointed.

2. Put Your Hope In The Sanctifying Power Of Jesus

When you take hold of the grace of God, the grace of God takes hold of you, because God's grace is not just saving grace; it is transforming grace. It's not just redeeming grace; it is reforming grace. It's not just amazing grace; it is changing grace. Grace is sanctifying grace. Don't be afraid of that word “sanctify.” The word “sanctify” simply means “to make pure,” “to make clean” or “to make holy.” Grace is more than just pardon for what you have done wrong in the past; it is the power to do what is right in the present. And that is something we can put our hope in.

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A Resilient Hope

All I Want For Christmas | Week 2 | Titus 2:11-14

3. Put Your Hope In The Second Coming Of Jesus

By its very nature hope normally doesn't look to the past because it's gone, and hope doesn't really look to the present because it is already here. Hope looks to the future hoping for something. It is for something that hasn't yet happened. So it's not about yesterday or today; it's about tomorrow. That is why biblical hope is the best hope because there's one thing we can be sure that's going to happen in the future, and that is the second coming of Jesus.

Think about what will happen the moment Jesus comes back. The moment He returns, everything will be right where it belongs. The church will be where it belongs in heaven. The devil will be where he belongs in hell. Jesus will be where He belongs, which is on the throne of the entire universe. That's why all I want for Christmas is a resilient hope in this Christmas baby. The world hopes for the best, but Jesus Christ is the world's best hope. In fact, He is the only hope.

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Lined area for notes, consisting of multiple horizontal lines.



# Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

## **A Resilient Hope**

*All I Want For Christmas | Week 2 | Titus 2:11-14*

### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1. What is something you've placed your hope in other than Jesus?
2. What do you think about the Bible's definition of hope? How does that differ from the way we normally define hope in our everyday use of the word?
3. What is one way you feel like the Lord is sanctifying you right now? What are you learning from this specific experience of sanctification?

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**A Real Love**

*All I Want For Christmas | Week 3 | 1 Corinthians 13*

**INTRODUCTION**

**NOTES**

As we wrap up this series, I want to talk about the last gift I want for Christmas, which is a real love, not an “I love you now but tomorrow is negotiable,” kind of love. Not an “I love you as long as things go my way but when they don't...” kind of love. Certainly not the Hollywood kind of love that really is more lust than love. I want you to see today that real love comes from above. I want to use this message as a way to show us what real love is all about. If you think you really are a really loving person - a loving husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, or friend - get ready for a love checkup. Let's see how your love measures up to the real love that comes from above.

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**KEY POINTS**

**1. We Will See The Necessity Of Love**

Paul is saying in today's key passage that God is not impressed with what you do, or how well you do it, nearly as much is why you do it. Now, all the things that Paul lists in these verses that we might do are random. This is actually in the middle of a section where Paul has been dealing with spiritual gifts. So, he lists the gifts of tongues, prophecy, faith, giving, and even dying. What he is saying is that all of those spiritual gifts without the spiritual fruit of love mean nothing.

So many people are impressed with the spiritual gifts people have, but God is more impressed with the spiritual fruit that people bear. We are impressed with what people do. God is impressed with why people do it. He wants everything that we do to be motivated by love.

**2. We Will Show The Reality Of Love**

As our key Scripture passage continues, Paul gets down to the nitty-gritty of what real love looks like. He gives us an exhaustive list of the characteristics of real love. Some are described positively, and some are described negatively. There are some things that love practices and some things that love prohibits. But if we want to know what true, godly, unconditional love looks like, this list is a great place to reference, because it shows the reality of agape love.





# Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

## A Real Love

*All I Want For Christmas | Week 3 | 1 Corinthians 13*

### QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How would you say the way you love others measures up to the list Paul gives us in 1 Corinthians 13?
2. Who is someone in your life who loves you well? What do they do that makes you feel loved by them?
3. Who is someone you need to show agape love to today?

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