



Touching Lives
with James Merritt



SERMON SINGLES

Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

Holy New Year

Psalm 119

INTRODUCTION

It is the start of a new year, and we are all in the same boat. It is called "social jetlag" but I call it a "holiday hangover." Maybe you've slept late, taken time off of work, partied it up, ditched your diet, enjoyed the new gadgets, and swapped your gifts. But now it is time to re-enter the real world of traffic, alarm clocks, school, and making a living. You have neither the will nor the energy to do it, but the new year is coming one way or another. So what kind of year are you going to have in 2024? I hope and pray it's a holy new year! But how can we make that happen? That's exactly what we're going to discuss in this message.

KEY POINTS

1. Look To The Bible Daily

There is not a day in your life that you do not need to hear from God. There is not a day in your life that you do not need to listen to God. The best place in life to be is in God's presence and the best way to get into God's presence is to get into God's Word.

I can tell you from personal experience when you open the Word of God and look at it, God will open up principles, precepts, and practices that will enhance you, enrich you, and enable you to be better than you ever thought you could be, do more than you ever thought you could do, and be happier than you ever thought you could imagine. It's for these reasons that if you're going to have a holy new year, you need to spend time reading your Bible every single day.

2. Learn From The Bible Continuously

When you quit learning, you quit living. There are always new truths to learn, and you will never know it all. There are no greater life lessons to be learned anywhere than from God's Word. One of the reasons why you need to continuously learn from God's Word is because it is all truth, and it is always true. God's lessons about how to have a strong marriage, how to be a good husband and a good wife, how to be a wise parent and raise wise children, how to manage money wisely and well, how to find the right kind of friend and be the right kind of friend, how to handle your enemies, and how to deal with conflict still works! They worked 2000 years ago, and they will work 2000 years from now. There is always something we can be learning from God's Word.

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3. Live Out The Bible Practically

You can love the Bible, you can look at the Bible, you can listen to the Bible, and you can learn from the Bible, but it will not change your life until you live out the Bible. James, the brother of Jesus, makes this clear to us when he says, *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says,” (James 1:22).*

Far too often we want to claim the promises of the Bible. We want to enjoy the blessings of the Bible. We want to get peace from the Bible, but we don't want to obey the commandments of the Bible. It is not enough to just listen to the Bible. The Latin word for “listen” gives us our English word “audit.” When you “audit” a class, you get the information from the class, but if you don't do the homework and you don't do anything with what you have learned, you don't get any credit for the class either.

The same thing is true spiritually. It is one thing to look to the Bible and learn from the Bible, but you don't get credit for that. You've got to put it into practice. You have got to live it out. You have got to obey it before it really becomes the power in your life that it should and gives you the power to live the life God intended for you to live.

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Are you currently reading your Bible every single day? If not, what hurdles are keeping you from doing so?
2. What is something you've learned from the Bible recently?
3. What is one practical step you can take this week to apply God's Word to your life and live out what you've been reading and learning?
