

Christmas in July

What is your favorite thing about Christmas?

James 1:17-27 (ESV)

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world.

The greatest gift that we have received is the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ. This gift is for anyone and everyone who believes.

4 gifts that you can give because you have received the ultimate gift of Jesus Christ.

1. Listening

James 2:5 (ESV)

Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?

Jesus commands us to listen because we do not listen well.

When we listen to someone we begin to understand what it is like to be them.

2. Patience

Jesus commands us to be slow to anger because we do not listen to God well enough to be able to control our anger.

1 Timothy 2:1-4 (ESV)

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:8 (ESV)

I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling.

Proverbs 29:7-11 (ESV)

A righteous man knows the rights of the poor; a wicked man does not understand such knowledge. Scoffers set a city aflame, but the wise turn away wrath. If a wise man has an argument with a fool, the fool only rages and laughs, and there is no quiet. Bloodthirsty men hate one who is blameless and seek the life of the upright. A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.

3. Improvement

How often do you look at yourself in the mirror?

What do you see when you look at yourself in the mirror?

What do you do about what you see when you look at yourself in the mirror?

2 Peter 1:5-9 (ESV)

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly

affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

4. Religion

True religion is about having a heart clean enough that it can care for the needs of others.

2 Peter 3:13 (ESV)

But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.