



**SERIES: JANUARY – BECOMING SPIRITUALLY FIT**

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**Monday, 01/31/2022**

**Scripture: James 1:1**

**TITLE: From Skeptic to Servant**

Today we are kicking off a two-month series called “Faith in Real Life.” Many people today want to follow Jesus but just don’t know-how. Well, the book of James is one of the best places to look. The book of James is sometimes called “Christianity 101.” It’s not that it’s Christianity lite. It’s not that it isn’t theologically rich. It’s deep and rich. And it’s so practical that it shows us how to put faith in real life.

This is how James opens the letter in James 1:1 (CSB).

*James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ: To the twelve tribes dispersed abroad. Greetings.*

The writer identifies himself as “James.” This is James, the half-brother of Jesus. What makes James so interesting is that he didn’t believe his brother was the Messiah. We know this because John 7:5 says that even Jesus’ own brothers didn’t believe His message. But then this changed. What happened? He encountered a risen Christ. James went from skeptic to, as he puts it here, “a servant” of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Servant is a poor translation. It’s better translated “bond-servant.” This was a slave who willingly sold him or herself into service. Today, slavery is a hot button issue like never before. But biblically speaking, this was a positive position. You may not know this, but Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Isaiah, Paul, Peter, John, and others gladly called themselves slaves of the one true God.

This letter is, according to James, to the twelve tribes who have dispersed abroad. Who are these people? They are the twelve tribes of Israel or Jews who were no longer living inside of Palestine.

And then he says, “greetings.” It’s a Greek word that means to be glad. This was a standard greeting, but for James, it’s more than mere formality. It’s the movement to joy for what they are about to hear and adopt in life.

In just one verse, we find a lot of theology, so a lot of application. So here’s my challenge for you today. Wrestle with this frequent identification of Christians as “bond-servants” or “slaves.” What do you think of this? Is it exciting? Troubling? Why? Share in the comments below.

One of the challenges we all face is submitting our ideas, preferences, and interpretations to what the Bible says and means. James, Paul, Peter, Jude, and John were all glad slaves of King Jesus. So today, we need to embrace and celebrate this honor. Today and in the coming days, wrestle with and then commit to living out your service to our King.

When we serve our King with gladness, we will win the day.