



DAY 1



YOUR STARTING POINT

James 1:1

*James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,
To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.*



YOUR OBSERVATION

What are three ways James identifies himself?
(Hint: One is his name.)



YOUR REACTION

What are three words you could use to identify you?



YOUR DISCOVERY

Everybody is known by something to the rest of the world. Sometimes it's your name or perhaps the family you come from. Other times it's what you do or an experience that creates a certain nickname someone else gives you.

At the beginning of the book of James, the author identifies himself to his readers. It's commonly thought that this individual was actually a half-brother to Jesus,¹ born to Mary and Joseph after Jesus. Most people might use such credentials to their advantage and toss it around to gain some authority. Instead, he identifies himself as "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ."

What kind of humility do you imagine it takes for James to say that? After all, it's possible he grew up seeing things in Jesus that the rest of the world didn't. Perhaps some of those moments were extraordinary, but many were likely everyday things like eating, sleeping, laughing, singing, and doing chores around the house. Is it possible for all of that have made him miss out on seeing the core identity of Jesus until much later?

YOUR CHALLENGE

It's funny how you can have known somebody since you were little and yet not honestly know much about that person. Think about it. You may have classmates you've grown up with since kindergarten, but you don't know as much about them as you think you do.

Do you know how hard the kid sitting next to you in English really has it or what it's like for him to try to talk to his dad about his feelings? What about how hard it is for the girl in your neighborhood who looks in the mirror every day and sees a distortion of who she truly is? Are the athletes you know playing their sports because they like it or because they feel like they have to? Is the group of girls who dress in surprising ways really as carefree as they appear, or is it all a smokescreen?

Do you see people for who they really are, or do you see what they want you to see?

YOUR APPLICATION

Imagine you are given a superpower for one day to hear the thoughts of the people around you. This new ability may have its perks, but you'll also have to listen to the different things people struggle with inside their minds. You'll hear what motivates them to do the things they do or act the way they act.

What kind of new perspective do you think you'll walk away with?

Now turn that around. What if people around you could hear your thoughts? What kind of perspective about you would they walk away with?

Obviously, this superpower doesn't exist, but Christians can walk around each day trying to listen to the Holy Spirit of God in order to respond to him. He has insights to offer on what's happening around you, but it will require you letting your day be more than what it commonly is.

What will you do differently tomorrow to let your identity be

_____, *a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus*

insert your name

Christ?