

**Session 1: The Prologue (Job 1–2)**

**Spiritual bypassing** is Dr. John Wellwood’s term for a tendency for persons “to use spiritual ideas and practices to avoid dealing with their emotional unfinished business” (*Toward a Psychology of Awakening*, 5). He writes that for him, “Witnessing this contradiction—where spiritual teachers and students who clearly had developed a certain level of genuine spiritual insight and awareness nonetheless remained stuck in unwholesome personality patterns—was both troubling and revealing” (*Toward a Psychology of Awakening*, xv).

**Task 1** Read and react to the text<sup>1</sup> below.

We prepare for victory or defeat at the very start of each day. When you get up in the morning, you have to set your mind in the right direction. You may feel discouraged. You may feel the blahs, thinking, *I don’t want to go to work today. Or I don’t want to deal with these children. Or I’ve got so many problems.*

If you make the mistake of dwelling on those thoughts, you are preparing to have a lousy day. You’re using your faith in the wrong direction. Turn it around and say, “This will be a great day. Something good will happen to me. God has favor in my future, and I’m expecting new opportunities, divine connections, and supernatural breakthroughs.”

When you take that approach, you prepare for victory, increase, and restoration. God says to the angels, “Did you hear that? They’re expecting to accomplish their dreams even though they don’t have the resources right now.”

When you begin each day in faith, anticipating something good, God tells the angels to go to work and to arrange things in your favor. He gives you breaks, lines up the right people, and opens the right doors.

**Task 2** Describe a time when you witnessed somebody being told (if not in so many words), “Christians do not feel that way.”

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<sup>1</sup> *Every Day a Friday* (New York: FaithWords, 2011), 6–7.

**Task 3** At your table, read Job 1–2. Use one adjective to describe each of these characters:

The narrator \_\_\_\_\_ Job: \_\_\_\_\_

God: \_\_\_\_\_ Satan: \_\_\_\_\_

Job's wife: \_\_\_\_\_ Job's friends: \_\_\_\_\_

**Task 4** Below is a list of truths taught by the prologue of Job. Add anything you think is missing. Choose one that strikes you as most important. Share your rationale.

\_\_\_\_ 1. The book of Job is formed around a central *irony*, which can be defined as a character(s) not knowing something that the reader does. The only ones who know why Job is suffering are you, the reader, and the members of the heavenly court. Job and his friends do not know, and they never find out.

\_\_\_\_ 2. Job's suffering is not explained by his personal sinfulness. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23); therefore, everybody deserves whatever suffering he gets" is *not* the way the book solves the problem of why Job suffers.

\_\_\_\_ 3. Satan is not omnipresent, omniscient, or omnipotent. He can act only with God's permission.

\_\_\_\_ 4. God points Job out to Satan, not the other way around, and God certainly realizes what will happen as a result. "God has no role in Job's suffering; he merely allows it" is also *not* the solution of the book.

\_\_\_\_ 5. Satan's challenge to God is "Does Job fear God for nothing?" (1:9). In other words, "Human beings only serve God for what they get out of it. Of course, Job serves you—you bought him off!" Some (not all!) interpreters see Satan's challenge as the key to the message of the book.

\_\_\_\_ 5. *Your additions:* \_\_\_\_\_  
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