



# GEEKS UNDER GRACE

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## STAR WARS: THRAWN (2017) | *When Control is Lost* | BIBLE STUDY

Facilitator Note: We encourage facilitators to take this Bible study and expound on it throughout the week, allowing it to be a springboard for deeper conversation and personal meditation.

### PRESS START

**Star Wars: Thrawn** is a reintroduction of a familiar villain from the **Star Wars: Expanded Universe**, (the written material published prior to Disney's purchase of the franchise); this book is also written by the same author who created Thrawn originally, Timothy Zahn. For those who have read those previous books, **what did you think of this new version of Thrawn? Is he the same? Is he different? Which do you prefer? For those who have not read previous versions of Thrawn, what did you think of the character? Which of the three perspectives (Thrawn, Eli Vanto, or Arhinda Pryce) did you enjoy the most and why?**

### EQUIP

Thrawn is a pretty impressive character who is capable of maneuvering throughout the bureaucracy of the Imperial Navy with the same tactical genius he demonstrates on the battlefield. He certainly does not appreciate that he has to maneuver because he feels merit alone should prove he deserves a promotion or a new command. Unfortunately for Vanto and Pryce, this does not come as easily. Vanto and Pryce (as does Thrawn, to a degree) fall victim to an elitist Imperial culture, putting much of their fate outside of their own hands. **How did each character approach these prejudices in the culture? What are your thoughts on how they handled it? Are these approaches right?**

The Empire certainly imposes its will upon its people, and one theme that's abundantly clear is it often isn't up to you if you like what the Empire is imposing on your life. **How did the Empire force itself upon all three main protagonists?**

Eli Vanto is probably the most identifiable character in the book. He is from humble origins and isn't trying to climb some military or political ladder. He just wants to be a supply officer and live out his life, but Thrawn comes into the picture, turning Vanto's life upside down. All of sudden, Eli's plans are thrown out the window when he is paired up with Thrawn. The one shred of control Vanto thought he had is gone!

### LEVEL UP

Vanto struggled with the lack of control over his career, but his career was in fact under the watchful eye of Thrawn. While Thrawn is obviously not God, we know based off the Bible that God is in control of all things:

**Isaiah 46:9-10 (ESV)** <sup>9</sup>remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, <sup>10</sup> declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,'

In **v. 10**, God is very clear that He is the creator of all things and His purpose will be accomplished. God is speaking in a very 'final' tone and there is no debate He is in control. So we must then assume He is in control of our lives. It can be difficult for us to see God's larger plan, just like Vanto struggled to see he was being set up for something much greater. Since God is perfectly in control, He can see everything in the greater perspective of His plan for our lives. **How do you feel about the fact that God is in control of your life and that at any moment, He could change it in an instant?**

## MOD

Let's get a little deeper. **Please Read Job 1-2 either as a group or silently on your own.** Job is a man who was blameless and upright in the eyes of the Lord. **How does Job's situation compare to Eli Vanto's situation? How do they contrast with one another?**

Job certainly looks to have his ducks in a row...his career is already together and he is choosing to honor the Lord with his lifestyle, probably from well-placed plans over the course of his life. Vanto is working his way into his career, as he attempts to become the best supply officer he can be because he has the skillset in logistics and wants to honor his parents through his profession. Their situations are slightly different, but what is the same? Their lives take a dramatic turn and control is taken completely out of their own hands.

- **How does Job respond when his life dramatically changes?**
- **How does Vanto respond when his life dramatically changes?**

Job responds by holding fast to his faith:

**Job 1:20-22 (ESV)** <sup>20</sup>Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. <sup>21</sup>And he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." <sup>22</sup>In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong.

This is in contrast to the response of Vanto, who struggles throughout the book and often holds grudges against those who are directing his life. While Vanto is a fictional character in a secular book, how many of us respond the same way to change in our lives? When what little we have control over is suddenly taken from us, and we must give it up to something else? Job responded through worship and praise, a powerful, but incredibly difficult, thing to do.

**How would you respond, or how have you responded, to a sudden change in your life? Share a story, if you have one, of where you felt like everything was under your control, but everything changed suddenly and you felt like you lost control. For example, the loss of a job or being forced to step away from school for a period of time because of finances.**

At the end of the story, Vanto finally sees the bigger picture of his life and why those changes were meant to happen. Job's estate was restored to him at the end of his story and he is left with a powerful testimony of God's control and power. God helped and restored Job, and while God doesn't always respond by giving us material possessions (for example...the disciples were faithful followers and weren't rewarded with material possessions), He will give you strength through those

challenging times. **How has God helped you or someone you know through a major life change? How can you use that story to advance the Gospel?** If you have a cool story of how God has used this testimony, please share!

**Please take some time to discuss how we can support someone who is going through a challenging time after a major life change.**

## PRAY

Please ask for prayer requests from each member and take some time to pray over those requests. When it comes to our lives changing dramatically, these can get very personal, and it may be best to split up into smaller groups, so plenty of time can be committed to praying together.

## THE NEXT LEVEL

Please take some time to reflect on this passage in Philippians and how we can turn to God in any difficult situation, and be assured God has a plan in place.

**Philippians 4: 6-7** *<sup>6</sup>Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

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