



Called Out of Sin

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# EXODUS

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Called Into His Presence

A Devotional Guide Through the Book of  
Exodus

## Setting the Stage

The Bible opens with the book of Genesis, which opens with the description of how God created the universe. Every aspect of the Lord's creation, from the light to the darkness and the plants to the animals, was described as good in the eyes of the Lord. Then, the Lord created man and woman to serve in dominion over His creation. After creating mankind, God stated that they were very good in His sight. Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden and worked daily to care for and cultivate the land. Every aspect of their existence was perfect, and they enjoyed perfect communion with God. This would all change with a momentary decision.

Sin entered the world and marred every aspect of creation in its wake. The consequences of sin would separate mankind from God and drive a wedge between the perfect relationship that was shared. Man was cast out of the garden, and they began to fill and corrupt the whole earth. Genesis continue to chronicle the story of man's folly in chasing after themselves instead of the Lord, and the Lord's pursuit of His creation in the hopes of providing a means of redemption.

After many generations had passed since Adam and Eve, God chose a man named Abraham to fulfill His promise of redemption through. The promise began with a new promise to Abraham, to make him and his offspring into a mighty nation and to give them a land in which to dwell, the Promised Land. This was truly a great promise of God since Abraham had no descendants at the time, and he and his wife were beyond the child bearing years.

God was faithful to give Abraham a son, Isaac. Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. Through Jacob, the Lord would fulfill His promise to Abraham as Jacob had 12 sons. One son, Joseph, was sold into slavery by his brothers and taken to Egypt. In Egypt, Joseph believed and followed the Lord. God gave Joseph favor, and Joseph rose to power in pharaoh's palace. When a famine ravaged the land of Joseph's family, they found refuge in Egypt and Joseph forgave his brothers and welcomed them.

So, Jacob, his sons, and their families made their home in Egypt. Joseph continued to be given favor by God and the people of Egypt found favor in the deeds of Joseph. Joseph lived 110 years providing a place of prosperity for his family for generations to come in the land of Egypt. But before Joseph breathed his final breath, Joseph reminded the people of God's promise to call them out of Egypt and into the land that He had promised Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. God would lead His people into the Promised Land.

# Week 1:1 • Exodus 1:1-7

## *The Exodus: Our Story in God's Story*

*Before you begin this devotion, take a moment to prepare your heart for what you are about to undertake. The Lord Almighty desires to sit with you for the next few moments. He wants to hear your heart, your thoughts, your struggles, your dreams. He has been anticipating this time for a while. He is ready to make the most of these moments. Take a deep breath and dive in.*

*Each day, I want to encourage you to begin your time with prayer, asking the Lord for illumination. After, take time to read the passage and think about what the passage is trying to say. Hear the passage as the voice of the Lord sharing His story with you. The devotion that follows should be seen as secondary to the words of the Lord. Take time today to read Exodus 1:1-7.*

The Bible is an amazing book that conveys to us the pursuit of the Lord since the dawn of time. Since the very beginning, God has been intimately involved in the lives of His people. From walking in the garden alongside Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:8) to God speaking with Abraham and sealing a covenant with him, God has intentionally pursued His people and written His story through their stories. God does not cease to do the same today. As our lives become united in Christ, God continues to write the story of His redemption and salvation through our lives just as He did the lives of the Patriarchs and heroes of the faith we read about in Scripture. Our Lord has chosen to use our stories to convey His story to a lost and searching world.

Let that sink in for a moment: my story and your story are pivotal chapters written by God to tell His story to the world. That is a lot to take in. My perspective on my life is usually limited to the impact that my life might have on others immediately. I can see how my life may play a part in God's story right now as I share my hope in Christ with others, but God's use of our story is not limited to the impact of our physical activity.

Pause for a moment and think back to the passage that opens the book of Exodus. The book opens by chronicling the sons of Jacob who have made their way to Egypt. If you were to read the end of Genesis starting in chapter 37, you would read about how the Lord had used the jealousy of brothers, the ill intent of a jealous housewife and the faithfulness of Joseph to save His people from a famine that would ravage the land of Canaan. While the immediate impact of Joseph's faith in the Lord can be seen in the events that chronicle the end of Genesis, the book of Exodus opens by giving us an even bigger picture of how God's story was unfolding as a result of the actions of Joseph and his brothers long after they had died.

It was through Joseph's faith in God that the Israelites found a home in Egypt and their needs were met for hundreds of years. They grew from a single family into a people millions strong. In fact, they are described in verse 7 as "exceedingly numerous, so that the land was filled with them." God had placed the family of Jacob in a land where they would be protected and provided for so that they might grow in such number that they would be ready to take the Promised Land. Neither Jacob, Joseph or any of His brothers could have foreseen how this part of their story would set the stage for the story of the Lord that would shape the people of Israel even today.

This is how our stories tell God's story. As we surrender to the Lord in the big and the small things, He takes the ordinary and does the extraordinary with it. In the space provided, take some time to pray about surrendering to God each aspect of your story. Pray that your story would be used to more fully tell His story.

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# Week 1:2 • Exodus 1:1-7

## *What is in a Name?*

*Before you begin today, take a moment to prepare your heart to hear from the Lord. This time of devotion is designed to be an intimate time between you and the Lord. Take a few moments to prepare yourself for this blessed encounter.*

*Today, reread Exodus 1:1-7. I know that this is not a long passage and you probably remember every word from the previous day, but try to soak in the words afresh and anew as you begin. Take time to pray for the Lord to peel back the layers of this seemingly mundane passage to draw you closer to Him.*

Have you ever given much thought as to what all is encompassed in your name? Maybe you have gone and done a “Google” search on your name to find out its meaning, or you have done some family research into the person in your family’s past to whom you were named after. Names are often much more than just an identification title. Our names become an instrumental part in conveying our personality or perspective on life. Our names give us a glimpse into our family’s past and present. This becomes especially true when we look at the biblical culture. The names that are found in Scripture are windows into the people and culture of the day. The culture of ancient Israel, as well as many of the known civilization around this same time, placed great significance on the meaning of names to help determine the future hopes of an individual or to tell some important aspect of the individual’s life. We see this in the opening of the book of Exodus as Moses chronicles once again the names of the sons of Jacob as he briefly explains the passage of the 430 years (Exodus 12:40) that the Israelites spent in Egypt. Moses records the names of the twelve sons of Israel at the very opening of the book. At the close of the book of Genesis, we see God beginning to fulfill His promises to Abraham in the life and provision of the generations that followed Abraham. Exodus picks up telling the continued fulfillment of these promises in the life and provision of the descendants of Abraham hundreds of years later. In the opening of the book of Exodus, Moses chronicles again the names of Jacob’s sons. The names of these sons of Jacob would serve as the identity for the entire nation. With this in mind, the meaning of the names of these sons of Jacob seemingly foretell of God’s plan for blessing and radically changing the entire world through a people. The Hebrew meanings of the names of the sons of Jacob are as follows in birth order:

Reuben - Behold, a Son is born to us

Simeon - One who hears

Levi - Attached

Judah - Praise the Lord

Dan - He judged

Naphtali - My struggle

Gad - Good fortune

Asher - Happiness

Issachar - Reward

Zebulun - Honor

Joseph - Add to my family

Benjamin - Son of righteousness

It would appear in the giving of these names to the sons of Jacob, God was telling His people of the means by which He would fulfill His promise. Together, in birth order, the meaning of the names of the sons of Jacob reads:

*Behold, a Son is born to us, One who hears and is attached to us. Praise the Lord, He judged our struggle and brought forth good fortune, reward and honor. He added us to His family and called us Sons of Righteousness.*

What an amazing foretelling of the truth of the gospel story written in the names of the origins of the very nation through which this promise would be fulfilled. Take a few moments to reflect on the foretelling of God’s promise. Record your thoughts below.

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# Week 1:3 • Exodus 1:1-7

## *Adversity Leads to Prosperity*

*As you prepare to spend some time today with the Lord, pause and just think back to the last two days. What has the Lord taught your heart? Have you been brought to awe in what the Lord has revealed you? How has God revealed Himself to you at the opening of the book of Exodus? Take time to re-read the passage before you begin today's devotional.*

Have you ever heard the phrase, *Addition through Subtraction*? This phrase is often used to describe the positive aspects that might arise in an organization or project as a result of “subtracting” a specific person or idea. In other words, the removal of a specific person would lead to better relationships and less distractions from the goal so more progress could be made.

In the opening of the Exodus story, Moses makes the connection between the adversity that brought the nation to Egypt and the prosperity that the nation experienced while they remained in Egypt. The close of the book of Genesis is marked by a seven year famine that was to hit the area of Canaan and Egypt. In Genesis 50:20, Joseph responds to his brothers in an act of forgiveness for the wickedness that they had shown him as they sold him into slavery (Gen. 37:12-36) by stating that their actions were used by the Lord for the good of all people. Joseph recognized that through the sovereignty of God, the adversity that he had experienced in his captivity was the very catalyst used by the Lord to position Joseph to be in the right place at the right time to interpret Pharaoh's dream and be given a position of influence and power to watch over and provide for his family.

The stories of the Scriptures preach this truth over and over again. The hand of Lord positioning people to be equipped and ready to be used by God in situations and circumstances that they would never have chosen for themselves but serve the greater work of the Lord.

When we find ourselves in seasons of adversity, we become so focused on the hardship of our circumstances. We feel the fullness of the struggle and the hardship that weighs down upon us. During these seasons, it is so difficult to be able to peer and look past our adversity. Scripture though tells us that in the hands of the Lord, even our greatest pains can and will be used for His glory as we surrender them to Him.

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.*

*Romans 8:28*

*When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other.*

*Ecclesiastes 7:14*

God created all things, and He is the sovereign One who orchestrates and ordains our days. God has a perfect plan that He is working out to completion. God does not waste the suffering of His people, but rather He uses it to show the world His might, power and the sustaining ability of the Lord to pull us through all adversity. When our most broken moments are placed in His hands, He transforms them into stories of victory and glory. The drug addict who found the Lord and now lives soberly in His service. The victim of assault who now speaks out and gives voice to those who are still oppressed in similar situations. These stories are told over and over again because they are living examples of the Lord working good from the bad.

How have you seen God work good through your struggles? What adversity are you facing today? How might God work good from your current suffering? Record your thoughts below. Take some extra moments to pray in surrendering your adversity into the hands of the Almighty.

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# Week 1:4 • Exodus 1:1-7

## *When We Can Not See*

*As you prepare for your time with the Lord today, begin once again by reading the opening of Exodus. Take careful notice of the words and the progression of events described in these few verses. See the plan of the Lord unfurl even as the people spoken about pass away.*

I have spent much of my life going to one church or another. My father served in the Army for much of my childhood so that meant we moved often as a family. Every move came with its own unique obstacles that we had to navigate as a family, but one obstacle that was constant in every move was the obstacle of finding a new church. From my perspective, the criteria used by my parents in locating a church did not seem to follow the traditional criteria that many would expect. As a family, we did not seem bound to a specific denomination even though my parents stated many times that we were Catholic. We attended Episcopalian, Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, and Non-Denominational churches over the years. The primary concern for my parents seemed to not be on the denomination but rather on the way that the teaching engaged our family. I vividly remember attending St. Christopher's Episcopal Church in Killeen, Texas as a child. We attended St. Christophers because they had something for everyone in our family.

It was at St. Christophers that my walk with Christ met its official beginning as the kindness of an elder in the church toward me, a rude and cynical child, shifted my heart to long for the kindness and compassion of the Lord. I never took the time to go back to this elder and tell him of the profound impact that his words and deeds had on my life.

Does this not describe many of the encounters that we have with others in the name of Jesus Christ. We all have had those chance encounters with perfect strangers that cause the hair on the back of our neck to stand up as we know that the Lord is doing something special in this moment. Then, as quickly as it seemed to develop, the moment is over and the conversation changes or the chance meeting ends. The rest of our lives, we never again meet the stranger and we have never had the opportunity to ask them what God did in that moment.

The beauty of knowing that God is in control and that He is faithful to His promises is knowing that even when I do not know, God does. In the opening of Exodus, Moses records the movement of the family of Jacob out of the land that the Lord has promised them and into the land of Egypt for an extended stay of about 430 years. Jacob, his sons and even his grandsons could not have seen how their migration to Egypt would play the pivotal role in allowing for the growth of a nation. This though is exactly what Moses tells us. In verse 7 of the first chapter of Exodus, Moses writes, "but the Israelites were fruitful and multiplied greatly and became exceedingly numerous so the land was filled with them."

God pulled the people of Israel from the land of Promise to Egypt for their good. In the land of Egypt, they survived the famine during the time of Joseph and then they continued to flourish under the provision and safety of the Egyptian rule. They were fruitful and multiplied as their needs were met by the provision of God in this foreign nation. Even though those to whom the promise was made had passed away, God bring to fulfillment His promise to His people. He would make from Abraham's descendants a nation and that is exactly what the Lord had accomplished in Egypt. Do you need to see the result in order to be obedient to God's calling? Take some time to pray to the Lord about how He is working today for the good of tomorrow.

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# Week 2:1 • Exodus 1:8-22

## *The Universal Conductor*

*As you prepare to sit this week with the Lord, it may be beneficial to listen to the sermon that corresponds with this week's passage. If you were unable to hear the sermon live, a recording of the message is available on our website, [www.newhopenorth.org](http://www.newhopenorth.org), by clicking on Sermons under the Resource tab at the top of the webpage. Before you begin reading the devotion for today, take some time to read Exodus 1:8-22. Hear and feel the plight of the Israelites as they cry out for God's deliverance.*

My first job was working as a custodian at my local church. My supervisor was a member of the church who was the head custodian for the local Baptist university. Denny was an amazing teacher when it came to making sure that every detail was noticed. He was very systematic and purposeful in everything that he did. He could walk into a room and immediately devise a plan for how and where you should start cleaning and why that was the best place to start. "Start in the top corner so that as you clean working your way down the dust that falls from above is being cleaned off below." "Clean the toilet from the outside in so that you clean the dirtiest parts last."

This is how I picture the Lord often times sitting on high. Events are happening all around Him, and He has carefully and intentionally devised a plan on how the mucky and broken situations will end in His glory. No matter if it is cancer, death, sorrow, pain, guilt or even sin, the Lord has already worked out the perfect plan that allows every one of these things to result in His glorification.

In the passage, it would appear at first glance that the hardship that the Israelites were experiencing was clear sign that the Lord had made a mistake or abandoned His people. It was the Lord who prepared the way for the people of Israel to come to Egypt. Through this pilgrimage, Jacob and His family found refuge and provision for the multi-year famine that hit the land. In Egypt, they were able to be fruitful and multiply. In the time of the Shepherd Kings in Egypt, the people of Israel found favor. All of this was as a result of the Lord leading His people to this land. Now, as the ruling class changes, the people face oppression and slavery. It does appear that the Lord has ceased to bless His people. God though has not forgotten His people, but instead has brought about the perfect set of circumstances to turn an entire nation's hearts toward Him while at the same time showing His power over the God's of Egypt and Pharaoh himself.

When you face dark circumstances, how do you respond? Do your eyes become set on the brokenness and hardship of the moment? Do you find yourself succumbing to the weight of it all? Our circumstances desire to shift our eyes off of the Lord and onto the present. Whether it be the times of victory or the times of trouble, the great aim of the enemy is to distract our focus from the One who is in control and working all things out for the good of those who love Him to our present and temporary circumstance that is only a moment in the overarching plan of God's redemption. To focus on the temporary is to miss sight of the bigger picture at hand. A temporary focus removes the power of Faith to keep us steadfast in our circumstances. Our life then becomes defined by a series of high highs and low lows. God desires for our gaze to be set solely on Him. He will be our guide and our steadfast hope in any and every present danger.

Take some time to pray through your current situation. Pray that the Lord will lead and that your gaze will be set on Him. Write down the aspects of your circumstances that divert your eyes from God. Now, pray for the perseverance to be steadfast.

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# Week 2:2 • Exodus 1:8-22

## *The Uncontrollable*

*Before you jump into today's devotion, take a moment to reflect on the conversation that you had with the Lord at the conclusion of the last devotion. How has your circumstance changed since then? How have you changed since you wrote those things? As you conclude, take a few moments to reread Exodus 1:8-22. Take careful notice of what the Israelites had control over and what they could only respond to.*

My friends and I climbed into the 90's pale green Honda Accord filled with excitement and anticipation. We were about to embark on an eight hour road trip to Moses Lake to cheer on our youth pastor as he took part in the annual Moses Lake Roundup Demolition Derby. The trip kicked off with riveting conversation about our anticipation to see Jeff get behind the wheel of his car doomed for destruction. As we turned onto I-84 and headed into the Columbia River Gorge, the length of the drive that still lay ahead started to sink in. The only solution to keep the energy high for the next leg of the trip was to plug the walkman into the stereo and blare some DC Talk. As Tim and I fumbled around trying to get everything set up, our vehicle meandered outside of our lane and toward the center concrete divider. Tim looked up and out of his peripheral, he noticed the divider. His response was to jerk the wheel, and at 80 mph, the Honda Accord entered into an uncontrollable swerve. Our vehicle hit the center divider once then a second time. The impact caused our vehicle to fishtail, and at over 70 mph, we drove head first into the concrete divider on the other side of the highway.

Do you remember that page in the driver's manual that stresses the fact that you must keep control of your vehicle at all times? There is a reason why this is so stressed. When we lose control, we become nothing more than a passenger to the havoc and mayhem that is about to ensue. For many of us, the need to have control over the circumstances of our lives drives us to manipulate our circumstances to gain more and more control. But are we ever really in control?

A new dynasty has taken power in Egypt, and the new Pharaoh looks at his land and sees a growing people group settled in his land. This people group are not under his control. His mind begins to race about with the possibilities of what this people group could accomplish that might diminish or completely take away his control over the land. In an attempt to regain control, the Pharaoh enslaves the people to force his control upon them. Pharaoh, still concerned that his control might be threatened, decrees that male babies of this people group shall be put to death to limit their ability to overthrow Egypt in future generations. The reality of what Pharaoh did not see and was not in control of was that God had only called His people to be there for a short time. They had a land that was to be given to them. Pharaoh did not need to be concerned that the Israelites would take his control. Worse yet, in manipulating his circumstances to gain more control, Pharaoh incurred the wrath of the One who was truly in control. When we manipulate for the sake of control, so often, the result is very thing that we were seeking to prevent from happening, the loss of our control. As we seek to control the path of our children, we are rudely awoken to the truth that we only possessed the perception of control as our kids grow and leave our homes. We are finite beings who, at best, have a partial ability to control the moment, but the truth is that we have little control over anything apart from our response to the uncontrollable around us. Is the need for control controlling your life? Reflect and share your heart with the Lord. Write the ways that you seek control below.

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# Week 2:3 • Exodus 1:8-22

## *The One in Control*

*As you sit to spend time with the Lord today, go back to your response in the previous devotion. Are you still seeing the same need for control in the areas of your life or circumstances? How much control do you really have in these areas? Take some time to talk this out with the Lord before you begin today. Re-read Exodus 1:8-22. Take notice of Pharaoh's control.*

In the passage, the Pharaoh looks out at his people and takes notice of these foreigners who have taken up residence in his land and have multiplied to the point that they outnumbered the native population. Fear of what could happen drives Pharaoh to enslave the foreigners and put them to forced labor. Pharaoh's fear of what might occur does not cease with their enslavement. His fear drives him to imagine this people shrugging off their oppression and rebelling against the Egyptians. Pharaoh, in response to maintain control, orders that the midwives of the nation slaughter every baby boy born of the next generation. The fear of a possibility led Pharaoh to do the unthinkable, to order the death of innocent life. Fear and control often go hand in hand in leading us away from the Lord. When our fear over the possible increases, our need to gain control to steer ourselves away from our feared possibilities increases. We begin to scramble seeking to negotiate or manipulate our circumstances in a futile attempt to gain some semblance of control. Yes, you read that correctly. Our attempts to gain control are futile. We are such limited and finite beings. There is very little in our lives that we have control over. When we drive, we believe that we are in control, but the truth is we barely even have control over our own vehicle let alone the vehicles around us.

Control is something that we strive to obtain a little more of everyday, but the circumstances of life continually remind us we have failed to take possession of. When the object of our aim is control, we will be let down time and time again because control is something that we as finite and limited human beings can not actually possess. To gain control requires the ability to manipulate all of the moving parts of a situation. We do not possess that kind of authority. While I can control my response to a situation, my inability to impact the reaction of others, nature, and more becomes glaringly obvious.

Pharaoh sought to control the growth and power of the nation of Israel in an attempt to master them. Pharaoh though was limited in his power and control. He could not control how the midwives would respond to his evil decree to kill the baby boys born. The most feared man in the nation could not control how the everyday citizen who respond to his threats and decrees. The resolve of each individual was something that his control could not manipulate.

God is the only one in control. He actually has the ability to manipulate all of the moving parts in every situation. This is why Scripture continually preaches to turn and place your trust in the Lord. In contrast to control, the Bible teaches dependance and faith, believing and trusting in the One who is in control. Where in your life do you find yourself struggling with the need for control? In times where you are lacking control, what is your response? Do you run to the Lord? Do you manipulate the situation and people involved to try to regain control? Write your responses in the space below. Have a conversation with God about what you wrote.

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# Week 2:4 • Exodus 1:8-22

## Worthwhile Consequences

*As you close out this week in Exodus 1, take some time to reflect on the beginning of this journey. How have you seen God work on your heart? What have you learned about yourself? Take some time to talk to God about what He has done in shifting your heart thus far. Take time to reread Exodus 1:8-22.*

Have you ever heard the saying, *what goes around comes around*? This saying is a common phrase shared in response to the actions of another. At the core of what we desire to convey when using this saying is that there are just and equal consequences for our actions. In other words, if you do evil to others, you will be repaid with evil, and if you do good to others, you will be repaid with good. This ideology has permeated our culture in so many different ways. From the ideas of karma, universal balance and other eastern ideologies, we have embraced this kind of universal justice system where all things end up equal. The danger in this ideology is that it fails the reality test. Our actions do not always result in a just and equal consequence.

People receive unjust consequences daily in the real world. Innocent people are sent to prison and guilty people are acquitted in our legal system daily. Scammers exploit the elderly and the vulnerable while taking all that they have to purchase a life of luxury for themselves. Sayings like *no good deed goes unpunished* remind us that this system of just and equal consequences does not exist in reality.

The truth according to Scripture is that the consequences of our actions are not directly in correlation with the actions that were taken in the first place. Take for example the Israelites in Exodus 1. The Israelites had relocated to Egypt as a result of the Lord's prompting. They now find themselves in captivity. Not quite the just consequences they were probably expecting. Their obedience to the Lord was met with the consequence of being enslaved and forced to work for a ruling regime. To take it even a step further, their obedience in the Lord has now resulted in the command to kill the male babies born to the nation. It would be easy to see that obedience to God does not result in the consequences that seemingly fit the righteousness of the action.

Have you ever thought about the fact that your obedience to the Lord may result in consequences that are not for your physical blessing? Have you thought through what the cost could be for placing your faith in God?

The Scripture call us to count the cost of our faith. In Luke 14:25-33, Jesus tells His followers that they must count the cost of what it means to truly follow Him. He uses the example of a builder counting the cost of the project before he begins to make sure that he could see the building to completion. Just as a building project has hang-ups, unexpected complications and unforeseen changes, our walks with God experience the same consequences. In our walk with God, we will face times where our obedience will not result in the consequences that we had thought, and there will be moments where our faith will result in consequences that challenge our faith. Take heart though, the true consequence of our faith and trust in the Lord is not blessings. Our obedience is not the gateway to receiving God's blessings. His blessings are a secondary consequences. Rather the primary consequence of our faith is God's glorification. The consequence of our faith is bringing glory to the Lord, and He is glorified no matter what the consequence is. Bringing God His glory is always a worthwhile consequence. Record your thoughts below.

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