

Study Series: Detours

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Lesson Title: “Their Purpose and Pain” (pp. 6-18)

Session 1

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The main point of this lesson is: Delays are necessary, though painful, parts of reaching our destiny.

Focus on this goal: To help adults acknowledge detours as God’s design to build their character

Key Bible Passage:Genesis 37:2-28; Romans 5:3-5

Before the Session

1. Display a local map. (Step 1 and future sessions)

2. Display a large sheet of paper. (Step 3 and future sessions)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Direct attention to the map. Share some of your favorite roads, scenery, or destinations in your area. Point to the locations on the map as you describe the areas.

Recall a time you planned to go a certain route but had to be detoured. Trace on the map your intended route as well as your actual route.

Ask: Are there areas you avoid because you’ve been stuck in traffic or construction one too many times? Are there any places you know of that make a good detour around those problem areas?

Explain that over the next seven weeks you’ll be looking at detours in life and God’s plan for those detours.

Step 2. The Purpose of Detours, Part 1

Briefly describe how you thought it would go when you were eighteen.

Say: However, that’s not what actually happened; my life took more than just a few detours.

Share a few of the life detours, what caused them, and how they changed your trajectory. If applicable, contrast the negative view you had of one detour at that time.

Read the Day One sentence (p. 7) beginning, “Divinely designed detours …” and continue to the end of Day One.

Engage a few volunteers to share some detours from their own lives that turned out over time to be a good thing.

Ask: Has anyone ever refused to get off the path even when that path was blocked? What happened?

Step 3. The Purpose of Detours, Part 2

Write destination and destiny near one another on the large paper.

Invite a volunteer to read Isaiah 43:6-7.

Ask: According to these verses, what is our destiny?

Use Day Two content (p. 8) to consider the two words you wrote as well as the terms eternal destiny and historical destiny.

Read the Day Two paragraph (p. 9) beginning, “We like to plan ….”

Invite adults whose Bibles contain maps to look for one that shows the Israelite nation’s journey from Egypt to the promised land.

Use Day Two content (pp. 9-10) to talk about how the Israelites’ lack of understanding and faith kept them from proceeding to the place God had planned for them.

Ask: Has that happened to you? Have you failed to develop through your detours?

Step 4. The Purpose of Detours, Part 3

Direct attention to a group member who has a particular set of skills that stand out (woodworking, singing, mechanics, cooking, etc.). Engage him/her in discussing how the skill developed over time using trial and error, strengthening good habits, and working through setbacks.

Say: In the same way, we must learn to have hope in the midst of our detours; only when we persevere through them do we strengthen our ability to hope in God’s destiny for us.

Invite volunteers to read Genesis 37:2-28 and 50:19-20. As a group, consider how Joseph viewed the detour as he lived it contrasted with how he explained it later in life.

Step 5. The Pain of Detours, Part 1

Say: Let’s consider Joseph’s young life.

Use the Day Four content (pp. 12-13) to consider Joseph’s family, parental, and sibling dysfunctions.

Acknowledge that many people experience some level of dysfunction or favoritism in their families, perhaps including some in the group.

Invite learners to raise their hands if they displayed a lack of wisdom or tact in their younger years.

Ask rhetorically if God ever placed a dream in learners’ hearts too big for others nearby to hear. If any of this rings especially true with you, briefly share that.

Say: We know how this story ends; God used it all—ALL—for good.

Step 6. The Pain of Detours, Part 2

Read the first paragraph from Day Five (p. 14).

Ask: How has God changed you for the better over the past ten years? Twenty years? How willingly have you been changed by Him and the detours He placed in your life?

As a group, consider the terrible twists and turns of Joseph’s life addressed in Day Five: thrown in a pit, betrayed by his brothers, and sold to traders. Point out that Joseph had lost all he valued most: significance, favor, family, homeland, control.

Say: This is what we would call ‘rock bottom.’ We know now that it was truly God’s perfect plan, but there’s little chance it felt like such at the time.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Read “The main point of this lesson is” (p. 17): “Delays are necessary, though painful, parts of reaching our destiny.”

Challenge learners to take time this week to intentionally walk through those detours of their own lives with fresh eyes of faith, allowing God to show them how He has used past detours to shape them into the persons they are today.

As you depart, pray that your group would begin to see detours through the truths you’re encountering in this new study.

