

Study Series: Detours

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Lesson Title: “Their Promotion and Plan” (pp. 45-56)

Session 4

September 26,2021

The main point of this lesson is:Before God’s detour for you concludes, He will disappoint you, then surprise you.

Focus on this goal:To help adults recognize the near misses of ending their detours as positive indication they are nearing that end and redouble their efforts to depend on God alone

Key Bible Passage:Genesis 41:1-32

To the Leader: Remember to retain and display from Session 1 the map and poster you began.

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Consider a movie you enjoyed watching that had elements of both disappointment and surprise. (For example, in the first *Lord of the Rings* movie, Gandalf appears to have died. There is much disappointment at the loss of a favorite character and integral part to success. But in the second installment of the trilogy, we realize Gandalf is not only alive but has turned into a greater, more powerful wizard.) Share your own synopsis of the movie plot, focusing on its disappointment and surprise.

Say: These two elements make for a great movie; but are they elements we look for in our lives? That’s what we’ll be talking about today*.*

Open with prayer for soft hearts and ears to hear God’s truth clearly.

Step 2. The Promotion of Detours, Part 1

If you are a parent, share a time when your child took an exceedingly long time to learn a lesson or behavior pattern you were working to instill. (For example, a delay in skipping the screaming fit when the child’s preference didn’t happen.) If you’re not a parent, share a similar experience from your own childhood.

Say: Some lessons take longer to learn than others. The detour—even for adults—lasts until the character change has occurred.

Use the Day One content under the heading, “A Lesson About Life” (pp. 46-47) to briefly summarize Joseph’s thirteen-year detour and how he surely thought his time in prison was about over, only to sit there for years.

Ask: How can we stay faithful to God and His timing when we feel disappointed or hopeless?

Step 3. The Promotion of Detours, Part 2

Say: God sometimes delays our time in a detour to prepare the place or person that is part of our destiny; it’s not just about you or me, but about our families, friends, and upcoming situations that have lasting consequences.

Engage learners in discussing Scriptures that give them hope in times of trial.

Explain that another reason God keeps us in detours is so He gets the credit.

Read the paragraph (p. 48) that begins, “If Joseph’s contact …” as well as the following paragraph.

Invite a volunteer to read 2 Corinthians 1:9.

Brainstorm how a short detour might allow us to think we are self-sufficient or to idolize another person.

Step 4. The Plan of Detours, Part 1

Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 41:1-16. Repeat the last verse.

Say: Seventeen-year-old Joseph would likely have boasted in his own dreams and power; thirty-year-old Joseph had been humbled and dependent on God long enough to understand his limitations and to give God credit for every blessing and ability.

As a group, consider the surprise that came to Joseph after being disappointed so many times by how the circumstances of his life had gone.

Summarize from Day Three, starting with the words “While Joseph set yet another day in the jail” through the end of the day (pp. 50-51).

Ask the group why it’s hard to see or believe God’s hand of providence as we wait in a detour’s holding power. Acknowledge it’s much easier to see after we’re back on track.

Step 5. The Plan of Detours, Part 2

Point out that Joseph went from the dungeon to the palace in a sudden turn of events. To some, he may have seemed like an overnight success. But Joseph knew God had been working to strengthen and mature his faith for many years.

Share a time in your life when God’s “surprise” ending to a detour arrived with suddenness. Point out how God had prepared you for this new purpose, whether it was shaping your heart, courage, prayer life, understanding of Scripture or something else.

If time allows, invite volunteers to share their experiences.

Use the last two paragraphs from Day Four (pp. 52-53) to explain how God-moves are often confirmed by a message, experience, or highlighted word from God that happens twice.

Step 6. The Plan of Detours, Part 3

Summarize Genesis 41:17-36.

Say: As Joseph heard pharaoh’s dream, he realized the situation was much bigger than just one man’s struggle: it involved a nation. God’s plan to develop Joseph into a great leader would save millions of lives.

As a group, consider how God’s long-term plan affects our day-to-day as well as our detours.

Challenge learners to consider not only their own struggles during a detour but also the impact they may have on the lives of others when God has made His plan clear.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Read the Day Five paragraph (p. 54) that begins, “So I am challenging you today …” as well as the paragraph that follows.

Say: We don’t know how long our detours will last. We don’t know who or what is involved. But we can be certain that God is orchestrating a plan that is for His glory.

Challenge learners to carefully walk the tightrope of obedience when faced with a detour. Encourage them to use detours as wake-up calls to do self-check-ups on their faith, surrendering not only plans but trust to the One whose plan is perfect.

Close in prayer.

