

Study Series: Detours

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Lesson Title: “Their Providence and Perfection” (pp. 70-82)

Session 6

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The main point of this lesson is:God providentially orchestrates our detours to accomplish His purposes.

Focus on this goal: To help adults trust God’s providential hand in their lives even when they cannot detect it

Key Bible Passage: Genesis 50:20; Romans 8:28-29

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

Before the Session

1. Write on separate index cards: family vacation, surprise party, sporting weekend, large business gathering or project, family reunion, home remodel. (Step 1)

2. Have available a board and marker. (Step 4)

3. Prepare to play a recording of an orchestra tuning/warming up. (Step 7)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Say: We orchestrate many things in our lives. Whether it’s with family, friends, in business or in the community, we’ve usually orchestrated something that took much time and attention.

Ask: Who has ever orchestrated … and display one of the index cards. Invite adults to quickly share the experience, including time invested and reward for the job. Continue through the cards.

Say: Today we’re going to consider God’s grand orchestration in our detours, our life paths, and how we got to where we are today.

Step 2. The Providence of Detours, Part 1

Write luck on the key words poster.

Ask: Who has had a bit of good luck lately?

Read the opening two Day One paragraphs (p. 70).

Say: In today’s study, let’s be sure we step away from believing luck has any power; all power and providence belongs to God Almighty.

Cross out “luck” from the poster and write providence.

Invite volunteers to read 1 Timothy 6:15; Proverbs 21:1; and Psalm 103:19.

As a group, consider how believers can and should give God glory for our life path rather than chalking it up to luck or fate.

Use the bulleted section of Day One (p. 71) to point out God’s guiding hand in Joseph’s life, stressing that these things all happened when Joseph was in some terrible situations.

Invite a volunteer to read the last paragraph from Day One (p. 72).

Step 3. The Providence of Detours, Part 2

Invite a volunteer to read Romans 8:28. Say: Maybe you have memorized this verse. When you hear it, what events from your own life come to mind? Be ready to share your own answer first.

Read Genesis 50:20, pointing out that Joseph had come to understand providence, as evidenced in this verse.

Say: We struggle, though, because in the midst of those detours, we don’t always see God’s hand.

Summarize the Day Two paragraph (p. 74) that begins, “Things can get so complicated ….”

Invite a volunteer to read Romans 11:33.

Explain that God is “unfigure-outable,” as the author says (p. 74) at the same time that He is totally in control; we must have faith in order to cling to him in those situations we don’t understand.

Step 4. The Perfection of Detours, Part 1

On your board, draw a circle that consumes about half of the surface. Write freedom in the center. Then draw a large rectangle (almost as big as the board) around the circle and write God’s sovereignty in the rectangle, but outside the circle.

Use Day Three comments (pp. 75-77) to explain how both our freedom and God’s sovereignty coexist.

Guide participants to read the paragraph (p. 76) that begins, “Yet He limits ….”

Explain that we see only what’s inside the circle; the rectangle (not to scale!) encompasses all the world, present and future. We can’t see everything, thus we can’t understand all that is happening behind the scenes.

Step 5. The Perfection of Detours, Part 2

Explain it took twenty-two years between the time Joseph dreamed his brothers would kneel before them until it actually happened.

Stress: Very few people get to God’s intended purpose for their lives quickly.

As a group, consider all the different things God is working together for good: different people (sometimes many different people), different hearts and mindsets, different situations, and so forth.

Retell the author’s story of the providential timing for his church member (Day Four, pp. 78-79) or share a similar story of your own.

Say: God is the conductor, inviting everything that seems chaotic to follow Him. We must wait for His timing.

Step 6. The Perfection of Detours, Part 3

Recount the opening paragraph of Day Five (p. 79).

Using your own life as an example, share a few unpleasant experiences that worked together to get you where you are today. (For example, an unhappy home life from which you learned to express care for others, mistakes you learned from, financial shortages that helped you learn to depend on God, something that happened to you through no fault of your own yet God used, etc.)

Invite volunteers to share their similar stories.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

Invite learners to silently listen to the recording of an orchestra warming up. Ask: How does this cacophony of noise remind you of life or being on a detour?

Say: Picture the conductor approaching the stage—what do all the musicians do as he approaches?

Challenge learners to use this image and these sounds to invigorate their faith and ability to wait on God, our great conductor.

Close in prayer.

