

DETOURS & DISAPPOINTMENTS

Small Group Discussion Guide [1 of 3]

1 GETTING STARTED

Share a memorable point, a spiritual lesson, a personal application, a question, or something that challenged you from the sermon last Sunday.

Share of a time when you planned to go someplace or do something but had to cancel due to some unforeseen event. What did you do instead? How did you feel?

2 GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Read Genesis 37:2-11. What are your observations about Jacob, Joseph and the brothers? How would you describe the relationship dynamics within their family?

2. *Discuss.* Describe Joseph's dreams. After receiving these dreams, what does he do? What does his action reveal about his character at this stage of his life? Considering that he is just a teenager, would he have done better or would it be expecting too much?

3. *Share.* God isn't mentioned in this part of the story. Have you ever experienced a time when it seemed that God has been absent in your part of the story? How did it make you feel? How did you respond (in the short term and in the long term)?

4. Read Genesis 37:12-36. In this part of the story, we see a sudden detour in the life of Joseph. If you were in his shoes, what would you be feeling at this point? (See Genesis 42:21 when the brothers would recall how Joseph begged for mercy.) Do you think what happened to Joseph was fair?

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2 GROUP DISCUSSION

5. Do you agree with the statement, "*Detours are often a regular part of God's plan in guiding us to our divine destinies*"? What does one do to prepare for the detours of life? What does Romans 8:28-29 and James 1:2-4 tell us about the purpose of trials in the life of a Christian?

6. What are the various plans that the brothers come up with? Who among the brothers stand out in this episode? What sort of characters are Judah and Reuben in this story? They did not have a clear plan when they threw Joseph into the cistern. Why then did they take the ring and the robe? What does it point to?

7. At the beginning of Genesis 37 Joseph received great promises and a great calling from God, but what has happened to him by the end of chapter 37? Why do you think this is the case? (See Psalm 105:17-19 in three different translations. Note especially verse 19.) What does this tell us about God's purposes in our testings?

3 NEXT STEPS

This week, pray for God to help you see the detours of life as part of God's plan to mature us.

- I will commit to go through the devotionals everyday this week.
- I will seek to know more about who God is by regularly reading his Word.
- I will sign-up for the 24/7 Prayer Chain for COVID and commit to pray for 30 minutes a day for one month.
- I will embrace the detours of my life that I am going through now.
- I will seek to grow in my love and knowledge of God by _____.
- Other ways I will apply this lesson: _____.

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4 CLOSING THE SESSION

Close the session by taking the time to pray for one another. Consider the following as you pray:

- Ask God to help you better understand the detours or life, to see his hand and to trust him to accomplish his purposes in your life.
- Pray for those who are hurting, going through fear, worry and anxiety in the group.
- Pray for your unsaved family, friends and loved ones.