

DETOURS

DETOURS, PART 3: PROOF

God uses detours in our own lives to bring us closer to Him. God will take us on a detour because He is constructing something in our lives. But how do you know God has you on a detour rather than simply experiencing a bad circumstance? How can we know that this is a God-ordained detour rather than things just aren't working out right now?

BIG IDEA: To get unstuck from a detour, serve others who are struggling alongside you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been on a detour that led to another detour? Maybe an alternate route that had a repair or accident on it that required yet another change of route? Explain.
2. Name a time when you have realized that you were on a God-ordained detour?
3. Have you recognized detours in your life that you didn't realize were detours at the time?
4. Chris said that *"Detours are good things that often feel bad."* When we read the story of Joseph, we always have to remember where the story is going—Genesis 50:20

But Joseph said, "You plotted evil against me, but God turned it into good, in order to preserve the lives of many people who are alive today because of what happened." Genesis 50:20 (TEV)

5. Joseph is going to continue to have things that happen to him that look bad or evil from the outside, but God is with him and is setting him up to do amazing good for his family and the people of Egypt. Share a time where something happened to you that seemed bad at the time, but ultimately ended up doing good.
6. Many times, we assume "Because things are going bad, I'm out of the will of God." Why doesn't this hold up when we look at Joseph's life? Have you ever made that assumption that when bad things happen, you must not be doing what God wants you to do? Explain.
7. *With your Bible or YouVersion, read Genesis 39:20-23.*

So he took Joseph and threw him into the prison where the king's prisoners were held, and there he remained. But the LORD was with Joseph in the prison and showed him his faithful love. And the LORD made Joseph a favorite with the prison warden. Before long, the warden put Joseph in charge of all the other prisoners and over everything that happened in the prison. The LORD was with Joseph and caused everything he did to succeed. Genesis 39:20-23 (NLT)

8. The similarities between the above scripture and how Joseph became second in command in Potiphar's household is uncanny. Has God ever repeated a situation to get your attention? Share your experience with the group.
9. Chris gave 4 proofs and ways to discern if God is taking you on a detour. **FIRST PROOF:** *You're suffering because of good, not bad.* Have you ever done the right thing in the sight of God but you suffered as a result of it? What lessons did you learn from that experience?
10. **SECOND PROOF:** *God doesn't take you out of the problem, but joins you in it.* How has God given you glimpses or even full-on assurance of His presence when you have suffered?

God didn't keep Daniel out the lion's den, He just joined him in the lion's den. God didn't keep Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from the fiery furnace. It says that was a fourth person who joined them in the fiery furnace.

11. How many times in Genesis 39:20-23 does it say that the LORD was with Joseph? How many times in the entire chapter of Genesis 39?

Some people may call what happened in that meeting between Pharaoh and the cupbearer luck, chance, or happenstance. Some may even call it fate. But as a believer in God, none of those words should even be in your vocabulary. What happened that day is providence. Providence is the hand of God moving in the glove of history—giving a dream, having set up the dream-reader, and reminding the cupbearer about his connection from years before.

12. Chris said that, “Bad luck, Karma, superstitions & horoscopes all go against the teachings found in the Bible.” How have you mistakenly credited luck or fate in a situation where you now recognize it as God’s providence? Share with the group.
13. THIRD PROOF: *God gives you people to serve who are in the same circumstance while you're suffering.* With your Bible or YouVersion, read Genesis 40:1-7.

Sometime later, Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer and chief baker offended their royal master. Pharaoh became angry with these two officials, and he put them in the prison where Joseph was, in the palace of the captain of the guard. They remained in prison for quite some time, and the captain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, who looked after them. While they were in prison, Pharaoh's cup-bearer and baker each had a dream one night, and each dream had its own meaning. When Joseph saw them the next morning, he noticed that they both looked upset. "Why do you look so worried today?" he asked them.
Genesis 40:1-7 (NLT)

14. Chris said, “Our tendency when are suffering is to be self-absorbed and to think about only 3 people: me, myself, and I.” But Joseph wasn’t like that. If he was, what opportunity would he have missed found in Genesis 40 and beyond?
15. Chris said, “ *There are people God placed in your path who are going through the same thing you're going through. You can help them while you're waiting for God to help you.*” One of the best ways to get over being stuck is to serve others. How have you seen this play out in your life? In the lives of others?
16. Chris gave the story of the Wizard of Oz of how Dorothy—needing to get home—helped a Lion with no courage, a Tin Man with no heart, and a Straw Man with no brains who ended up helping her get back home. Can you think of any other stories where the main character who has a need helps someone else that ends up helping meet their need? Share it with the group.
17. How has God used an unlikely person in your life to guide you to the next stage of your detour?
18. FOURTH PROOF: *God makes you wait.* With your Bible or YouVersion, read Genesis 40:13-23.

Within three days Pharaoh will restore you to your position as his chief cup-bearer. And please remember me and do me a favor when things go well for you. Mention me to Pharaoh, so he might let me out of this place. For I was kidnapped from my homeland, the land of the Hebrews, and now I'm here in prison, but I did nothing to deserve it.” Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer, however, forgot all about Joseph, never giving him another thought.
Genesis 40:13-15, 23 (NLT)

19. What are you waiting on God for right now? How can this group pray with you while you wait?

MOVING FORWARD

Our tendency when are suffering is to be self-absorbed, but Joseph didn’t do that. He helped with their dreams while he's waiting for the fulfillment of his dream. Any time God has us on a detour, God gives you people to serve who are in the same circumstance while you're suffering. So focus on others and serve them while you're struggling. That is what Joseph did. And if you do? You won't miss your ministry because of your misery.

