

FALL 2021
MASTERWORK[®]
ESSENTIAL MESSAGES FROM GOD'S SERVANTS



Lessons from

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DETOURS by **Tony Evans**

THE HOLINESS OF GOD by **R. C. Sproul**

## HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

# A STEP OF FAITH

In your opinion, what does it take for a person to get to heaven and have eternal life? The Bible answers this question in one word—**FAITH**.

### **F** Is for Forgiveness

- Everyone has sinned and needs God’s forgiveness: *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23).
- God’s forgiveness is in Jesus only: *“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace”* (Ephesians 1:7).

### **A** Is for Available

- God’s forgiveness is available for all: *“God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16).
- God’s forgiveness is available but not automatic: *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord!’ will enter the kingdom of heaven”* (Matthew 7:21).

### **I** Is for Impossible

- It is impossible to get to heaven on our own: *“You are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift—not from works, so that no one can boast”* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

### **T** Is for Turn

- Turn means repent. Turn away from sin and self and turn to Jesus alone as your Savior and Lord: *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6); *“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation”* (Romans 10:9-10).

### **H** Is for Heaven

- Here . . . Eternal life begins now with Jesus: *“I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance”* (John 10:10).
- Hereafter . . . Heaven is a place where we will live with God forever: *“If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also”* (John 14:3).
- How . . . How can a person have God’s forgiveness, eternal life, and heaven? By trusting Jesus as your Savior and Lord. You can do this right now by praying and asking Jesus to forgive you of your sins and inviting Jesus into your heart.

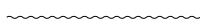
Accepting Christ is just the beginning of a wonderful adventure with God! Follow Christ’s command in baptism. Join a church where you can worship God and grow in your faith. Get involved in Sunday School and Bible study. Begin a daily personal worship time in which you study the Bible and pray.

# MASTERWORK<sup>®</sup>

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## GETTING THE MOST OUT OF MASTERWORK

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Here are a few suggestions to help you get the most out of this resource:

### Group Members

1. Read the daily assignments prior to attending the group time. Complete the personal learning activities in bold type. Record your notes and questions.
2. Review your notes and questions a few moments prior to the group time as a means of preparing to be an active part of the group.
3. In the margins of this book, record insights gained during the group time.

### Group Leader

1. Complete step 1 above.
2. Identify the one main idea and goal for the lesson. The main point of the lesson and the goal are printed on the teaching plan pages at the end of each lesson. (See p. 17.) Focus on the session goal as you lead the session.
3. Read and study the key Bible passages listed in the margin of the teaching plan.
4. Develop a group time plan. Two options are offered in this book. One option is to follow the teaching plan at the end of each lesson. A second option is to use the discussion questions in the margins of the lessons. Some group leaders use a combination of both group time plans.
5. Customize the electronic versions of the suggested teaching plans, available on the Internet at <https://masterworkbylifeway.wordpress.com>, to fit your group.
6. Review and refine your teaching notes as you move toward the group time.
7. Arrive early, praying for the group time.



# Detours

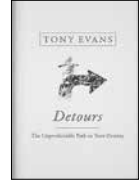
This study is called *Detours*—biblical principles of how God will often take you from you where you are to where He wants you to go. Let's start with a look at the destination, at what destiny means. Destiny is *the customized life calling for which God has equipped and ordained us, in order to bring Him the greatest glory and the maximum expansion of His kingdom*. Every believer must understand first and foremost that his or her premiere destiny is to glorify God and make His name known (Isa. 43:6-7). Destiny always starts there.

When you discover your destiny, you'll begin to live life like never before. You will have skills to bounce back from disappointments and challenges, even pain. You will find resolve and determination to accomplish things you didn't even know you could accomplish. Your passion and delight in what you do will be contagious to those around you, making your sphere of influence better as a result. You will push through things that used to defeat you.

When God gets His hands on our joyful and painful experiences, He can turn our lives into masterpieces that display His glory and channel His blessings to others. God will use our skills, training, and interests to help us discover our purpose in life.

Detours are often those opportunities God uses chisel us through the experiences we face. We can either cooperate with these detours, asking God to reveal what He wants us to learn, or we can complain, kick, scream, fight, and remain on the detour much longer than we ever needed to.

Remember this biblical truth: God uses all of our experiences to bring Him glory, when we allow Him.



## ABOUT THE WRITERS

**TONY EVANS** wrote *Detours: The Unpredictable Path to Your Destiny*. Evans is the founder and senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, Texas. His radio broadcast, *The Alternative with Dr. Tony Evans* can be heard on over 1,400 outlets in more than 130 countries. His books include *Kingdom Man*, *Kingdom Woman*, and *Kingdom Marriage*.

**LESLIE HUDSON** wrote the personal activities, interactive questions, and leader guide teaching suggestions for this study. A member of First Baptist Church, Dickson, Tennessee, Hudson strives to help other find "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" within God's Word.

# Their Purpose and Pain



## DAY ONE

### The Purpose of Detours, Part 1

#### **Discussion Questions**

When you hear the word *detour*, what images come to mind? What emotions are conjured by a detour in travel?

Detours are delays. They are rerouted paths that keep us from our original route. Detours pop up in places we had not expected. When we get in our cars, we do so with a destination in mind. And we typically know *how* we plan to get there. And even if we don't know the way, we can type the destination into our smartphone app, and rely on an automated voice to guide us through every turn.

Regardless if we are following our own mental map or the voice in our phone, sometimes we run into a detour (something we did not expect). Some roadblock requires us to make a U-turn or go down a path we did not expect.

I don't know about you, but I like to get to where I am going without any detours. When the kids were younger and we loaded into the car to drive from Dallas to Baltimore to visit my parents, I barely even stopped. Sometimes I would race against the last year's time clock in order to see if I could beat my previous time. If the kids needed to use the bathroom, I told them to wait. If they were thirsty, they had to wait. Essentially, they all buckled down at my mercy because I had a destination at which to arrive.

As you might imagine, if I won't even stop for normal things like food and bathroom breaks, you can guess how I feel about a detour. It's not good. I sigh. I moan. I wonder why on earth did this have to happen to me right now.

Have you ever done something similar? Been driving down the road when all was well only to arrive at a construction site with orange signs and



arrows and experience your whole attitude and outlook change? I've admitted that mine changed; you can admit it too.

Detours are typically unexpected inconveniences that, without fail, cause a speed bump in your emotions. It's either a sign you come up on, or a person who steers you elsewhere, or a police car with lights on it sitting there to let you know the road you are traveling is no longer available. Because of the detour, we must go off the beaten path, take longer than we had wished to, and be inconvenienced in order to arrive where we had hoped to go.

Few of us like to be stalled for any reason. Even if it's just someone cutting us off in traffic and forcing us to slow down. But detours are necessary if any improvement is going to be made on the paths we travel. Or if any wreck is going to be cleaned up or hazard avoided. Detours are designed for our own good, regardless of how we view or feel about them. Detours are good things that often feel bad.

**1. Identify three detours you have experienced in life. How did they feel at the time? Do they feel any differently now? Explain.**

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Divinely designed detours are positive interruptions designed to divert down a better path so we might have the opportunity to reach our destination at all.

Let me repeat that since it is something we don't often hear: *Detours can be a good thing.* They provide safety, opportunities for road improvement, and a different way to get where we want to go.

If you were to sit at a detour sign and stubbornly refuse to take the diversion, you would go nowhere. You would just sit there. For days. Possibly weeks sometimes.

Yes, a detour may take longer than you had originally planned; however, it won't take any longer than if you were to try to push through it on the original path. That will get you nowhere.

**2. In what areas of life do you stubbornly resist a closed road? Why?**

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**Discussion Question**

How patiently do you typically respond to detours?



DAY TWO

## The Purpose of Detours, Part 2

### Detours on the Road of Life

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you have a destination. We often refer to that throughout this study, and in life, as your *destiny*. From an eternal perspective, we know what our destiny is to be and that it involves being in God's presence forever—worshiping Him and working for Him in our eternal state. That is our *eternal destiny*.

But each of us also has a time-bound destiny here on Earth. I call this our *historical destiny*. It is the unique purpose you and I have been created for. God has a plan for you. He has a purpose for your existence. The reason you were not taken to heaven the moment after you were converted is because there is a purpose on the earth; He desires you to live out your destiny, not just go through the motions day-in and day-out. It is a God-designed stamp on your soul that involves the use of your time, talents, and treasures for His glory and other people's good for the advancement of His kingdom. As you fulfill your destiny, you receive the satisfaction and contentment that come from living out your calling. You receive the peace that comes from purpose.

**1. How confident are you in your personal historical destiny? \_\_\_\_\_**

**1 =zero confidence**

**5 =somewhat confident**

**10 =I know exactly why I'm here**

**What would make you more confident in your destiny on earth?**

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Rarely though does God ever take someone to their destiny without taking them on at least one detour, or two, or ten, or one hundred. It is the one-in-a-million Christian who gets to go from point A to B to C and straight on to Z. Most often, God takes you from A to F to D to R to B to Q, and so on. You never know which letter He is pulling you toward next.

We like to plan. We make itineraries when we travel. We keep a schedule log. We appreciate the efficiency of moving forward steadily. We would never plan chaos and detours. Yet that seems to be God's *modus operandi*—His default mode for guiding us. This is because it is in our detours that we become developed for our destiny.

### Development

Part of experiencing the fullness of your destiny is in understanding your detours. Far too often we fail to understand our detours. As a result, we wind up viewing them in a wrong light. When this happens, we give room for things like impatience, bitterness, regret, and doubt to grow. Rather than allowing detours to produce the development we need, they actually set us back spiritually, thus setting us up with a need for more detours in order to grow. It can become a vicious cycle.

#### 2. Which of the following marks your life when it comes to detours you've had to take?

- Impatience
- Bitterness
- Regret
- Doubt
- Humor
- Joy
- Amazement
- Confusion

#### Do your responses seem to be the same as they have always been or do you respond differently to detours now? Explain.

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God is not going to bring your destiny to fruition until He knows you are able to handle it spiritually, emotionally, and physically. If you cannot handle it, you will *lose it* rather than *use it*, for His glory. That is why He focuses so intently on our development as He takes us to our destiny.

Scripture is full of destinies being reached by detour. Israel's destiny was Canaan. They had to cross the Red Sea to get there. However, He didn't take them directly to the Red Sea. Rather, He took them south then brought them back up before He led them across the Red Sea. In fact, because they had not yet developed in their level of faith they would need in order to

#### Discussion Questions

How much of a planner are you? In what areas or situations do you choose to enjoy the ride instead of following an itinerary?

conquer the enemy in the promised land, they wandered on a forty-year detour before ever reaching their destiny.

The timing and length of our detours in life are often dependent upon our personal choices and growth. God may have a short detour planned for us, but sometimes through our hardheadedness, stubbornness, or immaturity God extends our detour.

Detours are often a regular part of God's plan in guiding us toward our destinies.

**Discussion Question**

Do you think it bothers believers that God regularly uses detours? Why?



DAY THREE

## The Purpose of Detours, Part 3

God *has* a destiny for you. He has a purpose and a place He wants you to live out. But it may not happen tomorrow. You probably won't get there by going in a straight line. Patience is the primary virtue needed in order to reach your destiny.

The following is a passage speaking on "trials," but we can easily substitute the word *affliction* with *detours* and arrive at the same intended meaning: "And not only that, but we also boast in our afflictions [*detours*], because we know that affliction [*detours*] produces endurance, endurance produces proven character, and proven character produces hope. This hope will not disappoint" (Rom. 5:3-5).

Hope does not disappoint. Detours disappoint momentarily. But when we allow them to produce hope, God promises hope will not disappoint. And in order to arrive at an authentic hope in your spirit, accepting your detours is necessary.

**1. Complete the following:**

**In my most current detour that involves** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**I am going to choose to hope because** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Just as your muscles will not grow stronger simply by wishful thinking, the painful process of strengthening your hope comes by detours, afflictions, and trials. Show me someone with an indomitable hope, and we will see someone who has had his or her share of detours. I promise you this is true. Authentic hope is a learned trait. Now, I don't mean wishful thinking or an optimistic attitude. I am referring to that level of hope that stays steady despite the storm and circumstances, which circle you in waves of chaos, testing, and pain.

### Joseph's Detours

There is no person in Scripture who better illustrates the principles of detours in relationship to destiny than Joseph. His life reads like a good suspense novel. It has twists and turns along the way with stories within stories within stories. If you didn't skip ahead to the end, you may wonder how it could ever end well along the way. But it does. Moving ahead from chapter 37 up to 50, we catch the culmination of the detours and distresses when it gives us Joseph's response to those who had served as the catalyst to his life's chaos: "But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive'" (Gen. 50:19-20 NASB).

Please notice the phrase, "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good." This insightful inclusion in Scripture gives us a clue as to the makeup of detours. They may oftentimes contain evil. They may oftentimes contain bad people. In fact, in our lives it can even be our own bad choices that set us off on a detour. In this cosmic battle of good against bad, we cannot expect to escape without coming in close contact with that which intends our harm. Yet what we often do is stay stuck there. We suffer under the evil of people acting badly or our own bad choices producing bitterness, cynicism, hate, and stunted growth. It is only when we read the entire phrase—keeping in the part that Joseph included "*but* God meant it for good"—that we are able to move forward, grow, trust, and reach our destiny.

Bad and good happen concurrently in order to bring us to the place God has for us. The first and greatest lesson in detours includes recognizing this reality at a level that allows you to trust God and His hand in the midst of evil, sin, and disappointment.

God is greater than all of it and will use it for good when we surrender to Him through a heart of faith, hope, forgiveness, and love.

#### Discussion Questions

Who in your life has an indomitable hope? What detours has he/she endured?

#### Discussion Question

How would you put Genesis 50:19-20 in your own words in such a way that it acknowledges bad but hopes in God's good plan?

**2. Consider a past detour in your life. How can you see it as a bad situation?**

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**What good can you see that God brought from it?**

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## DAY FOUR

# The Pain of Detours, Part 1

### A Dysfunctional Home

Joseph's story illustrates this better than nearly anything else I know. We discover Joseph as a teenager in a very dysfunctional home. All his father's life, Jacob deceived and tricked people in order to get his way. Jacob had twelve sons by four different women, which explains a lot of the dysfunction. Add on top of already volatile emotions the dynamics of favoritism, and you have a concoction worthy of a witch's brew. But in Genesis 37:3 we find just that: "Now Israel [Jacob] loved Joseph more than his other sons because Joseph was a son born to him in his old age." This is also the verse where we are introduced to the famous "coat of many colours" (KJV) Jacob gave Joseph, sparking a fury of jealousy in the family.

No one else got a special gift from Jacob, as far as we can tell. This unique multicolored piece of clothing was a status symbol. In 2 Samuel 13:18 we read about the robes the king's daughters wore to indicate their royalty. While it isn't an exact comparison, this gives you an idea of the robe's symbolism. It wasn't just a piece of new clothing; it sent a message loud and clear that Joseph was the most beloved, the chosen one of his father to occupy the privileged position that belonged to the eldest son.

As you might imagine, this irritated his family: “They hated him and could not bring themselves to speak peaceably to him” (Gen. 37:4). They couldn’t even speak kindly to him. Their father was choosing to give the double portion of his blessing to Joseph. He was placed as overseer and investigator of his brothers’ work. It was, in short, a perfect storm for a family disaster.

**1. What situation in your past was a perfect storm for a disaster at work, in the home, or in another relationship?**

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**At the time, to whom or what did you assign fault? Why?**

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Add the lightning and thunder of a dream, and you have a recipe for murder. Joseph dreamed he saw his brothers bowing down to him as sheaves of grain. At age seventeen, Joseph didn’t have the wisdom to keep that type of dream to himself. When he told his brothers, they mocked him and said, “‘Are you really going to reign over us?’ his brothers asked him. ‘Are you really going to rule us?’ So they hated him even more because of his dream and what he had said” (v. 8).

Joseph has another dream (v. 9). This time the sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed down to him. When he told his father about this dream, his father rebuked him for thinking they would one day bow down to him. Joseph’s dreams had even gone so far as to offend the one who loved him most—imagine what they did to his brothers. They could not stand to even be around him. Joseph’s dreams would later be proven true, but at the time he received them, the people around Joseph were not ready to hear them.

This can happen with us. God can place a dream or a vision in our heart that may seem too big to those around us. If you share it with others, you may get naysayers who try to talk you out of believing it. Not every vision God gives you is intended for those around you to know. Their hearts may not yet be ready because God has not yet developed their understanding.

**Discussion Question**

What steps can we take to see that our own immaturity or lack of wisdom do not put us in negative situations?

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Wisdom is the ability to know when and what to share. Just because the Lord lays something on your heart doesn't mean you should tell it to everyone.

**2. Has this ever happened to you—that God placed a dream or vision in your heart that no one else had yet felt or seen? Explain.**

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Before his eighteenth birthday, Joseph had made three critical mistakes. First, “[Joseph] brought a bad report about [his brothers] to their father” (Gen. 37:2). Joseph tattletaled. Second, he shared his dreams of ruling over his family with his family. The third mistake involved sporting his special coat, most likely in a way that wasn't very humble. He's a teenager in a dysfunctional family, most likely an immature teenager at best. Joseph doesn't know how to accept favor correctly or transfer information to whom and when. Apparently he still has some things that need correcting in his character.

**Discussion Question**

How does this early biblical account of Joseph remind us to be patient, mentoring, and loving to the children, teenagers, and young adults in our congregation and families?



DAY FIVE

## The Pain of Detours, Part 2

### The First Detour

The purpose of detours is to develop you for the destiny God has for you. When God is ready to move you to the next spiritual level (toward your destiny), things may get worse before they get better. Development is often a painful process of breaking us of our own ambitions and independence so we can live a life of surrender and obedience before God. God creates detours in order to perform some construction on our soul. He chips away parts that don't fit and strengthens things that aren't ready for our destiny. Depending on how we respond to our detours, we may be roadblocked several times before we reach our destination.



**1. In what way(s) has God performed some construction on your soul through the detours of your life?**

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**On the whole, do you consider the detour(s) beneficial or not? Explain.**

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Development is always part of the process of destiny. God cannot grant our destiny if we will not allow Him to shape our character; God must deal with our sins, flaws, fears, doubts, and immaturity. Until God is free to produce and promote righteousness within us, He is not free to move us to our intended destination.

Joseph's first lesson landed him in a pit. A literal pit. While shepherding the sheep, his brothers saw the dreamer in the distance and decided to destroy his dream once and for all. They threw him in a pit and spun a tale that a wild beast had devoured him (v. 20).

Joseph's older brother Reuben persuaded the brothers not to kill Joseph. They stripped Joseph of what he valued most—his significance and sign of favor. Have you ever noticed that the very thing you fear losing the most is often the thing you lose? God knows until we let go of what we prize the most, we will always place our desires and will above His own. God often lets us hit rock bottom so we discover He is the rock at the bottom.

Joseph valued his position of favor. So the Lord allowed his brothers to dethrone him by ripping off his coat and tossing him into a pit. Joseph *literally* hit rock bottom. A pit is a hole you cannot get out of by yourself, a situation you cannot fix. You find yourself stuck. When God takes you on a detour, you often wind up at a roadblock, just sitting there stuck.

Joseph didn't create the pit. But he was in it. No water. No food. No energy. No hope. Maybe the dreamer even thought his dreams were now shattered. He heard his brothers whispering about whether they should kill him. He was at their mercy. He had lost all control. Sometimes God allows things to be

Until God is free to produce and promote righteousness within us, He is not free to move us to our intended destination.

**Discussion Question**

Do you agree or disagree with the above pull quote? Explain your reasoning. What are the implications if your assessment is accurate?

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out of control so we will learn we never had control in the first place. Detours are divine interventions—usually even divine disappointments—where God intentionally addresses our character and matures us spiritually.

**2. Detours of our own making can be hard enough to bare. But sometimes, like Joseph, we find ourselves in pits we didn't create. When have you most recently found yourself in such a situation?**

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**When you find yourself in uncomfortable detours beyond your control, what is your typical response?**

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Eventually Ishmaelite traders came along. Joseph's brothers opted to profit off of him rather than to kill him, selling their brother as a slave. One minute Joseph was living large; the next minute he's chained to a caravan marching slowly through a desert. A desert is not usually where someone looks to find their destiny. But it is often a place God will bring us in order to develop us.

Joseph made his way to Egypt, no doubt afraid and definitely alone. Not such a good setup for a future prince and ruler. But that's just like God. He loves us enough to mold us into who He has designed us to be.

You may be in a pit right now, without water, food, or fellowship. You may feel like you're the only one in a perfect storm designed to take you down. But make yourself available to God in whatever form or fashion He chooses—even if that means as a slave to Ishmaelite traders. If you do, you will one day discover His divine providence in using the pain to strengthen your spirit and to deliver you from here to that perfect place waiting for you.

God has a plan for you. Try not to fight the detours designed to take you to its culmination. Praise Him in the pain, even if it is just a faint word that falls off your parched lips. He knows what He's doing. He has great things up ahead for you.

**Discussion Question**

How can we know if we should avoid a detour or if we must work through it?

# LEADER GUIDE



## 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

1. 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.
2. 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?*
3. 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.

## 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

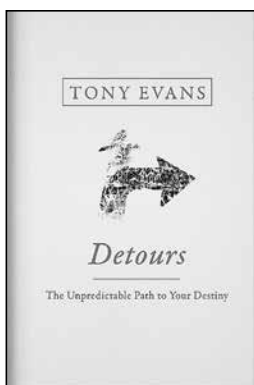
## Key Bible Passage:

Genesis 37:2-28;  
Romans 5:3-5

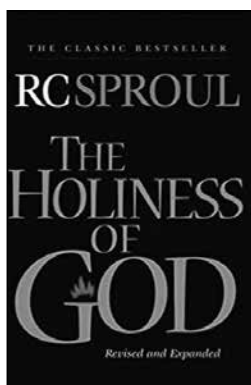
Use Day Two content (pp. 9-10) to talk about how the Israelites' lack of understanding and faith kept them from proceeding to the place God had planned for them. Ask: *Has that happened to you? Have you failed to develop through your detours?*

4. 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.
5. 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.*
6. 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.*
7. 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.

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