



# THAT'S MESSED UP

## SESSION 3 - PERSEVERANCE

### SERIES BIG IDEA

Though Joseph lived through so many messed up experiences, the Lord was with him and his life became a model of integrity and grace.

### MESSAGE BIG IDEA

When our aim is to honor God, we can find the strength to persevere through any circumstance.

### SCRIPTURE

Genesis 39:20-41:1a

### ICEBREAKER AND OPENING THOUGHT

Use this time to get to know the people in your small group, and warm them up to the reality that our past and present experiences shape how we think and act today. Keep these conversations light, and keep in mind these can be positive and/or negative outcomes. It might help to go first on question two and keep it light-hearted.

### BIBLE DISCUSSION

There is a lot of ground to cover here, so maybe have the group take turns reading it, or engaging in the material in a creative way. You could have people close their eyes and listen, or you could do a dramatic reading of the text. Encourage the group to speak up about what they noticed about the story, even if they think it's minor. Always encourage questions about the text even if you can't answer the questions yourself.

The Old Testament doesn't usually offer the details or feelings of the characters it narrates. This leaves a "gap" in the story, and the reader or listener is invited to fill in those gaps with their own perspective and story. In turn, the reader can further reflect on and examine their own life in light of the characters in the story. So encourage your group to think through all the thoughts and feelings the characters may have experienced. That will help them enter more deeply into the story.

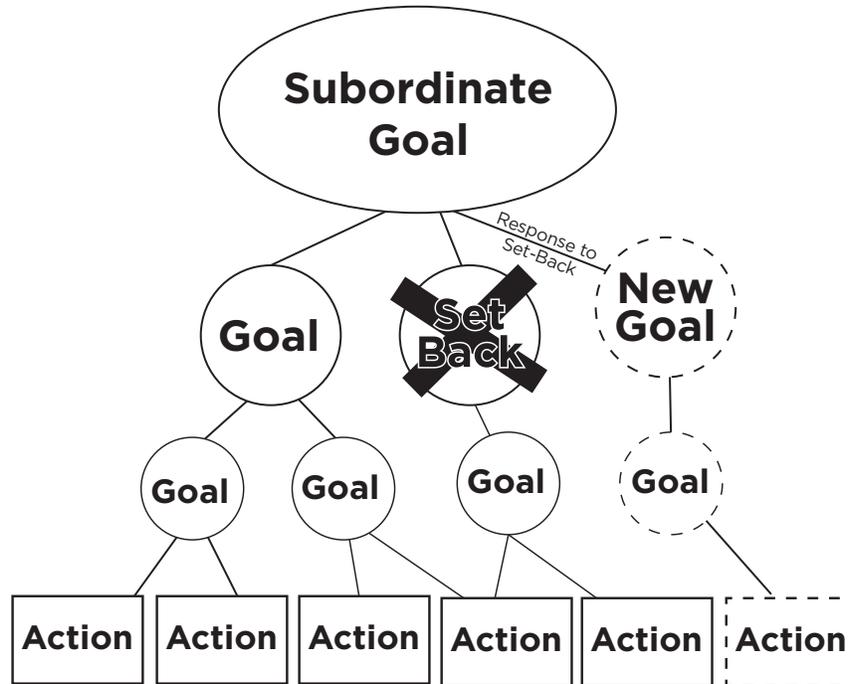
### LIFE APPLICATION

This portion of the group time is a chance for your group to reflect on and share about any "messed up" experiences they are currently facing. Help them wrestle through how they can persevere through those circumstances and how they can rely on God for help. If you have time and want to challenge your group further, you can show them this graph from Angela Duckworth's book *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. In it, she discusses how grit is the ability to keep our eyes on a superordinate goal and not settling for a subordinate goal when we face difficulty. She writes:

*"[Having grit means] tenaciously working toward [the goal] in the face of obstacles and setbacks, often for years or decades. This superordinate goal sits at the top of a well-organized goal hierarchy in which lower-order goals are tightly aligned with the superordinate goal, and these lower-order goals, in turn, give rise to effective actions that advance the individual toward the superordinate goal."* –Angela Duckworth, *Grit*

# THAT'S MESSED UP

SESSION 3 - PERSEVERANCE



The superordinate goal is the large circle on the top. The smaller goals below all feed into that. When one of those smaller goals gets thwarted, it doesn't change the superordinate goal...the person just adapts and creates a new goal in response to the setback. What empowers a person to persevere is the superordinate goal outweighs everything else.

## CHALLENGE

Spend some time reflecting on your life this week. Are there circumstances you are facing or have faced that have distracted you from honoring God? What can you do to set that focus again? What can you take to God in prayer? Write down your goals and a prayer to God to help you persevere.