**Series: Finding Your Way Back to God  
Scripture and Background Information for October 03-09.**

To prepare for your group discussion each week**,** group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD’S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

This week will finish the series, “*Finding Your Way Back to God.*” With the series, we focused on the the parable of the prodigal son as a guiding text. The younger son’s journey helps us understand our inner longings and how we can fill them. Today, we will focus on the older brother of the parable in **Luke 15:25-32** and talk about the life God invites us into.

**Background for Luke 15:25-32:**

Jesus told the parable of the prodigal son who left the father to chase after his dreams. He wanted to live a life that would bring fulfillment, but he realized that he did not find what he wanted. At the bottom of his life, the younger brother decided to go back to his father, become his slave, and repay him for the damage he had done. Instead of accepting the son as a slave, the father welcomed him and placed him into his family.

After the younger brother came home, the father threw a party to celebrate the son’s return (*coming to life 15:32*). When the older brother came home from his work, he was shocked by the father's excessive response to his younger brother. His younger brother had wasted all the money he received from the father. Now, the father was wasting valuable commodities for the brother.

Unwilling to participate in the party, the father goes out to the older son and invites him to come and participate. Disrespectfully, the older brother argues with his father. The father’s response shows His heart.

Questions to engage with the text:

1. Compare Luke 15:18-28. What are the differences between the two brothers in connection to the father? What do the different actions tell us about the father, the sons?
2. What does the older brother focus on when talking to the father? How would you describe his motivation for what he did?
3. How does the father answer the older brother? What does the father focus on when talking about his sons? Looking at the father’s response to the son, how would you describe the life God designed for us?
4. As you think of the series as a whole, what are some of your main takeaways? What are some of those longings you have identified in your life over the last few weeks? What does it look like for you to find them in the person of Jesus?

*Note:* *The parable ends unusually abruptly. Jesus never finishes the story and tells us how the older brother reacted. Did he join the party, or did he leave? It is as if Jesus shows us that the story is not completed yet. He waits for our response to join his invitation.*