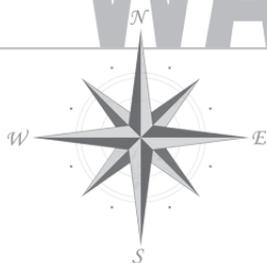


# FINDING

5 Awakenings  
to Your New Life

# YOUR

# WAY BACK



# TO GOD

DAVE FERGUSON &  
JON FERGUSON



MULTNOMAH  
BOOKS

**SESSION 5**

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FINDING YOUR WAY BACK TO GOD PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

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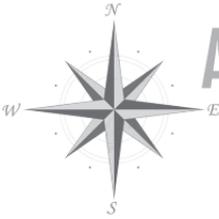
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## Session 5



# AWAKENING TO LIFE

**“Now this is living!”**

## Session 5 Big Idea:

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You know the way, and home is where you always belong. Be prepared in the years ahead for a life that's different from anything you thought possible when you made a U-turn on the road and asked the Father for help. The awakening to life brings with it unexpected influence and opportunities. How can this be? It's because Jesus is alive in you, and that changes just about everything. Now you can bring love to where there is hate. You can bring purpose to where there is confusion. You can bring hope to where there is despair. And that is living! So find your place in the community of other grateful sons and daughters of the Father. Connect with them, learn from them, and work alongside them to make a difference for good in marriages, homes, schools, workplaces, and communities. And together, let's keep helping others find their way back to God. That's where the real celebration is waiting.

If possible, please read chapters 14–16 of *Finding Your Way Back to God* before participating in session 5.

### OPTIONAL ICEBREAKER

Share your answer to this question: When do you feel most alive?

### OPENING THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

What changes have you already seen in yourself during the process of returning to God? What changes do you hope to see for yourself in your future?



## BIBLE DISCUSSION

Read Luke 15:22–24. You've already read these verses, but this time focus on the reason in verse 24 that the father gives for the celebration. (Also see verse 32.)

<sup>22</sup>The father said to his servants, "Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. <sup>24</sup>For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." So they began to celebrate.

4. In what sense was the son "dead" and "lost"? In what sense is he now "alive" and "found"?

5. Would you say that the same dramatic contrasts (alive after being dead, found after being lost) are appropriate to describe the changes in us when we find our way back to God? Give your reasons.

### LIFE APPLICATION DISCUSSION

6. Do you worship regularly as part of a church family? If so, describe the worship at your church. How does it help to sustain you in your new life with God?

If not, what might it take for you to find a church and consistently join in the worship?

7. Do you have a regular devotional time of Bible reading, reflection, and prayer? If so, describe your private devotional practice. How does it help to sustain you in your new life with God?

If not, how could you begin to make this a habit in your life?

8. Are you part of a small group of people who want to live in the love of God and meet together regularly? If so, tell about your small group and how it functions. How does it help to sustain you in your new life with God?

If not, how could you find a small group that fits your needs during this season of your life?

9. Do you engage in some kind of ministry or service (however informal) that seeks to bless others? If so, explain this ministry. How does it help to sustain you in your new life with God?

If not, what kind of ministry do you think God has equipped you to be involved with in order to bring his blessing into the lives of others?

## OPTIONAL PERSONAL DECISION TIME

Think back to your answers to questions 6–9. These questions get at four key practical ways in which you can live out your new life in Christ: public worship, private devotions, small-group participation, and personal ministry. Choose at least one area where you know you are not doing what you could, then settle on at least one specific step you will take to live out your new spiritual identity. (For example, if you are not in a small group but would like to be, then maybe this week you could contact the leader who coordinates small groups in your church.) Write down what you plan to do.

Remember, Jesus says, “I am making everything new!” (Revelation 21:5).

## EXPANDED BIBLE DISCUSSION

Read John 3:1–8, the account of a time when Jesus mystified a religious teacher by talking about being “born again.”

<sup>1</sup>Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. <sup>2</sup>He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.”

<sup>3</sup>Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”

<sup>4</sup>“How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!”

<sup>5</sup>Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup>Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup>You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ <sup>8</sup>The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.”



we do so no longer. <sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:16–18)

<sup>3</sup>Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. (Romans 6:3–4)

3. What do you think is included in the newness that comes to people who are reconciled to God through Christ?

4. How does baptism represent this new life in Christ?

## AFTER THE SESSION

Sometime after participating in session 5, find some quiet time to spend alone in a peaceful place with Scripture, your own thoughts, and prayer.

Read the following Scripture passage (Colossians 3:1–4):

<sup>1</sup>Since . . . you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. <sup>3</sup>For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Underline one or more lines in the above passage that mean the most to you.

Think about these questions: *How has my life changed since coming back to God? What can I do to get rid of the remnants of my old life and live in a way that's more consistent with my new life?*

Pray the following prayer:

**God, if you are real,  
make yourself real to me.  
Awaken in me the confidence  
that I can live a brand-new life.**



Thank the Lord for drawing you near when you felt separated from him. Ask his help to remain close to him for your whole life long—and throughout all eternity!

## Session 5

# Awakening to Life

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*Objective:* To help participants celebrate their new life by finding their place in the community of grateful sons and daughters of the Father.

What you need for this session:

- At least one copy of the book *Finding Your Way Back to God* to refer to if needed
- The *Finding Your Way Back to God* DVD
- A DVD player and a screen on which the whole group can watch video 5
- Bibles for yourself and the other participants
- (optional) Index cards or slips of paper
- (optional) Pens or pencils
- (optional) Information group members can

use to begin corporate and personal worship, small-group participation, and service to others in your community

### OPTIONAL ICEBREAKER

If you decide to use this icebreaker question with your group, examples of answers might include playing extreme sports, traveling to exotic locales, and performing with a musical instrument.

### OPENING THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION

*Question 1:* Be as affirming as you can about the positive changes taking place in group members' lives. Give God the glory for it all.

### VIDEO DISCUSSION

*Questions 2 and 3:* After playing the video, use these questions to help group members react to what they saw.

### BIBLE DISCUSSION

*Questions 4 and 5:* The Scriptures frequently use dramatic contrasts, such as death and life (see Ephesians 2:1–10; Colossians

2:9–15), to talk about the difference between not knowing God and knowing him. Help your fellow group members see that finding one's way back to God is not just an *improvement* to someone's life—it is a *new* life.

### LIFE APPLICATION DISCUSSION

*Questions 6 to 9:* If your group is large, you may wish to break it into small groups so that everyone has time to discuss these application questions. Don't make anyone feel guilty for not going to church regularly or otherwise failing to do these things he or she "should" be doing. Instead, help group members see that worship, devotions, small groups, and service are means that God has provided to help us maintain a growing relationship with him. They do not need to be a duty but a joy!

### OPTIONAL PERSONAL DECISION TIME

Use this as a concluding activity if you have time and want the group members to make a personal response to the discussion you've been having.

Hand out index cards or slips of paper, along with pencils or pens, for participants to write their decisions down. Then invite the group members to go to different spots in your meeting area in groups of two or three to discuss their decisions.

If possible, be prepared with practical information people

can use. For example, maybe you could have a few examples of devotional guides you like. Or maybe you can have the contact information people can use to get in touch with leaders in your church about joining a small group or participating with a ministry team.

### EXPANDED BIBLE DISCUSSION

If you have time in the session to discuss more of the Bible, use one or both of the passages in this expanded material. (You may wish to insert these questions following the discussion of Luke 15:22–24 in questions four and five above.)

*Expanded questions 1 and 2:* “Born again” is another way to talk about having new life. This passage gives a glimpse into the mysterious yet powerful way in which the Spirit of God is at work behind the scenes as we are seeking to find our way back to God.

*Expanded question 3:* Group members may refer to such things as peace, joy, holiness, purpose, and assurance of an eternity with God. All such are true.

### CLOSING PRAYER

Invite volunteers to express their feelings to God about drawing near to him as lost sons and daughters who have now been found.