

# losing your mind & finding the mind of Christ



This fall we've made a change to the devotions and small group study guides. Instead of having two separate studies, we've combined them into one tool. This devo is designed to serve as both an individual devotion and/or small group study guide. We've added elements of focused prayer and scripture memory. This will help us soak in the Bible, creating greater meaning, and wisdom that's only gained when we slow down and take time for spiritual growth as individuals and groups. The following steps can be done all at once or throughout the entire week. The more consistently you make time with God a daily activity, the better result you will get.

**daily prayer:** Father, this day make me aware of the condition of my mind. Help me to set my mind on things above not on things below. Help me to have the mind of Christ. Help me to be a person of learning, problem solving, creativity, peace, sound judgment, empathy, compassion, and courage. Give me the ability to love You with my mind. *(In small group - pray this prayer aloud together.)*

**this week's memory verse:** Isaiah 26:3

**step one:** Read Psalm 139:14.

"The mind is a terrible thing to waste." This is true, but the mind is also a **powerful** and **dangerous** thing to waste. The more we discover and learn about the brain, as well as the differences between the human brain and all other creatures, the more the words of the Psalmist ring true! God created and designed the lizard brain to survive, nothing more. God designed and created the human brain for higher thinking -- learning, problem solving, creativity, peace, sound judgment, empathy, compassion, courage and love. In the weekend message it was stated that, "We have a tendency to live in lizard brain or survival mode." *Do you think this is true?* In his book, Consider, Forrester describes this kind of survival mode:

*We rarely step back to question the pace of our lives, the personal impact, chaotic information flows, unpredictability, and lack of meaning.*

*We collapse at the end of the day and then get back in the water the next morning.*

*With all the information coming at us, our only choice appears to be to try to stay on top of it all, the same way we do our email.*

*How have you seen this in your own life?*

*(In small group -- can you share a specific example?)*

**step two:**

Listed below are some mind conditions which are stated in the Bible.

**Circle** the words that best describe the current state of your mind.

**Underline** the words you wish were descriptive of your mind.

*Will you take the risk to share your answers in your group?*

**Anxious, Debased, Carnal, Depraved, Set on the flesh, Set on earthly things, Haughty, Blinded, Led astray, Futile, Alienated, Hostile, Defiled, Idle/Lazy, Shaken, Troubled, Grieved, Desiring, Vexed, Dull, Closed, Double-minded, Unfruitful, Darkened, Deadened, Sound, Right, Willing, Convinced, Transformed, Renewed, Fixed, Steadfast and stayed, Set on things above, Girded for action, Searched, Tested and tried, Ready, Lowly, Wise, Peaceful, Clear**

**Read** Isaiah 26:3. The word *steadfast* is defined as "fixed in a direction; steadily directed: firm in purpose, unwavering..."

*Is that how you'd describe the condition of your mind? At peace?*

*Firm in purpose and unwavering?* When our brains are in survival mode, we're unable to use higher brain function. We react to what's going around and within us instead of thoughtfully responding. *How would you describe the difference of reacting and responding?* **Take** a few minutes to practice the memory verse as individuals *(and/or as a group)*.

**step three:** **Look** at Romans 8:5a; 6a; 7-8. **Think** about how these verses relate to lower survival mode-type thinking. **Consider** the four survival mode options: **fight, flight, freeze, float**. **Think** of behaviors which result from reacting in these 4 ways (i.e. **fight** = lashing out, or manipulating people and situations, **flight** = denying, avoiding, hiding from real issues, **freeze** = incapable of responding or reacting, and **float** = going through the motions, numbing out with TV, shopping, web surfing, etc.)

*Which is your default behavior when dealing with your "lizard brain?"*

*(Share with your small group.)*

**step four:** **Read** Romans 8:5-8. *How are those who live in accordance with the Spirit different?* **Consider** the following behaviors:

**Focus, Attitude, Reflection, Awareness, and Growth.** These mind issues can develop into patterned behaviors which can change perspectives and create clarity. **Read** one (or more) scripture for each behavior and consider the following questions: *What does it say about the behavior? Does this describe my own focus/attitude/reflection/awareness/growth? On what am I focused? What's my attitude? What kinds of things do I think about? Am I allowing myself to live in lizard brain mode? If so, what does this verse say about that?*

**focus:** Hebrews 12:2a, Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:2

**attitude:** Ephesians 4:22-24, Philippians 2:5

**reflection:** 2 Corinthians 13:5, Hebrews 12:3a

**awareness:** 1 Corinthians 11:28, Romans 12:3

**growth:** 1 Peter 2:2-3, 2 Peter 3:18