



Why God Gave Us Dopamine | Doug Wekenman| 08.03.2025
Weekly Study

SHARE

As group members settle in, take a few minutes to check in with everyone and see how their lives are going. Share an exciting story from this week, your highs and lows, an answered prayer, or something you're struggling with. If someone is really struggling, rally the group around them and take a few moments to pray over them.

- **Share a high, a low, and something interesting from this week.**

GROW

God designed dopamine not just for pleasure, but as a tool for us to pursue a rich, satisfying life and to shine His light to the world. This week, Doug drew fascinating parallels between the Garden of Eden and our modern struggles with instant gratification. Just as Adam and Eve faced a choice between two trees, we constantly choose between quick fixes and the deeper joy God offers. This exploration of neuroscience and faith reminds us that self-control, often overlooked, is a crucial fruit of the Spirit. It's not about legalism, but about raising our standards for what truly constitutes an abundant life. As we navigate a world full of distractions, we're encouraged to embrace effort and spiritual discipline, recognizing that choices leading to life often feel like dying to ourselves initially.

Read 1 Peter 1:13, John 10:10

- **How did this week's message speak to you?**

- **How has your understanding of dopamine changed after hearing this sermon?**
- **How does the imagery of the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil in Eden relate to our daily choices and spiritual battles?**
- **What area of your life do you need to exercise more self-control in?**

MOVE

Exercising self-control may feel like a small death in the moment—denying a craving, a reaction, or a shortcut—but it’s actually a pathway to true joy and long-term fulfillment. Neuroscience even affirms this: practicing self-control helps regulate and increase healthy dopamine levels over time. Instead of the fleeting spike we get from giving in to temptation, discipline trains our brains to find lasting satisfaction in purpose, progress, and peace. Spiritually, this aligns with Jesus’ call to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow Him. When we die to the momentary impulses of the flesh, we make space for the fruit of the Spirit—self-control included—to grow in us. In that surrender, we don’t just lose something—we gain a more abundant, resurrection-powered life that’s deeply rewarding both now and eternally.

Read Matthew 16:24-25, Galatians 2:20

- **How do you see the tension between instant gratification and long-term fulfillment playing out in your life?**
- **How can we balance the concept of grace with the need for effort and 'spiritual disciplines' in our Christian walk?**
- **How does the idea that discipline can lead to healthy, lasting dopamine (rather than a short-term spike) change the way you view habits like prayer, rest, generosity, or service?**
- **What might the Holy Spirit be inviting you to “put to death” or surrender right now, in order to make room for more life, growth, or freedom?**

- **How can we support one another as a group in developing self-control and spiritual discipline?**

P R A Y

Lord,

Restore to us the joy that comes from walking closely with You. Give us willing hearts and steady spirits as we learn to die to ourselves and live in Your strength. Help us to choose what leads to life, even when it's hard in the moment. Grow in us the fruit of self-control and lead us into the fullness of the life You've promised.

In Jesus' name, Amen.