



IS MY MIND SET ON THE FLESH... OR THE SPIRIT?

A Prayer Guide for Underground TN

THE THERMOSTAT & THE THERMOMETER

A *thermometer* REACTS to its environment.

A *thermostat* INFLUENCES its environment, setting the temperature.

Paul calls us in Romans 8, NOT to be like *thermometers* shaped by the flesh's cravings — but to be like *thermostats* through the Spirit. With our minds fixed on the Spirit, we are empowered to bring the Kingdom into every room we enter. As we are filled with the Spirit the love, goodness, and power of our Father overflows.

Begin to pay attention... are you responding to your circumstances, relationships, opportunities, challenges? Or with the Spirit's help are you INFLUENCING your environments? *Which do you want to be?*

1. THE MIND SETS DIRECTION— ROMANS 8:1–8

Scripture and brain science... consistently highlight that your mind is like the steering wheel of your destiny. The thoughts you dwell on shape your character, attitude, perspective and the direction your life takes.

Romans 8:5–6

"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace."

Romans 8:7–8

"For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

In the Bible sometimes "flesh" can simply mean your physical body. At other time the word "flesh" is used to describe your natural selfish inclination to get what you want, when you want, how you want, regardless of negative impact on others or God.

A helpful analogy for the use of "flesh" as used in Romans 8... think of a 2–3-year-old, with unbridled, unchecked desires for self-gratification. This stage of life is sometimes called the 'terrible twos. Two-year old's love to get what they want and hate to be told 'no or wait'. When they want something, they will try to manipulate to get it, in sweet ways or by throwing a big old Kroger tantrum.

"The mind is the control center of the person. What you set your mind on determines what your life becomes. Paul is describing a fundamental orientation — a deep and persistent inclination of the whole person toward either the flesh or the Spirit." — Tim Keller, Romans 1–7 For You

2. THE FLESH & THE SPIRIT BOTH HAVE DESIRES — GALATIANS 5:16–25

Galatians 5:16–17

"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other."

Galatians 5:22–25

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control ... If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."

"The Spirit-filled life is not about trying harder. It is about being so rooted in your union with Christ that the fruit simply grows — not manufactured, but cultivated through abiding. You yield, and love emerges."

— Scot McKnight, *Open to the Spirit*

3. THE CONTRAST — FLESH VS. SPIRIT

	MIND SET ON THE FLESH	MIND SET ON THE SPIRIT
DESIRES	Self-preservation, approval, pleasure, control, comfort, independence from God	Communion with God, love for others, Christlikeness, truth, righteousness, peace
STRATEGIES	Striving, manipulation, self-medication, people-pleasing, avoidance, numbing pain	Prayer, surrender, Scripture, community, confession, waiting on God
HABITS	Impurity, anger, envy, selfish ambition, gossip, idolatry, addiction, self-reliance	Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control
FRUIT	Death, shame, broken relationships, spiritual emptiness, enslavement to selfishness	Life and peace (Rom. 8:6), freedom, restored relationships, spiritual abundance, fully alive
FOCUS	The temporary — comfort, pleasure, control, status, self-image, circumstances	The eternal — God's kingdom, others' good, the imperishable
IDENTITY	Defined by performance, wounds, or the opinions of others	Defined by adoption in Christ — child of God, co-heir with Christ

"The flesh doesn't just want sin — it wants control. It wants to write its own story, meet its own needs by its own strategies. The Spirit's work is to expose that throne and dethrone it — not through self-effort but through encounter with the living God." — Marcus Warner, The Heart of Discipleship

"Walking in the flesh is trusting in yourself. Much of what looks like Christian living is, at its core, flesh dressed in spiritual language." — Charles Stanley, The Wonderful Spirit-Filled Life

4. THE STAKES — LIFE AND DEATH

Romans 8:6 does not sugar coat...*"To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace."* A mind set on the flesh produces a kind of living death: fragmented relationships, enslaved appetites, a conscience that cannot rest. A mind set on the Spirit produces **life and peace** — even in hardship.

"God does not ask us to manage our flesh — He invites us to reckon ourselves dead to it, and to walk in the newness of the resurrection life the Spirit supplies. This is not a discipline of subtraction; it is a discipline of saturation."
— Charles Stanley, *The Wonderful Spirit-Filled Life*

5. PRAYING AS THOSE SET ON THE SPIRIT

EXAMINATION — Where has my mind been set?

- *Holy Spirit, show me the desires I have been trying to satisfy apart from You. Where has my mind been a thermometer — absorbing the world — rather than a thermostat set on You?*
- *Are there habits or patterns in my life that belong to the works of the flesh? Name and confess them.*

SURRENDER — Releasing the flesh's agenda

- *Father, I acknowledge that my flesh cannot please You. I surrender it to the cross — where it has been crucified with Christ.*
- *I let go of _____. It has been a strategy of the flesh. I bring this need to You instead.*

INVITATION — Setting the mind on the Spirit

- *Holy Spirit, saturate my thinking. Set my mind on You and Your Kingdom. Renew my mind today (Rom. 12:2).*
- *Produce in me what I cannot produce in myself: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. I yield to Your work.*
- *Spirit of God, show me one person today who needs the life and peace that flows from a mind set on You. Let it overflow through me in my prayers, kindness, and acts of blessing.*

Romans 8:6 — *"To set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace."*