

“ROLLING OUT OF BED”

Romans 8:6-11

March 22, 2026

Have you ever had the experience of not being able to **get out of bed**? Well, it's not because you can't physically get out of bed, it's just that you don't want to. There is nothing motivating you to leave a nice, warm, comfortable bed to step out on the cold floor and begin the day. So, we hit the alarm snooze button 6 times, curl up and go back to sleep. We've all had those lazy days, sleep until noon moments. Fortunately or unfortunately, we do have activities that need our attention, school, work, pay bills, dishes, laundry, meet with friends, get the car's oil changed, and sing in the choir. We know we should get up, and we hate to rush and be late, but we still push it to that last possible moment to roll out and begin the day.

Yet, there are other days when we wake before the alarm, jump up, do our morning exercises, make coffee, reply to emails, and are moving before anyone else has blinked. Why is it that on some days we are greatly motivated and others not so much? Why can't we just be motivated all the time? For that matter, why do we struggle to keep to our routines, keep to our diet, keep to our commitment to exercise, keep up the housework, keep going on projects we have begun, and even keep our promises?

Perhaps the problem is we are depending too much on **motivation**. After all, motivation is a feeling or a mood which comes and goes. If we are waiting to feel motivated, and let's be honest who really feels like doing the dishes, either the task is never going to get done or we wait until

there are no more dishes left in the cupboard. Maybe we need to substitute motivation with a different mindset.

Ironically, the Apostle Paul mentions the **mind** three times in the first 2 verses of our scripture reading. I did a little research and discovered that in Paul's letters to the churches in Rome, Colossi, Corinth, Ephesus, and Philippi he speaks about the importance of the mind and its relationship to faith. He makes statements like: **"Have the mind of Christ, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, think about these things, be in full accord and have one mind, set your minds on the things above, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds."** All this talk about the mind made me wonder what role it plays in our walk with Christ. Could one of the keys to faith be how our mind is set?

I. TWO WAYS OF LIVING

A Police officer **pulls over a car driving 15 mph in a 70-mph speed zone** The Officer discovered it was an older woman driving. He asks her why she was driving so slowly.

The Woman replied, **"I saw a sign that said I-15, so I thought the speed limit was 15 mph."**

The Officer said, **"Ms. that is the sign for the Interstate 15. The speed limit is 70 mph on this road."** Then he notices 3 other older ladies in the back seat whose faces were white as a sheet.

He asks the driver, **"What's wrong with them."**

The woman said, **"Oh, we just came off I-215."**

The challenging part about driving a car is the ability to make multiple decisions under constantly changing situations. Do I speed up, slow down, put on the high beams, watch the construction flag person, stop for gas, change the radio station, choose a setting for the windshield wipers, turn down the heat, engage the 4-wheel drive, pass the car in front? One of the most important driving decisions happens when you come to a stop sign. Do you turn left, turn right, or keep going straight? This is a critical decision because which direction you choose determines where you end up.

This is Paul's point when he wrote, "**To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.**" In this passage Paul is not talking about flesh and spirit as if they are two parts of our nature. What he is describing is 2 ways of living, two decisions we are making that lead to two very different destinations.

Either we are living the way of the flesh, meaning our lives are shaped by, controlled by, and holding the values that are in rebellion against God or we are living a life that is shaped by, controlled by and holding the values that are in tune with God. The first way leads to our demise, and the second way leads to life and peace. One way brings us closer to God and the other takes us further away from God.

For those who follow Jesus, "**to set our mind**" means, we are intentionally making decisions every day and indeed every moment, to live with and for God's purposes, not just when we feel like it, or when it is convenient. This is an intention of the heart, the purpose for living, and

a mind set on Christ Jesus. We will not be perfect at this. We will miss the mark, often. But life in the Spirit means we have set our mind on a particular path that follows the voice of Christ.

II. THE SPIRIT MIND DANCE

My very first dance lessons came in the form of **square dancing** in Jr. High. The insensitive gym teacher would line the boys up in front of all the girls to choose our dance partner. **Talk about awkward!** You didn't want to let a girl know you liked her and at the same time there were definitely girls you didn't want to choose. And if you hemmed and hawed for too long the teacher would make a choice for you. **Oh the anxiety of Jr. High!**

But here's the thing. In order to square dance you need a **partner**. The same could be said for living out our faith. We need a partner. Even the strongest mind is not enough. Attempting to live this Christian life all on our own is doomed to failure. We need a power greater than ourselves. The good news is **God provides us with a dance partner**. **"But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you."**

However, I find that many people do not understand this **Spirit Dance Partner**. When Paul says the Spirit dwells in you, he does not mean we are possessed nor do we have some kind of parasite living inside us. We don't own the Spirit nor is it some kind of power that we can manipulate for our own purposes.

The Spirit is God's spirit at work within us who functions like a helper, a guide, an advocate, a God connection, and a teacher. The Spirit trains the mind to turn to God, Trains the heart to love God. Trains our eyes to seek and follow God and Trains our feet to dance in time with God.

The Spirit as Dance Partner means the Spirit is our life partner. We dance as a synchronized team. There is only one catch. We must let the Spirit lead. This is not an equal partnership, but it is one based on love, trust, and faith. We can resist the Spirit and even say, **“No I'll do it my way!”** The Spirit doesn't force us to dance, but we won't get very far in faith without our partner. And the really cool part is the spirit works with us in this life and the next. **“IF the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.”** We get to keep dancing in eternal partnership.

III. TRAINING THE MIND

So how can we act like a better dance partner. Or to put it another way how do we train the mind? I offer a couple of suggestions.

1. MAKE SPACE

If you have ever watched people dance, you know it is physically impossible for them to occupy the same space. The dancers must respect each other's area, or they will run into each other and fall down. While the Spirit may dwell in us, we are two different persons. The Spirit respects our personhood, our space. The Spirit of God works not as a

hostile takeover but rather as a coordinated relationship. For that coordinated relationship to thrive we need to be in step with one another, which means we take time to listen, to talk, and to learn from our partner, This is why prayer is so important. Prayer is one of the ways we make space for God to work in and through us. It is a creates a mind that is moldable to the Spirit. We learn to live in the Spirit's presence.

2. GET RID OF DISTRACTIONS – AND LIVE WITH FOCUS

Can you image dancing with someone and watching TV at the same time? It won't work! There is too much distraction and no focus on the dance. We live in a very distracted culture. We have constant distraction and entertainment that we can carry around with us 24 hours a day. This distraction interferes with setting our minds on the Spirit.

For the past month I have weaned myself off almost all social media and TV. At first, it was strange because I found myself constantly reaching for the phone out of habit. I also discovered how much extra time I had when I wasn't planted in front of a screen. I had no more excuses not to read, work on a project, chat with my family, and I can actually live without knowing the next episode.

Another strange experience is I feel like my mind has jumped into a higher gear of awareness. For instance, I noticed what was going on in my own heart because I wasn't using the escapism of the silver screen to pacify my anxieties. At first this was overwhelming, but as I faced them with the Spirit, my mind became calmer and more focused.

Speaking of focus, how focused are we? How much attention do we give to the activities we are engaged in? For instance, **do you enjoy what you are eating** – the texture, flavor, spice level or do you swallow without chewing? When you **Take your morning walk are you just trying to arrive at a magic finished line or attentive to the beauty around you?**

When we get rid of the distractions and focus our minds on the moment we develop a sensitivity to life. We discover joy in the simple things, not just the utility of getting a job done. We begin to live life and not the imaginary ones of a screen. We also become sensitive to the voice of God. Our morning devotions become richer and deeper because now God has our focused attention, free of distraction.

3. DO THE DIFFICULT TASK FIRST

There is a story about a man who had a hard time with getting out of bed. He came up with a 9X plan. If he did not get up right away, then he would force himself to get in and out of bed 9 times. If he couldn't sit still for 5 minutes, then had to sit still for 45 minutes. If he didn't get going with his 10 minutes of exercise, then he would turn it into 90 minutes of exercise. His 9X principle was not a punishment, but rather a way of training his mind to obey his will. This is how military training works. It trains the recruits to let go of ego, trust their commanding officer, and work for the good of a team.

To set our mind on the Spirit is to train our minds to Obey the Spirit. One way to begin this is to do the hard task first. Instead of leaving

it when we feel motivated begin the day there. Give, forgive, reach out in love, get rid of stuff we don't use or need, help another. If we follow the Spirit's leading, she will train our minds to obey.

IV. THE MIND IS A TERRIBLE THING TO WASTE

Do any of you remember the phrase ***"A mind is a terrible thing to waste"***? It was coined by Vernon Jordan of the United Negro College Fund in 1972. It was part of a campaign slogan to raise money and awareness for education. Since its founding in 1944, this organization has been a cornerstone of educational equity in the United States. Created to support historically Black colleges and universities. Each year, the organization awards more than 10,000 scholarships through over 400 programs, helping students overcome financial barriers and persist through college. Their impact on young black minds is measurable.

A mind is a terrible thing to waste. Paul would agree. A mind trained and set on the Spirit of life has great consequences now and, in the future, because it is a mind God can dance with. What is your mind doing today?
Amen.

First Presbyterian Church in Hawley
Sunday, March 22, 2026
Second Scripture Lesson

Romans 8:6-11

6 To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

7 For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed, it cannot,

8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

10 But if Christ is in you, then the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be To God.