FEELINGS, THE FLESH, AND THE SPIRIT  
Galatians 5:16-18

Introduction:  1) Notice the word DESIRES  2) Paying attention to your feelings because they are either the warning signs of influence of the flesh or the blessed signs of the influence of the Holy Spirit.  3) Walking in the Spirit is expressed in different ways in the Bible.  Philippians 4:13 and Galatians 2:20.  Walking in the Flesh is expressed in a number of ways.  Romans 7:15-18

I. Desires of the Flesh (The goal of the flesh)
   A. Sexual feelings - Galatians 5:19 (Sex is for the marriage bed according to Scripture.  Sexual feelings outside of marriage can lead to what the Bible calls fornication.  All unmarried people who claim the name of Christ should avoid such feelings.  Includes trying to stir up sexual feelings in others, flirts.  Also for money, pornography, strip clubs, prostitution, movies, and television.
   B. Anger -  Galatians 5:20;  Ephesians 4:26 (can lead to acts of sin in words and actions and culminate in bitterness, which is an intense desire for revenge, refusing to initiate or accept any opportunity for forgiveness.  Anger can lead to ruined relationships of all kinds.  The flesh wants to ruin all your relationships.)
   C. Love for the world - Galatians 5:20; 1 John 2:15-17 (Eternal pleasures exchanged for eternal pleasures.  These things can cause an idolatrous relationship with family, friends, organizations, causes, money, position in life, careers, hobbies and any and everything that the world might have to offer.  The flesh wants to make an idolater out of you.)
   D. Fear - Philippians 4:6,7; 2 Timothy 1:7 (Fear can lead to anxiety, it is a worry that wears out the spirit.  Fear can cause us to refuse to entrust ourselves to the Love of God.  It is a control issue.  Anxiety is the consequence of it.  Love casts out
fear.)

II. Desires of the Spirit  (The goal of the Spirit is for Christ to live through us)
   A. Love - Galatians 5:22; 1 John 5:3  (This kind of love is when we treasure Jesus above anyone and anything. It leads to obedience. In this passage it is telling us this kind of love is not a once in a lifetime experience but is instead a voluntary moment by moment experience predicated on letting the Holy Spirit influence you. He influences you through Church, right fellowship, Bible Study, Music, and prayer)  Ephesians 5:18-21
   B. Joy - Galatians 5:22 (The greater the treasure the greater the joy. When the Joy of the Lord is our strength then we delight ourselves in the Lord. Joy is what brings glory to God. It also produces a thankful heart instead of a complaining and critical spirit. Delight yourself in the Lord and you will experience joy. Guard your heart that Jesus is your greatest treasure.)
   C. Peace - Galatians 5:22 (Peace comes from entrusting yourself to the Lord. It is also what pleases God. Peace is the result of knowing God is pleased with you. When you trust him, give him control of your life, deny yourself and take up your cross, peace is the result. Peace calms our fears so they don’t grow into anxiety. It is the peace of God that calms us not something in ourselves. We are trusting in the Peace God has with himself.) Philippians 4:7

Conclusion:  1) Only Born again, blood bought, Christ trusting people truly have free will. They can choose to walk by the Spirit or the flesh. The unsaved have no free will.  2) It is important we guard our hearts, we are commanded to do so, this means to watch our feelings, pay attention to them, they indicated which direction we are headed in. They can indicate we are getting close to sinning or they can indicate we are drawing closer to Christ.  2) Feelings have led many into a lifestyle of sins and
regardless of what you think, Paul warns that those who live like that will never inherit the kingdom of God.