

## Passion

Stoicism: Followers of the philosopher Zeno of Citium (334 – 262 BC) Passion is contrary to reason, so should be thought through and brought under control. Zeno recommended a life of virtue and reason which should result in a life without excessive lows or highs. (Think: Spock.)

Many in Christianity have adopted a similar position, with the modification by some of relying on the Spirit to overcome passion. Therefore, they argue, sexual passion can be overcome with reason (and the work of the Spirit), as well as other intense emotions such as grief, anger, and fear. But such a position also eliminates spontaneity, unplanned compassion, and exhibitions of joy. They reason that having an intensely low period demonstrates a lack of the work of the Spirit, and exuberance demonstrates a lack of control. See Galatians 5:24.

### Sexual Desire

- 1 Corinthians 7:1 – 9, 25 – 40 The euphemism for marital relations was “kindness” or “good will.”
- Misplaced sexual desire is called immorality, vile passions (*e.g.*, Romans 1:26), adultery (*e.g.*, Galatians 5:19) or fornication (*e.g.*, 1 Thessalonians 4:3 – 5).
- Building good character through the work of the Spirit allows passion to work in its intended context.

### Grief

- God experiences grief (Ephesians 4:30)
- Paul would have grieved if Epaphroditus had died (Philippians 2:25 – 28)
- Jesus withdrew from the public to be alone after receiving the news that John had been executed. (Matthew 14:13)
- Yet, some teach that grief shows weak faith or a lack of hope (1 Thessalonians 4:13)
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### Anger

- Be angry but sin not. Do not let the sun go down on your wrath (Ephesians 4:26)
- The wrath of God is revealed (Romans 1:18)
- Jesus was angry with the hardness of heart of a crowd (Mark 3:5).
- Be slow to wrath (James 1:19 – 20)
- Yet, some teach that anger is wrong in any context (2 Corinthians 12:20, Galatians 5:20, Ephesians 4:31, Colossians 3:8, 1 Timothy 2:8)
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## **Joy**

- The occasions for joy in the New Testament do not describe the physical response (see Rejoice handout)
- David danced at the head of the procession bringing the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem. His wife (and likely others) considered this undignified. (2 Samuel 6:14 – 16, 20 – 23).
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## **Fear**

- Christians are released from fear of bondage to sin (Romans 8:15), torment (1 John 4:18), and death (Hebrews 2:15).
- Christians experience fear for the fate of the lost (2 Corinthians 5:11, 7:1, Ephesians 5:21, Philippians 2:12, Hebrews 4:1, Hebrews 10:31, 1 Peter 1:17)
- Building good character through the work of the Spirit allows passion to work in its intended context.

## **Compassion**

- Jesus often reacted (without planning) due to compassion (Matthew 9:36, 14:14, 15:32, 20:34, Mark 1:41, 6:34, 8:2, Luke 7:13). Note: the assumption that Jesus knew the future eliminates any opportunity for spontaneity.
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Passion strips away reason and civility thereby laying bare the real self.