

A List of the Passions

by St Peter of Damaskos

The passions are:

harshness, trickery, malice, perversity, mindlessness, licentiousness, enticement, dullness, lack of understanding, idleness, sluggishness, stupidity, flattery, silliness, idiocy, madness, derangement, coarseness, rashness, cowardice, lethargy, dearth of good actions, moral errors, greed, over-frugality, ignorance, folly, spurious knowledge, forgetfulness, lack of discrimination, obduracy, injustice, evil intention, a conscienceless soul, slothfulness, idle chatter, breaking of faith, wrongdoing, sinfulness, lawlessness, criminality, passion, seduction, assent to evil, mindless coupling, demonic provocation, dallying, bodily comfort beyond what is required, vice, stumbling, sickness of soul, enervation, weakness of intellect, negligence, laziness, a reprehensible despondency, disdain of God, aberration, transgression, unbelief, lack of faith, wrong belief, poverty of faith, heresy, fellowship in heresy, polytheism, idolatry, ignorance of God, impiety, magic, astrology, divination, sorcery, denial of God, the love of idols, dissipation, profligacy, loquacity, indolence, self-love, inattentiveness, lack of progress, deceit, delusion, audacity, witchcraft, defilement, the eating of unclean food, soft living, dissoluteness, voracity, unchastity, avarice, anger, dejection, listlessness, self-esteem, pride, presumption, self-elation, boastfulness, infatuation, foulness, satiety, doltishness, torpor, sensuality, over-eating, gluttony, insatiability, secret eating, hoggishness, solitary eating, indifference, fickleness, self-will, thoughtlessness, self-satisfaction, love of popularity, ignorance of beauty, uncouthness, gaucherie, lightmindedness, boorishness, rudeness, contentiousness, quarrelsomeness, abusiveness, shouting, brawling, fighting, rage, mindless desire, gall, exasperation, giving offence, enmity, meddlesomeness, chicanery, asperity, slander, censure, calumny, condemnation, accusation, hatred, railing, insolence, dishonour, ferocity, frenzy, severity, aggressiveness, forswearing oneself, oathtaking, lack of compassion, hatred of one's brothers, partiality, patricide, matricide, breaking fasts, laxity, acceptance of bribes, theft, rapine, jealousy, strife, envy, indecency, jesting, vilification, mockery, derision, exploitation, oppression, disdain of one's neighbour, flogging, making sport of others, hanging, throttling, heartlessness, implacability, covenant-breaking, bewitchment, harshness, shamelessness, impudence, obfuscation of thoughts, obtuseness, mental blindness, attraction to what is fleeting, impassionedness, frivolity, disobedience, dullwittedness, drowsiness of soul, excessive sleep, fantasy, heavy drinking, drunkenness, uselessness, slackness, mindless enjoyment, self-indulgence, venery, using foul language, effeminacy, unbridled desire, burning lust, masturbation, pimping, adultery, sodomy, bestiality, defilement, wantonness, a stained soul, incest, uncleanness, pollution, sordidness, feigned

affection, laughter, jokes, immodest dancing, clapping, improper songs, revelry, fluteplaying, license of tongue, excessive love of order, insubordination, disorderliness, reprehensible collusion, conspiracy, warfare, killing, brigandry, sacrilege, illicit gains, usury, wiliness, grave-robbing, hardness of heart, obloquy, complaining, blasphemy, fault-finding, ingratitude, malevolence, contemptuousness, pettiness, confusion, lying, verbosity, empty words, mindless joy, daydreaming, mindless friendship, bad habits, nonsensicality, silly talk, garrulity, niggardliness, depravity, intolerance, irritability, affluence, rancour, misuse, ill-temper, clinging to life, ostentation, affectation, pusillanimity, satanic love, curiosity, contumely, lack of the fear of God, unteachability, senselessness, haughtiness, self-vaunting, self-inflation, scorn for one's neighbour, mercilessness, insensitivity, hopelessness, spiritual paralysis, hatred of God, despair, suicide, a falling away from God in all things, and utter destruction; altogether 298 passions.

These, then, are the passions which I have found named in the Holy Scriptures. I have set them down in a single list, as I did at the beginning of my discourse with the various books I have used. I have not tried, nor would I have been able, to arrange them all in order; this would have been beyond my powers, for the reason given by St. John Klimakos: 'If you seek understanding in wicked men, you will not find it.' For all that the demons produce is disorderly. In common with the godless and the unjust, the demons have but one purpose: to destroy the souls of those who accept their evil counsel. Yet sometimes they actually help men to attain holiness. In such instances they are conquered by the patience and faith of those who put their trust in the Lord, and who through their good actions and resistance to evil thoughts counteract the demons and bring down curses upon them.

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