

# Flowers & Passion

Is aggression good or bad? It probably depends on who you ask, and what kind of aggression. Our world is fraught with people who are aggressively pursuing their goals. You could call them “passionate.” They want to win at all costs. They are going to accomplish their agenda, and everyone had better stay out of their way. They tend to make more enemies. They aren’t to be deterred from their goals or their way of seeing the world. If you don’t agree with them, you had better be ready to butt heads, or get out of their way. They care deeply. They are passionate. They certainly aren’t boring. On the other hand, some people simply can’t handle their level of intensity and conflict. It raises their blood pressure too much.

Our world is also fraught with people begging, “Can’t we all just get along? Can we loosen up on the aggression here?” They are willing to bend over backwards if it means we can just have some peace and quiet. They want togetherness, even if it means holding a diversity of views. Is their desire for unity good or bad?

Meanwhile, we are being taught every day to communicate using categories and systems that train us in polarization, tribalism, and rage against our enemies. The result is that the aggressive people say things that are more and more painful. And those who want everyone to just get along leave the hard conversations. They turn a blind eye to injustice, hatred, oppression, and unfaithfulness.

In his story of the early Christians in the book of Acts, Luke the doctor repeatedly describes the church by smashing two words together that don’t seem to go together. Luke smashes *togetherness/unity* into *rage/passion* to create a new word that describes how unique the Christian community was. They had a *rage/passion* for *togetherness/unity*. Their *homothymadon* was what made them unique. (Acts 1:14; 2:1; 2:46; 4:24; 5:12; 15:25; Romans 15:6). It wasn’t that they didn’t have differences. It wasn’t that they agreed on everything or had it all figured out, but they had an unrelenting *passion* for *togetherness*. What would it feel like to have this same kind of passion for togetherness with other believers?

**3-5 minutes:** If you tend to be someone who says, “Can’t we all just get along?” reflect on the posture of the man. What does it feel like to be so passionate that your body buzzes with energy? What’s it feel like to take a risk and stick your neck out. What does it feel like when you can’t abide allowing things to be the way they are? Can you feel the lump in your throat? Does your heart beat strong? How would your body feel to have this much passion for togetherness in the body of Christ?

If you are someone who tends to be aggressive or passionate, focus on the flowers. What is it that normally ignites your passion? What do you tend to throw around as you pursue the things you are passionate about? If your primary passion was for *togetherness in the body of Christ*, what would you throw?

**Open Reflections:** Share about your experience of listening to God through this picture.

Artwork “*Rage Flower Thrower*” Beit Sahour, Palestinian Territories, Eddie Gerald.