

Upright Woman



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Blush

by Carol Tisdale



Carol has been a part of SWCofC for over 55 years. She is married to Jack Tisdale, mother to Lauren and Matt and grandmother to Johannah, Jaden and Ruby. Her physical family means the world to her and her church family is a precious treasure. Quilting, CFA Frosted Coffee, friends and traveling are things that bring great joy.

When was the last time you saw someone blush? There was a time in my late childhood and teen years when blushing felt like a curse. If I was called upon in class, I turned red. When singled out for a compliment, my face burned, I could feel my color changing. If a cute guy paid attention to me, the blood rushed to my cheeks. It was not something I could control and believe me I wanted to! Now I realize there was a certain innocence attached to my ability to blush so easily. Sadly I confess, I now blush less frequently.

Webster defines “blush” as a verb: “to become suffused with red in the cheeks, as from a sense of shame, modesty or confusion.” In the Greek and Hebrew it comes from a word that means “to be put to shame, disgrace, confound, dishonor, make ashamed.” Blushing is obviously a physical thing that happens to our face over which we may have little control but, most importantly for us, it has spiritual connotation. It has everything to do with our hearts and our minds.

“I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself” (Gen. 3:10). It could be said that Adam was the first human to ever “blush” and it was because he was ashamed. He became aware of having disobeyed God and for the first time was able to feel guilt. Shame plays a healthy role in our Christian walk. It’s when we lose our ability to blush and feel shame that we race down the path of destruction. Paul speaks of those who grew so cold spiritually that they actually gloried in their shame (Phil. 3:18-19). Scripture further warns us that we can become so desensitized to immorality that our hearts become as stone, our conscience becomes seared over and as a result God will give us over to our “shame” (Rom. 1:24-32).

The too frequent message from our world today is: “Don’t be ashamed. Own it! Do what YOU think is right for you.” But God gave us the ability to feel guilt and shame, and He demands that we acknowledge it, because if we fail to recognize our sin we can never become “sorrowful to the point of repentance” (2 Cor. 7:9-11).

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Without the one, the other cannot occur. We need to take heed of what the Psalmist said in Psalm 119:80: “May my heart be blameless in your statutes, so that I will not be ashamed.”

Conscience is defined as “the inner sense of what is right or wrong in one's conduct or motives, impelling one toward right action.” First Peter 3:16 speaks of a “good conscience,” and the way we develop that good “inner voice” is by turning to the Word of God to study and meditate upon it day and night (Ps. 1:1-6). What will lead us to feeling guilt for our wrongdoing? A tender conscience, a tender heart. Conversely, if we immerse ourselves in time spent with individuals and media that desensitize us to evil, murder, sexual perversions, nudity, obscenities, and so forth, we are NOT training our consciences to be good and will result in losing our consciences. We must guard our hearts and shun perverse things or we will find ourselves becoming ever so comfortable with what should make us feel shame (Prov. 4:23).

Does God want us to abide in shame, feeling guilty all of the time? Absolutely not! Read the account of Cain in Genesis 4:6-7, where after God deemed Cain's sacrifice as unacceptable, Cain raged; but God told him to rise above his sin, repent of it and not let it rule over him. We have the example of David, who sinned greatly against God but shame led him to praise and serve the Lord more diligently (1 Kings 15:5).

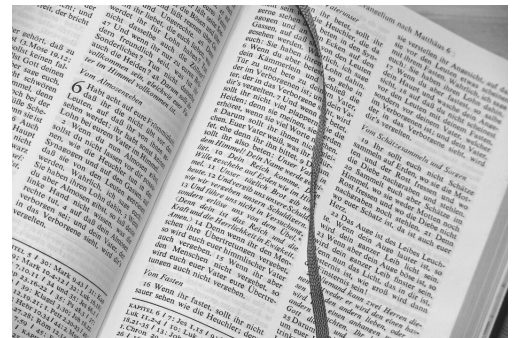
God wants us to have an abundant life, a joyful life. And we will have that kind of life when we develop and maintain a healthy conscience, when we recognize we have disobeyed God, and when we repent of our disobedience. I recently read a quote that rings true to me: “In the year 2020, our world no longer blushes at sin...it glorifies it.” This is sad and frightening.

As each of us strives to be an upright woman based on God's standard, let's ask ourselves a question. “When was the last time I blushed?”

Jeremiah's Message

by Leah Hopkins

I will always remember my dad telling me when I was in high school that I should blush when I heard someone use foul language. Sadly, at the time I laughed. I thought that was absurd because you could not walk two feet into our school hallways without hearing all kinds of language. My dad was trying to warn me not to become desensitized, which is exactly what had happened to the people of Judah in Jeremiah's day and what had been happening to me. The text in Jeremiah 6:13-15 says that they did not blush.



They were so used to the evil being done around them that it did not even register on their faces any longer. God asks rhetorically in verse 15 if the people were ashamed when they committed these abominations, which they were not. The word for ashamed here means to be dried up or to wither. What a visual! The implication is that they (and we) should wither when we are exposed to sin. This would be the appropriate response!

Before we can talk about blushing, we need discuss how the Israelites got to this point in the first place and how it is connected to us. In order to blush, we must have something to which we react. In this context it is sin, which is defined as a transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). According to Isaiah 5:20, it is, literally, calling what is good (God's law) evil and what is evil (sin) good. Our Savior explained that sin comes from the heart. The action is pondered before it is done just as His brother James explained in James 1:13-15. So, what happens when sin is not dealt with? According to Hebrews 3:1-13, if the problem of sin is not handled, it leads to a hardened heart.

This study reminds me of an incident that took place with my middle son about a year ago, which I am sharing with his permission. We had gone to a fair on a day where many area schools were also attending and were having a great time when my son ventured about thirty feet from me to check the price on something. He returned very upset because another child that he did not know had insulted him. He was absolutely baffled that he was treated in this way from someone he did not know and for no reason. At the time, I tried to console him by saying that it happens sometimes and just to ignore it, but after studying this passage, I could not help but see that my sweet son had taught me a lesson just by being an innocent child.

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His reaction to something foul was shock. He was confused by its ugliness and withered at its burn. Jesus said in Matthew 18:1-6 that we should be converted and humbled like little children. Perhaps this is the first step in our response to sin. Faithfulness starts in the heart.

I read a quote recently from an unfamiliar author named Sabine Shah that brought me pause. She said: "The Cherokee used to fear that taking a photo would make them lose their souls. Over-exposure and desensitization is pretty close to losing one's soul. So they were right to quite an extent." To be desensitized means to be less sensitive to something. If you reach a point in your life that you cannot blush at sin, you have become desensitized to it. You see, the life of a Christian is lived starting with the heart. While there is so much more that can be said, I would encourage us to study Philippians 4:8-9, 1 Thessalonians 5:17 and James 1:16 as practical tips on preventing desensitization.

We cannot expect the world to act godly when they do not know God, but this does not mean we should ignore sin. We need to patiently, lovingly, and courageously teach them about God... and by all means BLUSH!

Why Do I Blush?

by Avery Armagost

As Christians, we are those who have learned to blush at sin. Christians are set apart (2 Timothy 2:21). We have turned away from the ways of the World, and we are called to live for Christ (Galatians 2:20). The reality of living for Christ is not a perfect one. We know that we are set apart, but the devil is constantly begging us to return to the world's business of being ashamed of good and loving evil. Left unprotected, our minds can be worn down by worldly perspectives until they seem true and good. These perspectives will separate us from God.

One way that we can fall to the devil's devices is by becoming ashamed of the gospel. This could show up in our lives in small but impactful moments, such as when an opportunity to share the gospel comes and goes during a conversation with a friend. It may seem trivial, but those moments add up to bigger faith issues. Sometimes we can become so wrapped up in thinking that someone will not be receptive or that we do not have all the answers, when it is really our shame of the impact of the Truth. Paul was a bold teacher. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation..." (Romans 1:16). If we truly believe in the life-altering power of the gospel, we will most certainly share it with friends and family who need it.

Our shame can also appear in our unwillingness to suffer for Christ. The apostle Peter makes it clear that to suffer for Christ is something to glory about, not something to be ashamed of (1 Peter 4:16). To use the same illustration as before, if a friend rejects the Gospel message and you consequently lose that relationship, you should glory that God's work was done. Suffering and momentary embarrassment are sure to happen in the life of a Christian. The apostles stood in public squares and taught boldly about the resurrected Savior. People mocked them, turned them away, and even threw them in prison. They were not popular, and they lived their lives being rejected by the majority, but God was glorified by their actions and that was something they were right to value. Matthew 6:19-21 Speaks about laying up treasures in the right place. That passage is applicable to valuing spiritual over physical, but it also applies to our topic. If we are embarrassed to be children of God, and not embarrassed of our sins, we are heaping up our treasures here on earth. Mark's Gospel account puts it bluntly; "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words ...of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels" (Mark 8:38).

We should all want God to be glorified by our lives and for Him not to be ashamed of us on the Judgment Day. We have to grow closer to God through constant study of His words and communication with Him. The closer we are to God, the less influence the world will hold over us. We will blush for the right reasons.

"For I am not
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salvation..."

Romans 1:16

Blush at Immodesty

by Athena Scherffius

The world has a very distorted view of modesty. As women we are constantly bombarded with what the “in” fashion should be for the season. We search store after store for clothes only to find they are too short, too tight, or too skimpy. Christian women, what are we revealing about ourselves when we dress immodestly? As women we must realize the effect we have on men by the way we dress. God designed male and female with special needs and desires to be fulfilled within the sacred institution of marriage. God designed woman to be a helpmeet for man (Gen. 2:18), to provide him with companionship and to provide for his physical needs. Men are visual beings. This is essential knowledge for us as we consider the clothing we wear. If we choose to dress according the world’s standard, what are we doing to our brothers in Christ?

Paul admonished Christian women to adorn themselves in modest apparel (1 Tim. 2:9-10). The context of this statement is a contrast of Christian women of Ephesus and the priestesses of Diana (cf. Acts 19:24-35; 1 Tim. 1:3). While we as Christian women should strive to dress modestly in all areas of our lives, do we give consideration to our attire when we worship God? If we insist on dressing the fashion to the neglect of modesty, what effect do we have on our brothers as they purpose to praise and glorify God? If we reveal our bodies and show what should be kept for our husbands, we become both a distraction in worship and cause someone’s son, brother or father to stumble.

Jesus warned “that offences will come: but woe unto them through whom they come” (Luke 17:1-2). Ladies, this is a very serious warning. The world tells us it is our body. The world tells us we are not responsible for their thoughts. We know better. When we show off our bodies we are responsible for the thoughts and desires we may arouse in men. We must do all we can to help our precious brothers as they strive to keep their thoughts and hearts pure.

In our daily lives we should also be mindful of the way we dress. We are presenting ourselves as a daughter of the King. As children of God we should protect our Father’s honor. We may ask where to draw the line. How short is too short? But is that the question we should be asking? Sisters, we should strive to stay as far away as we can from the world’s standards and as close to God as we can. Our hearts should be set on pleasing God and adorning ourselves as modestly as possible. We have been given a great responsibility with the beauty God has given us. That beauty should be enjoyed by our husbands, protected for their eyes only and be an encouragement to our brothers in Christ. Remember our bodies are to be used to glorify God, not ourselves.

About Upright Woman

The Upright Woman publication is intended to educate, promote, and encourage the women of the church to strive for righteousness in every aspect of life. It is the mission of this publication to provide women an opportunity to study the word and share articles about various issues and topics to encourage us to be upright women in an upside down world.

“FOR THE LORD IS RIGHTEOUS; HE LOVES RIGHTEOUS DEEDS; THE UPRIGHT SHALL BEHOLD HIS FACE.” PSALM 11:7



We pray that with every issue and with every article all glory is given to God.