

Have You Forgotten How To Blush?



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

Have You Forgotten How To Blush?

Learn about the problem of worldliness, consider your attitude toward worldliness, learn how you can overcome worldliness in your life, and know what God expects from you

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Written by Eric Krieg

About the author: My name is Eric Krieg. I am a disciple of Jesus, a Bible student, a truth seeker, and an evangelist. My interest is in using the Bible as my only guide in my faith. My desire is to help others understand the message of the Bible and pursue true, New Testament Christianity.

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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Have You Forgotten How To Blush?

Whenever the people of Judah had sinned against God and refused to repent, God became full of fury and promised to punish them. In speaking against Judah in this way, God (through His prophet, Jeremiah) said, “‘Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed, Nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; In the time of their punishment They shall be cast down,’ says the Lord” (Jeremiah 8:12; also Jeremiah 6:15).

These people, who were supposed to be the people of God, be committed to holiness, and to keeping the covenant they had made with God, were not ashamed to do things that were contrary to the law of God and considered by God to be an abomination. They were so unashamed that they had forgotten how to blush! Maybe you remember a time in your life (perhaps as a child) that you were caught doing something that you knew was wrong. The guilt and shame that you experienced whenever your error was pointed out was so great that your face turned red! Yet, these people had failed to have that kind of shame for their sin. Because of their lack of shame over their sin and failure to repent, God would punish them greatly.

We can look on the example and the statement that is made in this verse and think, “That is just terrible.” But, what about us, today? What about you? Have you forgotten how to be so ashamed of sin that you blush? Have you become so comfortable around sin that it just does not seem to

phase you any longer? Does it seem to be “no big deal”? Romans 12:9 describes what your attitude should be toward sin: “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.”

So, you must learn how to “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil” (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22). Your attitude toward sin should be that you want to get as far away from it as possible. There should be no level of comfort around sin whatsoever. Your desire should only be to be associated with things that are good in God’s sight. Therefore, the purpose of this lesson is to consider the problem of sin and worldliness so as to evaluate whether you have forgotten how to blush and become comfortable around sin.

The Problem Of Worldliness

To be “worldly” is to live your life for the things of this world rather than for God. So, rather than being cut from a different mold, your life resembles the other people who are not living for God. But, worldliness is not just a problem whenever it has taken over your *entire* life. Instead, worldliness is also a problem whenever it has entered just a single area of your life. So, consider a few points to demonstrate the problem of worldliness.

It is contrary to the ways of God

Ever since sin entered the world, there has been a temptation for God’s people to become like those who were not His people. This can be seen in the time leading up to the great flood in Genesis 6. This was a continual struggle for the Israelites. This was a struggle for early Christians. Since God’s people have a physical element to their existence, there is a war that is waged between the flesh and the spirit. And, the pressure that is put on you by the people in this world is trying to pull you away from God.

Listen to 1 John 2:15-17. “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the

eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”

Those who are worldly love this world and the things that are in this world. In fact, whether in their whole lives or just in one area, they love the things of this world more than they love God. They love the physical desires that appeal to their flesh (i.e. makes them feel good). They love the physical desires that appeal to their eyes (i.e. things that look good to them). And, they love the physical desires that appeal to their sense of pride (i.e. that make them feel better than they are). But, these are only temporary desires. Soon, they will all fail you and they are all contrary to the will of God. And, only those who do the will of God will live forever!

It is selfish and carnal

In this battle between the flesh and spirit, a love for the ways of this world are all focused on one thing: Yourself! As the passage in 1 John 2 identified, it is all about the desires of *your own* flesh, *your own* eyes, and *your own* pride. It does not consider sacrificing the physical desires that are appealing to yourself right now to live according to the will of God. For, your flesh does not understand why you would want to deny such “wonderful” experiences on this earth.

Listen to Romans 8:5-8. “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Those who have forgotten how to blush and live to please their fleshly desires have set their minds on the things of the flesh. They are not interested in the things of God because that would mean they must not please their flesh so that they could please God. But, they do not recognize the terrible consequences of such selfish carnality. Romans 8 helps us to see that such a selfish

commitment to pleasing our own desires makes us enemies of God and results in spiritual death. For, it is simply impossible for someone who is so selfishly focused on worldly things to please God.

It works to desensitize you

Now, worldliness does not usually pull someone away from God all at once. That is, it is probably less likely that Satan can convince someone who is living for Jesus Christ faithfully to stop living for Christ and be as much like the world as possible all at one time. No, it is usually far more gradual than this. I believe that Satan knows how to “inch” you away from God by appealing to your selfish and carnal desires little by little.

Listen to Hebrews 2:1-4. “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?”

It has been said that sin takes you further than you wanted to go, keeps you longer than you wanted to stay, and costs you more than you were willing to pay. But, Satan knows that if he can get you to compromise in one seemingly “small” area that he can probably get you to compromise in another, then another, then another, and so on. Such is the nature of worldliness. Although you may absolutely detest sin right now, Satan is working (along with his many associates) to get you to compromise in some area. So, he is trying to get you used to being around sin through the people who are around you, through the entertainment choices you make, etc. Then, once he gets you to feel that some sin is “not so bad,” he has succeeded in putting you on a path that leads further and further away from God, and you drift away from God!

Evaluating Your Current Attitude Toward Worldliness

With a proper understanding of the dangers involved in worldliness, you should have a desire to test your current attitude toward the things of the world that go against the will of God. 2 Corinthians 13:5 says, “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.” So, be honest with yourself and consider your current attitude toward worldliness – in every area of your life. Consider the following four questions to help you evaluate yourself. These answers will help you know whether you have forgotten how to blush in any area of your life.

Do you desire to live like the world?

The first question for you to honestly ask yourself is, “Do I desire to live like the world?” Since you live in this world, you can look around and see how other people live and what they live for. So, do you ever look at them and think, “If I only wasn’t a Christian...”? Do you feel as if Jesus Christ holds you back from doing the things that you would really like to be doing? Do you believe that Jesus Christ and His law keeps you from being happy?

If you have answered “yes” to any of these questions, your attitude is not what it should be toward worldliness and sin may be waiting at the door of your heart for the right opportunity (if it has not already gained access to your life)! For, you must recognize the great damage that sin and worldliness cause to your life and desire no part of it. Remember, Romans 12:9 said to “Abhor what is evil.”

Although there are “passing pleasures” involved in sin (see Hebrews 11:24-26), you must determine that those pleasures are not worth what they cost you spiritually! And, you must recognize that true happiness is only found in Jesus Christ. Everything else is empty and does not provide true satisfaction. For, as 1 John 2:15-17 said, the ways of

this world are “passing away,” while the one who does the will of God “abides forever.”

Do you approve of sin?

The second question for you to honestly ask yourself is, “Do I approve of sin?” Living in the world, you see sin around you every day. Do you accept those who are living in sin as being just an “alternate lifestyle” to the one you have chosen to live? Do you openly endorse those who are making sinful choices? Do you look at others who are living in sin and say, “I’m glad they found something that has made them happy”? Do you show your approval of sin by saying and doing nothing to show that you actively disapprove of the sin? And, do you approve of any sin in your life by making it seem not as bad as it actually is?

If you have answered “yes” to any of these questions, your attitude is not what it should be toward worldliness and sin may be waiting at the door of your heart for the right opportunity (if it has not already gained access to your life)! For, you must recognize what God says about who will be punished. Romans 1:32, after listing many different sins in verses 18-31, says, “who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.”

So, if you are engaged in *any* sin (no matter how “big” or how “small” you consider the sin to be), you are deserving of death. This is spiritual death, separation from God. Then, if you die physically while you are dead spiritually, you will experience the “second death” in the “lake which burns with fire and brimstone” (Revelation 21:8). But, you are not just “deserving of death” if you are involved in sin yourself. Instead, you are even “deserving of death” if you “approve of those who practice” sin. Now, you can show approval for sin in two ways. First, you can show direct approval by going along with the sin or telling someone you approve of the sin. Then, you can show approval for a sin by not expressing your disapproval for a sin when you have the opportunity to do so.

Do you disapprove of sin?

The third question for you to honestly ask yourself is, “Do I disapprove of sin?” Living in a world full of sin gives you many opportunities to say and show that you disapprove of the sin that is going on around you. Do you fail to take these opportunities to tell people that what they are doing fails to please God? Do you fail to warn people about the spiritual consequences of their sin? Do you fail to help people recognize there is a better way than living to please themselves? Or, do you approve of the sin by refusing to say or act otherwise?

If you have answered “yes” to these questions, your attitude is not what it should be toward worldliness and sin may be waiting at the door of your heart for the right opportunity (if it has not already gained access to your life)! Remember that there is more than one way for you to show your approval of sin (as demonstrated from Romans 1:32). For, God not only wants you to *not* be involved with sin and show direct approval of sin, but wants you to also take a firm stand against sin. Ephesians 5:11-12 says, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.”

So, in order to please God, your life must be committed to living in the right ways of God. For, those who are Christians are “light in the Lord” and must walk (live) as “children of light” (Ephesians 5:8). There must be no participation in anything that is “darkness.” All such things accomplish nothing that is good. They are shameful things. Instead, you must “expose” the “unfruitful works of darkness.” Therefore, God wants those who are His people to be so opposed to sin that they are working to expose sin for what it is and turn those who are practicing sin away from it and to the Lord!

How serious do you view the problem of worldliness?

The fourth question for you to honestly ask yourself is, “How serious do I view the problem of worldliness?” Since you live in a world that is full of sin, you have many opportunities to evaluate how much the sin of the world bothers you. Have you

been able to get used to sin to the point that it is “no big deal”? Do you fail to mourn whenever your life starts to resemble the world in any way? Do you fail to mourn for those who are spiritually dead in their sins and making decisions that will lead them to eternal death in Hell?

If you have answered “yes” to any of these questions, your attitude is not what it should be toward worldliness and sin may be waiting at the door of your heart for the right opportunity (if it has not already gained access to your life)! In addition to the things we discussed previously about the problem of worldliness, consider James 4:4. “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

You must recognize that any amount of friendship with the world makes you the enemy of God. And, even if you *want* to be a friend of the world, you make yourself the enemy of God. This is because you cannot be God’s friend by doing or approving of things that are contrary to Him (since He is separated from everything that is evil). For, as Proverbs 6:27-28 asks, “Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared?” So, you must see worldliness as a great problem and not mess around by trying to be a friend of God and the world at the same time! It is simply impossible to do.

Overcoming Worldliness

Now that you have considered the problems with worldliness and your attitude toward worldliness, you need to consider how it is that you can overcome worldliness. As you do, let Romans 12:1-2 help you. It says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Consider worldliness in the following areas.

Entertainment

The entertainment that you choose to participate in can have a big impact on how you view worldliness. For, many mediums used for entertainment are used by the world to change culture (and not for the better). Those who are Christians can be guilty of inviting sin into their homes through these forms of entertainment. I challenge you to think about the television programs, sporting events, movies, radio stations, internet sites, books, magazines, etc. that you use for entertainment. Do they have *any* form of evil involved in them? Then, not only do you need to think about the things themselves, but you need to consider the advertisements that you see and hear at these times. And, it is not just about the direct messages that these things send, but also the subtle messages (i.e. about what it means to be happy, about what it means to be successful, etc.).

The problem is that we can come up with all kinds of ways to “justify” our involvement in various forms of wicked entertainment. But, in doing so, we actually work to desensitize ourselves to sin. We become more and more comfortable with sin and forget how to blush because we see and hear God’s name used in vain, profanity and euphemistic expressions, people who clothe themselves in ungodly ways, adulterous and homosexual relationships, people who seem to have fun because of alcohol, etc., etc., etc.

Now, this is not to say that entertainment is wrong or that these various forms of entertainment are wrong of themselves. It just takes a great deal of diligence to make sure that the entertainment you are involved in is exactly how God wants you to be entertained. You must “Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil,” as 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 says. No matter how much you love some form of entertainment, you must put it to an honest test to make sure that it is separate from “every form of evil”! Don’t allow your life to take the same shape as the world in the way you entertain yourself!

Peers

Perhaps the one thing that has as much or more power to impact you than entertainment has is your peers. The friends you choose to keep company with and your family members can have great influence over you – for the good or the bad. So, you need to carefully consider the people you keep company with. Do you *willingly* keep company with people who take God’s name in vain, use profanity and euphemistic expressions, dress themselves in ungodly ways, live with a man/woman they are not married to, live in adultery or homosexuality, consume intoxicating beverages or drugs, etc., etc., etc.?

Although you may think that you are too strong for these people to influence you, two passages from 1 Corinthians should be sufficient in proving otherwise. 1 Corinthians 10:12 says, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” Then, 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, “Do not be deceived: ‘Evil company corrupts good habits.’”

While you must not isolate yourself from those who live worldly lives (so that you can teach them), you must not keep company with people who are working to pull you into worldliness either. Don’t deceive yourself into thinking that your peers will never influence you to live for sin. Even though you love your friends and your family members, you must not choose to love them more than God. You must not allow a relationship with any of them to hinder you from opposing sin and living for God. Jesus said, “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:26). So, you must choose who you associate with wisely and make sure that they are the kinds of companions who will help you live in a way that pleases God!

Activities

The things that you do as a Christian must not reflect any amount of worldliness. So, you must carefully evaluate yourself and consider the activities you are involved with. Consider whether you are choosing to live for yourself or for God in each one of these areas. Certainly, there must be no amount of

sin involved (no appearance of evil) in anything you do.

Everything you do must be evaluated. Not only must you evaluate your entertainment (as previously discussed), but you must evaluate your hobbies. You must evaluate the things you do for fun. You must evaluate the places that you go. You must evaluate everything. And, the standard for your evaluation must be the word of God, not your own desires or the world's interests!

Listen to James 1:27. "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." So, as you put everything in your life to the test, you must not be content with a "little" worldliness in your activities. Instead, you must stay away from every kind of activity that does not have God's full approval!

Speech

There are some ways in which the Christian simply should not talk. Yet, the world uses this kind of language every day. For instance, Ephesians 4:29 says, "Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers." Then, Ephesians 5:3-4 says, "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks."

There are some ways of speaking that are not even to be named among God's people because it is not fitting for them. Certainly, this includes lying and deception, gossip and slander, profanity and euphemistic expressions, taking God's name in vain and suggestive humor, etc. These are entirely inappropriate for those whose desire is to serve and honor God in everything.

People are watching and listening to you. So, you must make sure that they only hear things that will glorify God (see Matthew 5:13-16). Every word that you speak must be carefully tested to see whether it meets God's standard. For, God has said, "but I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of

judgment" (Matthew 12:36). Therefore, every word that is unemployed, lazy, or accomplishes no good (like the words spoken by the world) will be part of your judgment before God!

Dress

The way people clothe themselves communicates something about them. For instance, Proverbs 7:10 says, "And there a woman met him, With the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart." Notice that her clothing was connected with what she was interested in (here, sexually promiscuous activity). This principle is something that we can also observe.

Think about how a person is dressed communicates a message about him/her. If you see a boy wearing a baseball uniform, he is probably on his way to a baseball game (if it is dirty, he's probably on his way back). If you see someone in a set of scrubs, he/she is probably in the medical profession. If you see someone with a carpenter's belt on, he/she probably is doing some kind of construction or carpentry. If you see someone with a tee shirt with a logo for the Ohio State Buckeyes, that person probably has some connection to the university or is a fan of its athletic program.

You see, it is a basic point: Your clothing communicates something to the people around you. Now, you must consider whether your clothing communicates that you are living for God or for the world. 1 Timothy 2:9-10 (particularly addressing women, but applicable to men in principle) says, "in like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works." So, those who are Christians should not dress themselves to communicate worldly messages (i.e. in wearing short shorts/skirts, low-cut blouses, tight fitting clothing, see through clothing, men without their shirts on, etc.). Instead, your clothing must profess godliness with good works at all times!

Habits

Every person has habitual ways of conducting themselves. These are just patterns of

behavior. So, sometimes the way you may respond to another person is out of habit. The phrases you say may be habit. Your daily routine may be a matter of habit. The way you dress yourself may be habit. The things you do for entertainment may be habit. They places you go on vacation may be habit.

So, you may find yourself not even thinking about many of these things that you are doing any longer. They are choices that tend to just get made automatically because you have trained yourself in those ways. And, this can be a good thing if your habits are pleasing to God. Yet, there are many people who have habits that are worldly. So, they habitually clothe themselves in immodest ways, they habitually use profanity and expressions that do not please God, they habitually use their time in ways that are foolish and selfish, they habitually use alcohol, they habitually use drugs and cigarettes that harm their bodies, etc.

Your habits are either going to help you please God or please yourself. They are either going to be like Christ or like the world. So, as 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 says, you must put all your habits to the test and determine to stay away from every evil habit and hold fast to what is good. Instead of just doing things without really thinking, you must learn to really evaluate what you do habitually.

Priorities

The world's priority is to please themselves or to accomplish something that pertains to this world. So, they pursue wealth. They pursue earthly relationships. They pursue earthly fame. They pursue enjoyable earthly experiences. And, all these things are given greater priority than serving and glorifying God!

Now, these things are not inherently wrong. But, prioritizing these things above God or using them in a way that causes you to violate God's laws or steal service away from God is wrong! So, you must carefully evaluate your priorities. For example, having a job is part of what men are supposed to do in order to support their families. But, working unnecessary overtime to accumulate luxuries at the expense of being able to attend the assemblies of the local church is not (as it violates Hebrews 10:24-25)!

So, you must carefully test yourself to see whether your priorities are exactly what God would have them to be. For instance, Matthew 6:33 says, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you." God must come absolutely first in your life. Not a close second, a distant third, or any other place besides first! Even above your earthly relationships, your physical needs, and your own physical life, you must prioritize God as first!

What God Expects

As you evaluate yourself, perhaps you have seen that you have forgotten how to blush and have compromised in some area of your life. Perhaps you are simply not living the kind of life that God desires you to live. So, I encourage you to consider three basic points to see what God expects from you.

A different people

Those who are Christians should view themselves as being different from the world. This is not because Christians are *better* than other people are (for, we have all sinned). Instead, it is because the Christian has surrendered his/her life to Jesus Christ. So, 1 Peter 2:9-10 says, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." Therefore, a Christian is someone who is special to God and must not take the same sinful form the world takes. Instead, the Christian (as a sojourner and pilgrim) must "abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" so that his/her conduct can be honorable among all and result in glory being given to God (1 Peter 2:11-12).

A zealous people

Next, those who are Christians should be zealous (on fire) for doing good, rather than being eager to do evil. Titus 2:11-14 says, "For the grace of

God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.” Jesus Christ died in order to save you from your sins (that you committed whenever you did live like the world), not for you to continue living in sin. Now, realizing how great a sacrifice was made for you, you should have the burning passion to give your life to God and accomplish His good works!

A holy people

Finally, God’s people must be holy in order to please Him. Just as God is separated from everything that is evil and committed to everything that is good (holy), God expects His people to be holy in all their conduct. 1 Peter 1:13-16 says, “Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, ‘Be holy, for I am holy.’” So, even a “little bit” of sin is way too much for the one who is a Christian! This is why you must be diligent in testing all things, holding fast to the good, and abstaining from every form of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22).

Conclusion

Have you forgotten how to blush? Have you allowed the world (in all of its unrighteous ways) to negatively influence you and pull you away from God? Are you more comfortable around sin than you should be? Are you unwilling to get rid of some sin that is in your life at this time? If so, please recognize that the consequences of sin are far too great to allow yourself to forget how to blush! Instead, determine

that you will live as the different, zealous, and holy person God wants you to be!

Study Questions

What does it mean to forget how to blush?

1. The Problem Of Worldliness

How is worldliness contrary to the will of God?

How is worldliness selfish and carnal?

How does worldliness work to desensitize you?

2. Evaluating Your Current Attitude Toward Worldliness

Do you desire to live like the world?

Do you approve of sin?

Do you disapprove of sin?

How serious do you view the problem of worldliness?

3. Overcoming Worldliness

How can you overcome worldliness in your entertainment?

How can you overcome worldliness in your peers?

How can you overcome worldliness in your activities?

How can you overcome worldliness in your speech?

How can you overcome worldliness in your dress?

How can you overcome worldliness in your habits?

How can you overcome worldliness in your priorities?

4. What God Expects

How does God expect you to be different?

How does God expect you to be zealous?

How does God expect you to be holy?