

BYPASS EVERYTHING AND GO DIRECTLY TO JESUS

One of the greatest lessons we learn in our Christian life is to bypass the entire realm of the flesh and go directly to Jesus and make contact with Him. When we go directly to Christ, we are free from the flesh. We are free from our self. We are free from self-preoccupation. We are free from self-condemnation. We are free from anxiety. We are free from interacting with the impossible realm of the flesh (Rom. 8:8). Our relationship to the flesh is that we died to it and our life is now hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3).

Our interaction is not with ourselves – with self-effort and self-reformation. We bypass the self. When we bypass, Christ becomes our joy. Christ becomes our encouragement. Christ becomes our faith. Christ becomes our living (Phil. 1:21). We interact with Him in everything in our lives. We interact exclusively with Him. We enjoy Him as our righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30). He is “all and in all” to us (Col. 3:11).

When we receive Him, it is our spirit that is born again. Our dead spirit is begotten of the divine Spirit and comes alive (Eph. 2:1). Indeed, our newly-born spirit becomes the source from which we live as believers. It is into our regenerated spirit that Christ comes to dwell. From this place we contact Christ Himself and bypass the flesh. Thus, our relationship with the flesh is Jesus Christ *as He* lives in our spirit and *as we* walk according to spirit (Rom. 8:3-4).

When we bypass the flesh, Jesus Christ becomes the Christian life. We look away to Him. Look away from yourself. Look away from your failure. Look away from your bad mood. Look away unto Jesus. Christ is the centrality of everything in our Christian life. He is the Christian life itself in every aspect.

The new birth bypasses man's flesh

Our new birth teaches us from the very start that God intended to bypass the flesh. In other words, our initial salvation is not a matter of expecting anything to come out of the flesh. God doesn't save man by any works of the flesh, including improving it, upgrading it, or remaking it (Gal. 2:16). No. God bypasses man's flesh altogether and starts by leaving the flesh untouched except to terminate and crucify it (Gal. 2:20; 5:24).

In John 3:6 the Lord Jesus said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” By using the Greek perfect tense (signifying a present, permanent state) for the word “born,” He conveyed two important facts: first, the realm of the flesh never changes; and second, the realm of the Spirit never changes. The Lord wanted to convey at the beginning of our Christian life that we should not expect any change from the source of our flesh, but always bypass it and go directly to Jesus. The new birth begins a lifelong process of bypassing the flesh, both the good and bad, to go directly to Jesus.

Bypass the “bad” flesh

There are many aspects of the flesh — the lusts of the flesh (Gal. 5:16), the will of the flesh (John 1:13), the mind of the flesh (Rom. 8:6-7), and the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19), to name a few. The flesh has feelings and reactions, as well as deeds; and many times we are intimidated by these things.

Concerning his own flesh, Paul had to admit, “*I am* (present tense) fleshly, *sold* (perfect tense, indicating

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a present state) under sin . . . For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells” (Rom. 7:14,18). This statement clearly reveals that the flesh is incorrigible and must be bypassed. Also, in Colossians he warns the believers that if they relate to the evil flesh with a religious flesh they will encounter certain defeat (Col. 2:18-23).

How then can we be related to our flesh, if the flesh cannot overcome the flesh? The answer to this question is found in Galatians 5:24-25: ²⁴ “And those who are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” The phrase, “those who are of Christ Jesus,” tells us how we are to be related to the flesh. It is simply by our belonging to Christ Jesus that the flesh is crucified.

To be of Christ Jesus means that you do not have a separate life from Him. You are wholly identified with Him. This means you do not have a separate relationship with the flesh. Because you are of Christ Jesus, you *own* His relationship with the flesh. His relationship with the flesh is not a long, drawn-out battle with it; rather it is a onetime crucifixion to it. The word “crucified” in Galatians 5:24 is in the aorist tense in Greek, indicating that a blow was dealt to the flesh in the past that was decisive, complete, and final. That blow was dealt to the flesh on the cross of Calvary two thousand years ago.

To bypass the flesh is wrapped up in the answer to one question — Are we of Christ Jesus? That is all we need to answer. We don’t need to examine whether or not we have any potential to overcome the flesh. Neither do we need a good record or a string of victories that we can boast in. Nor do we need to look at our condition to see whether or not we feel like a crucified person. We just need to answer one question — Are we of Christ Jesus? If so, we have crucified the flesh. Paul says it — if we are of Christ Jesus then we have crucified the flesh.

In Galatians 5:24 bypassing the flesh is an established fact in Christ Jesus. Then verse 25 shows us the application and experience of this fact: “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” To “live in the Spirit” in this verse is equivalent to being “of Christ Jesus” in the preceding verse. Thus Christ, in the realm of the Spirit, is our bypass route. But for this fact to become our experience over and over again in our daily life, we need to walk in the Spirit.

The Greek word for “walk” in Galatians 5:25 is a specific military word, rather than the more general word for “walk” used in other places in the New

Testament. It has the sense of “keeping in step with the Spirit.” This could be likened to a group of soldiers marching down the street, keeping in step with the cadence of the drummer. Their steps are very deliberate and specific. It is the same when we walk in the spirit. Christ is dwelling in our spirit. He has already dealt a blow to the flesh. Now we must keep in step with Him whenever our flesh rises up to be fulfilled. This means we take a deliberate and specific step in spirit at the moment our flesh manifests itself. When we keep in step with the Spirit, we allow the Lord Himself to become our relationship with the reacting flesh. We just say, “Amen, Lord, I love You!” Or, call out His name, “Lord Jesus!” Or, take the Word of God as the sword of Spirit and declare it!” By interacting with Him in this way, we keep in step with the Spirit and execute the crucifixion over our flesh.

The main point in dealing with the flesh is to not interact with it. We do not dare to handle it on our own. There is only One who is qualified to handle it, and He was incarnated to do so. He became flesh (John 1:14) and lived a victorious life in the flesh (Rom. 8:3). And now in resurrection He has become a life-giving Spirit in our spirit to supply to us His victory over the flesh. All we need to do is keep in step with the Spirit — pray a little bit, call “Jesus” a little bit, shout to God a little bit, sing a little bit. Just keep in step with the Spirit, and bypass the flesh.

You may say to me, “I can’t overcome my flesh. I have already tried over and over again and failed.” I will respond by saying, “That’s right! Of course you can’t!” If you and I have a relationship with the flesh based upon ourselves, we are finished. We all must come back to Christ — learn to bypass the flesh and then just keep in step with the Spirit.

Bypass the “good” flesh

One of the clearest statements in the Bible regarding bypassing the good flesh is Paul’s utterance in Philippians 3:3-7: ³ “For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, ⁴ though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: ⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. ⁷ But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ.”

In other words, all the gains of his good flesh were counted as loss to Paul. He bypassed the good flesh and went directly to the excellency of Christ! His testimony is found in verses 8 through 10: ⁸ “But indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰ that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” These verses are telling us that God wants us to bypass the good flesh that is occupied with self-effort, self-righteousness, and self-glory. Bypassing the good flesh is in order that we would be occupied exclusively with Christ – to gain Him, to be found in Him, and to know Him.

Bypass by turning the heart to the Lord

The secret of bypassing the flesh is by learning to turn the heart to the Lord. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3:15-16, ¹⁵ “But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. ¹⁶ But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.” Then he continues in verse 18, “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord . . .” These verses show us that in order to bypass a hardened heart to behold the Lord we need a *turned* heart. A turned heart is one that is positioned toward the Lord. In other words, our heart has been turned in another direction – away from the Lord – now we need to bypass what distracts us by turning our heart toward the Lord.

Our heart may be distracted by many things, but our one unique need is to turn it toward the Lord. Our tendency is to have our heart turned toward our problems or turned toward our defeated condition or turned toward what we see in ourselves that is still not subdued by the Lord. But the most important thing in bypassing is to get our eyes off ourselves and onto Him. Regardless of how we feel or what we see in ourselves, we need to bypass it all.

Hebrews 2:8-9 is another passage that describes what is involved in bypassing; ⁸ “You have put all things in subjection under His feet. For in that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to Him, ⁹ *but we see Jesus . . .*” There are two things to take note of in these verses. First, the fact that

“we do not yet see all things put under Him”; and second, “but we see Jesus.” These two things are going on at the same time. That means we may see many things in us that are not yet subjected to Him — things that are not under His feet, under His ruling. But even in such an unfinished state, we still see Jesus! Despite the existence of the unsubjected things, our heart can turn to the Lord — this is the bypass. So do not be distracted or discouraged by what you see in yourself. Keep your eyes upon Jesus and trust *Him* to subdue every unruly thing.

If *turning* is the secret of bypassing the flesh and every other distraction, then what is involved in turning our heart to the Lord? To answer this we need to see from the Book of James that the turning member of our entire being — spirit, soul, and body — is our tongue. James uses two examples of the tongue as our turning member — the bits in the horses mouth and the rudder of a ship. James 3:3-4 says, ³ “Indeed, we put bits in horses’ mouths that they may obey us, and we *turn* their whole body. ⁴ Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are *turned* by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires.” The “bits” and the “rudder” are the keys to turning a horse and a ship. Even so, says James, the tongue is set among our members.

How then do we turn our heart and bypass? It is simple. Knowing that the tongue is the turning member of our being, we just need to pray, to sing, to give thanks, to make melody in our hearts, to fellowship, to share the gospel. We need to let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly by declaring it like the Lord did in Matthew 4:3-10. Do everything to help activate and fill your spirit (Eph. 5:18-21). Today everyone is exercising their body. And in the universities everyone is exercising their mind. Then if you go to a concert, everyone is exercising their emotions. So everyone is exercising these parts of their being. But the Bible shows us that on this earth the genuine humanity comes by exercising the spirit (1 Cor. 2:11). When our spirit and our mouth are used to turn our heart, we bypass the flesh and go directly to Jesus.

The key is with our tongue — opening our mouth. Just realize that by praying, by touching the Lord, this mouth of ours can turn our whole being in the middle of a thought, in the middle of reactions, moods, depression, feeling bad about yourself. Just interrupt it! Feeling bad about yourself is typical for the flesh. That is how the flesh always feels. It never seems to want to give up its mood. So interrupt it. Call upon the name of the Lord, and immediately you bypass the mood and end up with Jesus!

Areas to learn to bypass

1. Bypass your weaknesses —

¹⁴ “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4:14-16)

2. Bypass your religious habits and patterns —

²⁰ “Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations — ²¹ ‘Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,’ ²² which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? ²³ These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh. ¹ If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. (Col. 2:20—3:4)

3. Bypass the accumulation of corruption —

¹ “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, ² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby, ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is gracious. ⁴ Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious.” (1 Pet. 2:1-4)

4. Bypass the fainting feelings of your soul —

¹ Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.” (Heb. 12:1-3)

5. Bypass the feelings during temptation —

¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. ¹ Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus.” (Heb. 2:18—3:1)

6. Bypass the struggling self trying to please God

¹⁹ “For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. ²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.” (Gal. 2:19-21)

7. Bypass the lust of the flesh —

¹⁶ I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit

against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.” (Gal. 2:16-18)

8. Bypass what is not under His feet —

⁸ “You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. ⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.” (Heb. 2:8-9)

9. Bypass being sidetracked by your sins and sin —

⁷ “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. ¹ My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” (1 John 1:7—2:1)

10. Bypass the wretched man —

²⁴ “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? ²⁵ I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. ¹ There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Rom. 7:24—8:2)

11. Defining bypassing in the Christian life —

¹⁴ For the love of Christ constrains us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; ¹⁵ and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again. ¹⁶ Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Cor. 5:14-18)

— Bill Freeman

the Christian

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