

Spiritual Vertigo

Joe Slater

I would never make it as a pilot. What if I had to fly at night in fog or a strong wind? Pilots must trust their instruments in such conditions – easier said than done!

Pilots are not immune from vertigo, the loss of their sense of direction, balance, and equilibrium. That's when trusting instruments is especially important! Fifteen percent of airplane accidents are due to vertigo; most of them are fatal. It's far worse for pilots who are not instrument rated.

Christians must trust God and His word just like an airplane pilot must trust the instruments. It's far too easy to become disoriented and rely on our feelings, sincerely believing that we're headed in the right direction. Jeremiah correctly wrote, *"Oh Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps"* (10:23). Two passages in Judges state: *"In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes"* (9:6 & 21:25). It was one of the lowest points in Israel's history.

How can I be saved? What does God accept as worship? How should I behave each day? What about my relationships with other people? The Bible answers all of these questions and more. However, some presume that their feelings are promptings by the Holy Spirit that somehow out-rank what the Scriptures say. Others think, "God wants me to be happy, and here's what makes me happy, so it must be ok regardless of what the Bible says."

We must deal with spiritual vertigo by trusting God and His word as we fly toward heaven. God and His word are more reliable than the best human instruments, and certainly more trustworthy than our feelings!

Who Benefits From Your Attendance?

I personally do not understand why some church members only come on Sunday mornings. After all, we worship the same God on Sunday evening as we do on Sunday morning. We study from the same Bible on Wednesday evenings as we do during all other service times. Maybe if those folks could see just who benefits from everyone coming to every service, they would desire to come more often. Let's take a look at who benefits when members come to every service.

* God benefits. We come here to honor and worship Him. The more that we are here, the better our singing of praises to God and the more glory is given to Him. I realize that God doesn't need us, but imagine how disappointed He must be when we decide not to come to a service in His honor.

* The church benefits. When we gather together, encouragement and edification takes place. The more that are here, the better the fellowship and the greater the opportunities for showing our love and concern for one another. When we choose not to come, the church suffers.

* Your family benefits. Coming to services is a family activity that can always be done together. The more of your family that are here, the better the influence and the closer your family will become. When we opt not to come, our family loses.

* You benefit. By bringing yourself, you are putting yourself in a position to increase your spirituality. The more that you are here, the greater the opportunity for you to grow and mature in Christ and find areas of greater service. When you don't come, you are harming yourself.

"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching." (Heb. 10:24-25)

--Edd Sterchi (Campbellsville, KY) via *Bulletin Gold*

YOU WERE THERE FOR ME

You may remember the story that appeared on the front page of the San Francisco Chronicle back on December 14, 2005 about a female humpback whale who had become entangled in a spider web of crab traps and lines. She was weighted down by hundreds of pounds of traps that caused her to struggle to stay afloat. She also had hundreds of yards of line rope wrapped around her body, her tail, her torso, a line tugging in her mouth. A fisherman spotted her just east of the Farallon Islands (outside the Golden Gate) and radioed for help.

Within a few hours, the rescue team arrived and determined that she was so bad off, the only way to save her was to dive in and untangle her. They worked for hours with curved knives and eventually freed her. When she was free, the divers say she swam in what seemed like joyous circles. She then gently nudged them. Some said it was the most incredibly beautiful experience of their lives. The diver who cut the rope out of her mouth said her eyes were following him the whole time, and he will never be the same.

May you, and all those you love, be so blessed and fortunate to be surrounded by people who will help you get untangled from the things that are binding you. And, may you always know the joy of giving and receiving gratitude. I pass this on to you, my friends, in the same spirit.

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).