

INSTRUMENT RATED CHRISTIANITY

Pastor Glen Curry

Matthew 7:24-27, *“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:²⁷ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”*

Build on Rock = WORD

Sand = NO WORD

I want to compare the story Jesus told to flying an airplane. There are two kinds of pilots:

1. Familiar Landmarks – They fly by sight (that’s the majority).
2. Instrument Rated Pilots – They don’t need to see to navigate.

The principles of God’s Word are your instrument telling you what to do to succeed and prosper and *win in life*.

If you will learn how to operate and depend on your trusted instruments (the Word of God), you will be able to navigate the rough patches of life and reach your goals and destination safely.

AN UNFORTUNATE SCENARIO

Pilot (to control tower): *“This is alpha bravo zero one 9er calling El Monte tower. Can you read me tower? Over.”*

Tower (to pilot): *“I read you alpha bravo zero one 9er – go ahead. Over.”*

Pilot: *“Tower, I’m declaring an emergency. I’m in a fog bank somewhere over the San Gabriel Mountains. I can’t see a thing and I’m lost. Over.”*

Tower: *“Roger that zero one 9er. Are you instrument rated zero one 9er? Over.”*

Pilot: *“Negative tower. Over.”*

Tower: *“Zero one 9er – I’ve got you on my radar. I’m going to bring you in verbally. Turn right heading 24 degrees. Zero one 9er – (the voice from the tower is loud and urgent) you are in rapid descent!” “Pull up now!” “Climb to 3500 feet and hold!” “Expedite!” “Over.”*

Pilot: *“Tower, I think I’m in a spin and going... N-o-o-o-o-o...”*

Those were the last words from *Cessna Alpha Bravo Zero One 9er*. Because the pilot didn’t take the time to become instrument rated, an emergency caused him to crash and burn.

Christians who don’t take the time to develop their faith in the absolute integrity of God’s Word are bound to crash and burn when an emergency hits.

In 1999, John Kennedy, Jr. (son of President John F. Kennedy and editor of *George Magazine*) crashed his airplane and perished in a fog bank at night. His wife and sister-in-law were passengers and were also killed. He was in the process of becoming instrument rated, and a few more hours of study and practice would have given him the tools he needed to navigate in the dark and fog and probably save his life.

Thousands of pilots fly small planes in America and around the world. The majority fly by sight and are not instrument rated.

1. They can take-off.
2. They can maneuver.
3. They can land safely.
4. Generally, they can go where they want to go – no problem.

They find their way by seeing familiar landmarks. They fly and keep their bearing by identifying

- Rivers
- Highways and roads
- Mountains
- Lakes
- Water towers
- Barns and man-made structures, etc.

They have a license to fly, however, it is illegal for these pilots to fly at night or in a storm because they depend on seeing landmarks for navigation. The darkness of night and the limited visibility of a storm or fog blind and disorient them. Under those conditions, they become a hazard to themselves and others.

2 Corinthians 5:7, *“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”*

Christian's who insist on *seeing* evidence that God is working in their lives and are always moved by circumstances are like the pilots who depend on seeing in order to navigate. When the storms of life hit, they feel isolated, confused, and lost. They experience very few manifestations of God's blessings because *God insists that we operate by faith – not by sight.*

Christian's who **know** the Word and put the Word above what they see or feel are like the instrument rated pilot. *They trust God's Word like an explorer trusts his compass,* and go where they desire in life regardless of circumstances. These Christians experience God's blessings every day.

SCUBA DIVING – NITROGEN NARCOSIS

When a scuba diver dives to unsafe depths and stays there too long, he develops what is called, "nitrogen narcosis." This means he **feels** great. In fact, he feels so good he believes that his air gauge and computer is sending him an incorrect warning to head for shallow water.

If he has a severe case, he may ignore his instruments and go by his **feelings** and continue to go deeper. He values what he feels more than his instruments.

Nitrogen narcosis impairs the diver's judgment making him confident that "all is well" when his life is actually in serious danger. The best case scenario is for the diver (and the Christian) to trust his gauges over his feelings.

The Yukon – In the year 2000, a Canadian Destroyer was purposely sunk off the coast of San Diego and became an instant scuba diving destination. It was supposed to rest in the upright position on the ocean floor. However, a miscalculation caused it to list to one side at the 1 or 2 o'clock position.

Once inside the Yukon, the scuba divers are confused as to which way is really up. Their surroundings orient them to swim at a list, matching the ships décor. They think they are swimming straight, yet their air-bubbles float away from them at an angle and not straight overhead.

Question: What direction should the divers believe is straight up? The light fixtures on the ceilings, or the direction of the escaping air-bubbles?

Equate the answer to the above question to **God's Word verses your circumstances** and experiences.

Which should you believe and go by?

Equilibrium – Blindfold a person and sit them in a secretary’s chair and spin them in circles. After a few seconds or minutes, the person may not be able to correctly state which direction they are spinning. They may even think they have stopped spinning. Their equilibrium has been “thrown off.”

Bionic Man – At Universal Studios, for the 1970s TV show, “The Bionic Man,” a rotating tunnel was designed as a prop. A giant cylinder that looked like a rock tunnel rotated around a stationary road. The rotating tunnel was perhaps a hundred feet long with a mirror at the end. The actor, Lee Majors, was unable to run down the road without falling down because even though the road never moved, the rotation of the walls of the tunnel threw his equilibrium off and made him too dizzy to stand.

That’s what circumstances do. They throw our spiritual and mental equilibrium off and cause us to stumble. The Word helps us keep our balance and helps us keep going forward.

2 Corinthians 5:7, **“For we walk by faith, not by sight.”** Until a believer pulls away from the negative reports of the world and what his five physical senses tell him, and start walking by faith, he can never be victorious.

Like the “Bionic Man,” what you see might throw you for a loop. However, when you walk “by faith” nothing can faze you or prevent you from experiencing your desired outcome.

You need to be of the mind that no matter what ever happens to you, God’s Word is true to you.

God said, *“I will never leave you nor forsake you.”* That one word from God would be enough to cause you to overcome any situation and come out on top if you were instrument rated to the Word of God.

Both the non-instrument rated pilot and the average Christian move along smoothly until the storm hits. Then they freak out and crash and burn. The FAA said, *“Very seldom do planes crash because of mechanical failure. It’s almost always pilot error.”* The Word of God never fails. Jesus never fails. Yet many Christians crash and burn.

The only remedy is to become instrument rated to the Word of God and **become an expert in using and utilizing your Heavenly Instrument – God’s Word.** Trust and depend on God’s Word regardless of circumstances and your past experiences.

A new day has dawned for you! You have left the limitations of your five physical senses and are now putting your confidence in a more dependable way of life – a more dependable navigation system – GOD’S MIGHTY WORD!