

# Fly by the Instruments

By Gloria Okes Perkins

The following excerpt metaphorically explains how we can gain emotional stability in time of trials and suffering:

While piloting a plane in a thick fog, a pilot cannot be sure of his direction unless he gives full attention to his instruments. When flying through a thunderstorm, the turbulence will throw him about, and the darkness within the clouds will threaten to disorient him. Sometimes he will feel as though he is going up or down or turning around. But he cannot depend on his feelings. Only the gyros can be trusted, so the pilot must hang on to the controls in the turbulence and discipline his mind to concentrate on the instruments while he flies through the storm.

The parallel truth for the Christian in troubled times is clear. Undisciplined feelings...can cause a crash unless one keeps himself stabilized by the facts of the Word of God...Every promise in the Word of God is like a gyro giving information to stabilize him in a specific situation...With daily practice one learns not to panic but to believe a specific truth from the Bible fitted for his own unique circumstances. By experience one learns not to fight his feelings, but to look away from them to the “instrument panel” of the Word of God which is utterly dependable.

One discovers that if he will just hang on in the worst of the turbulence, no matter how disrupting, his mind and heart steadied by the great truths of the Word and his eyes intently fixed on God Himself, he will eventually break through rain-black clouds to soar once more in the clear, tranquil atmosphere.<sup>1</sup>

1. In what areas of your life have you lived by your emotions instead of by the promises and commandments of God?

2. What have been some of the consequences of feeling-oriented living?

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<sup>1</sup> Gloria Okes Perkins, “Fly by the Instruments,” *Good News Broadcaster* (October 1978): 26-27 as printed in *Love Life for Every Married Couple* by Ed Wheat (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1980) 288-289.

3. Read the following Bible passages. Note what each says about living in a way that honors God versus living according to feelings (the “follow your heart” philosophy).

Proverbs 4:23, 16:32, 25:28, 29:11

1 Corinthians 10:13

James 1:6-8, 14, 4:1-3

1 Peter 1:13-16

1 John 2:16-17

4. What commandments and/or promises are given regarding living a feeling-oriented life versus a commandment-oriented life?

5. What changes do you need to make in your life so that you are living a commandment-oriented life for God’s glory rather than a feeling-oriented life for self?