

## Palisades Community Bible Church

### Online Sunday School

# Trust Your Instruments!

December 13, 2020

Did you ever want to fly a plane? I've often thought about it. Did you know that an enormous amount of pilot training focuses on using instruments?

Pilots are trained to use instruments, instead of INSTINCT, to fly the plane. Ask any seasoned pilot and they'll tell you that they frequently feel (in their head) as if they are going in circles, ascending or descending – all while flying straight and level. By keeping focused on the instruments, not intuition, the pilot knows exactly what the aircraft is doing at all times. Regardless of how it FEELS, the instruments tell the real story.

The same goes with submarines. There are no windows, and nothing to look at, other than instruments. You can feel the ship's angle change as it ascends or descends, and you can feel it lean to the left or right as it turns, but you have no idea how much, how fast, how far, etc., without instruments.

In both cases, it is impossible to navigate the craft safely without understanding, and fully trusting, the instruments.

So, it is with our Christian walk. We need to trust in our instruments, and not our gut feelings:

**Proverbs 3:5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.**

God has supplied us with "instruments" to guide our lives. We should not be operating on our own flawed, fallen, instincts. Rather, we should be following the instruments God has put into our lives. These instruments take the form of:

- Being raised by Godly parents, grandparents, etc., who emphasize biblical principles each day
- Yielding one's life to Christ, for salvation, and also for daily living

- Reading, knowing and understanding God's Holy Word each day
- Having fellowship with other Christians who share wisdom, prayer, encouragement, etc.
- Praying regularly and yielding to the leadings of the Holy Spirit
- Attending a Bible believing church that teaches/preaches the whole Word of God

This is only a partial list, but each of these is an "instrument" we can use to navigate life's good, and troublesome, times. Did you ever peek into the cockpit of a plane? Were you amazed at the number of dials, gauges and indicators? The pilot knows exactly what each is, what it tells him/her, and what they are to do with the information. A Christian knows exactly what each of God's instruments is, and what it does in his/her life.

A Christian would not dare to get married, undergo a surgery, move to another state, etc., without checking these instruments. May I suggest that we check our instruments with "minor issues," as well?

A Christian knows what their Godly parent, pastor or friend would think of a certain activity. S/he knows what God's word says about certain things, and they often know what God's answer might be, if asked in prayer.

Let's look at a Christian young man who was raised by Godly parents, gave his life to Jesus early in life, grew up in the church, had lots of Christian friends, and is attending a Christian college. First, what instruments did he use to determine whether to smoke pot or drink during high school? What instruments did he use to decide on his college...and major? If he has a girlfriend, what instruments are telling him how to conduct himself with her? .....Get the picture?

I'm not naïve enough to think he was perfect! He probably made some real mistakes along the way. If so, how do you think those instruments helped him process the problem and get right?

So, we can add to our list, above, the instrument of FAILURE. Yes, failure IS an option! We yield to temptation, we get selfish, we take our eyes off our Savior long enough to FAIL. Failing is a crash, and we return to our instruments to keep us from crashing again.

Do you think the ground might be a powerful instrument to the pilot? Do you think the pilot has the ground on his/her mind when flying? (as a passenger, I think about the ground!) The pilot's gut tells him/her to avoid unscheduled contact with the ground. The instruments are critical to managing that.

When our kids were young, we were very close to a Christian family. We occasionally hired the oldest daughter to baby sit. She was about the most devout Christian teen I'd ever met. Her family was very devout, and she was pure in her conduct and conversation. She and I were once having a conversation and she shared that she often thought about what it might be like to sin....to know what it was...to understand the 'other side.' I was really surprised by this gal who seemed to have unending joy in her life, bringing up such a question.

I suggested that she might be thinking as Eve did in the garden....and just look at the mess she made by wanting to know good and evil! We also discussed how sin causes damage that is never fully repaired in this life. Though it's forgiven through Jesus, sin's scars linger in the human heart and present a lifetime of struggle. I asked her to ask me how I knew about all that.....she did.

Knowing her Dad, I understood how she could not feel comfortable having the same conversation with him. I'm glad she confided in me, and I hope I helped her.....I hope she benefitted from the instrument; an older Christian.

In another conversation with a different teen, he expressed that he was contemplating a tough decision. I could see the two choices, and the right one was not that hard to discern. The one he WANTED was not the right choice. He wanted to follow his feelings. I asked if he had prayed about it. He said he had, and that 'God had not answered him.' I figured the LAST thing he wanted to hear was; "Do you know what your Dad would say?" When I asked him, he reluctantly nodded. "Do you think your Dad would say anything different from God?" He let out a huge sigh and shook his head. All I was doing was wiping the foggy haze off his instruments.

One of my customers, who owns a rental property, had a week between tenants and wanted to remodel the kitchen before the new renter moved in. We planned that I would perform the critical aspects of the job and he would work with me, doing the less skilled, more labor-related tasks. In so doing, he would learn some things, and save some money. No problem.

We spent the week working side by side and getting a lot done. We had time to get to know one another and to have several conversations. I found openings to discuss the Bible, and he said he likes to talk about it. He also told me his father is Jewish and his mother is protestant; neither is active in their faith. He explained that he was a serious athlete through school, so between the confusion between his parents over just how to approach the whole “worship thing” and the fact that all his sports competitions were conducted on Saturdays and Sundays, he never went to any kind of organized religious activity.

So, the topic of God kept flowing as the week went on. We had many short discussions and a few long ones, as work permitted. I came away with the sad realization that this fellow has almost NO GODLY INSTRUMENTS in his life! I pray that something we discussed will take hold.

He is a kind, moral, decent, honest, enjoyable person, but he has no spiritual development or guidance. He has no Godly instruments. I also felt that he really had no desire to pursue such things on his own. Though I was sharing a lot of things one needs to understand about God (both from a Jewish, and Christian, perspective), I got the clear impression that, when the conversation ended, it had just been a conversation....not much more.

I suspect that, had I been an experienced hockey player, he'd have had lots of engaging questions about his favorite sport. See the contrast? No spiritual instruments in his life. He assumes that being a good fellow is sufficient – it's worked with most of his experiences, so far.

Take a look back at that partial list of instruments and see which ones are big in your life. Take an inventory of how one, or more, has shaped your life. Consider, also, how the absence of one, or more, has left you with a deficit. Not all of us were raised in Godly homes, etc.

**2 Timothy 3:14 But as for you, continue in the things you have learned and firmly believed, since you know from whom you have learned them. 15 From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for instruction, for conviction, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.**

....so that the man of God will have guiding **instruments** in his life that he can trust as he navigates – instead of relying on instinct and feelings!

Now, look at your family. Is there ONE person who has no instruments? Can you make a difference in that ONE's life? Can you make an investment in them? Can you point the way?

If we fail in our Christian walk, there is a remedy for that. If we do not do anything.....where is the remedy? What is the value of instruments that are not used?

Consider Jesus' contrasting view of these two Churches....

**Revelation 3: 7 To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of the One who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What He opens no one can shut, and what He shuts no one can open. 8 I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door, which no one can shut. For you have only a little strength, yet you have kept My word and have not denied My name. 9 Look at those who belong to the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews but are liars instead. I will make them come and bow down at your feet, and they will know that I love you. 10 Because you have kept My command to persevere, I will also keep you from the hour of testing that is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 I am coming soon. Hold fast to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. 12 The one who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will never again leave it. Upon him I will write the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God (the new Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven from My God), and My new name.**

**14 To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Originator of God's creation. 15 I know your deeds; you are neither cold nor hot. How I wish you were one or the other! 16 So because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to vomit you out of My mouth! 17 You say, 'I am rich; I have grown wealthy and need nothing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, white garments so that you may be clothed and your shameful**

**nakedness not exposed, and salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see. 19 Those I love I rebuke and discipline. Therefore, be earnest and repent.**

You would not DARE to climb into an airplane and attempt to fly it with no training. You would not dare to just use your instincts and intuition to start the thing up and take off! You would absolutely not jump into the pilot's seat and "feel" your way along.

Why, then do so many of us travel through life without investing in our instruments? Ah, yes, we have a high school diploma! We may have a college degree! We may be saved! We may sit in church once a week. Are we really being trained to use our Godly instruments to guide our lives? Are we really applying ourselves here? Are we learning about the instruments that we can use in our Christian life?

Or, when the conversation ends, is that it? Is it.....just another conversation???

Jesus speaking; **John 10: 9 "I am the gate. If anyone enters through Me, he will be saved. He will come in and go out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness."**

I'm very mechanical, and have done plenty of serious work on my vehicles over the years. I'm not technical, and really don't like all the techy gadgetry that has infected the modern automobile. One thing I really have no use for is the tire pressure indicator on the dashboard that was mandated about a decade back. I know how to look at a tire and know if it needs air, for goodness sake!

One day, I pulled out of my driveway and headed to work. About a mile into the drive, I heard a 'ding,' looked at my dash and saw a low-pressure warning. "Must be the cold temp this morning." I thought. I kept driving and another 'ding.' I looked and it showed the tire pressure was about 15 psi too low. A half mile more; 'ding' and the pressure showed 20 psi low. I pulled over and got out. There was a hissing sound coming from the rapidly softening tire. Fortunately, I was only two miles from an auto shop....I limped in on a totally flat tire! Turns out, I'd run over a sharp stone that pierced through the steel belts and destroyed the tire.

Boy! Was I ever grateful for those “techy, gadgety, air sensors!!” Had I not gotten the warning from my instrument; I could have had a disaster at 60 mph on the highway. Praise God!!

**Psalm 62: 8 “Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts before him. God is our refuge.”**

Perhaps you can look at this study as an instrument letting you know your tire pressure is getting low. If you consider this topic prayerfully, I hope that you will come to the point of renewing your dedication to walking ever closer with Jesus, and using His instruments in your life more effectively.

If you don't have a good knowledge of the Bible...if you don't have that instrument in your life, I pray that you will commit time to the studies Pastor is going to start soon, or one of the other Bible studies at PCBC. I don't make this suggestion lightly. Regular study of the Bible is absolutely life changing....it's how God designed it.

If you lack the additional wisdom in your life that comes from a mature Christian, you will be amazed at how much benefit you'll receive from seeking the counsel of an older person who has walked with Christ longer than you. It doesn't mean they are perfect; it means they've been there and learned.

If you're just attending church out of habit, I pray you'll renew your passion to extract every single morsel of value from the weekly experience. And, then, share what you gain with others. You might be surprised at how easy it is to work them into a conversation with one who needs it.

**Jeremiah 17: 7-8 “The person who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence indeed is the Lord, is blessed. He will be like a tree planted by water: it sends its roots out toward a stream, it doesn't fear when heat comes, and its foliage remains green. It will not worry in a year of drought or cease producing fruit.”**

**Turn your eyes upon Jesus  
Look full in his wonderful face.  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim  
In the light of His glory and grace!  
Lord, teach us to use your instruments!  
Amen**