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Flight Instructions

by Ryan Boyer

As Becky and I were flying to Florida the other day the flight attendant came over the intercom and started giving some instructions. As is totally normal, especially in the age of electronics (although I don't remember a time when anyone has ever listened to this stuff intently) NO ONE was listening. I wasn't listening either. We have all heard it. If you have flown in a airplane at all in your life you know they are going to walk you through how to put on and take off a seat belt (most of us regularly ride in cars so there is no real revelation here). The flight attendant is going to tell you to locate the exits on the plane and to notice that the closest one may be behind you. They remind you that if we experience a change in cabin pressure, oxygen masks will drop down and you need to secure your own mask before helping someone else secure theirs.

So why don't we listen? I noticed it wasn't because anyone was rushing to read the little pamphlet that walks you through all possible plane disasters. So what is it that makes us not care? Part of it, I'm sure, is we have heard all of these instructions before. But I think part of it also is we don't really have any belief that something bad is going to happen to our plane. How many people do you know that have ever been in a plane crash? We all know the statistic that we are far more likely to die in a car crash than in a plane crash.

As I thought about these life saving instructions the flight attendants were trying to give us, and how no one seemed to want to listen, and how none of us probably believed we needed to know it anyways it made me think about spiritual things. We have a book of life saving instructions: are we willing to listen to them? We know that hard times will come for us – turbulence, if not an all out wreck of our faith, and yet do we believe and prepare for those times?

Paul told Timothy in 2 Tim. 3:16-17 that, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." God has equipped us. Thoroughly. That is an amazing thought. That we have everything we need through God's revelation. But the thing is that revelation is in the Scriptures. So if we don't read them we aren't equipped. So that's the first thing I felt challenged to do: really know the instruction manual to life that God has given me. I think about things I'm interested in knowing about. How many times do you have ONE source that tells you everything you need to know about any given subject. Then to make it even crazier this ONE source tells us everything we need to know about LIFE. And yet sometimes we don't get around to consulting it. Sometimes we are just too busy. Sometimes we think we know better and can figure it out without God's manual. It's really probably not a huge deal if we don't listen to the flight attendants as they give us their instructions. But it's a very big deal to not listen to our King when He tells us how to live so we can be a part of His kingdom forever.

What about thinking that nothing bad is going to happen to us? 1 Cor. 10:12-13 warns us, "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it." Don't think you are stronger than you are. Temptation is coming. God will give you a way to escape it but it's still coming. We know that Satan is prowling around like a lion looking for someone to devour. We know that we all sin and fall short of His glory. The turbulence (temptation) will come and sometimes you will outright crash. Since we know it's coming what sort of people should we be? We should be prepared, having put God's words in our heart. We shouldn't expect that we will escape the tough times but be ready for them when they come.

So while I know you may not suddenly start listening to flight attendants I would urge you with all my heart to start listening to the Lord. He has given us everything we need to make it through life and all its difficulties and on the other side to live with Him forever. He is worth listening to. It will save your life.