



Running Rabid

Balancing the passion to pursue with the pressure to produce.

The Power of Me

When I am weak then He is strong; self-reliance versus self-sacrifice

I am not sure about you, but I can't stand not being in control. I don't like it when I feel like things are out of control, especially when I can't do anything to "fix" the situation. It is even worse when I feel like I am in some sort of danger. One of the scariest times I have experienced was when I was working on my pilot's license in college. Part of the training and certification process requires that each student pilot, as reflected in what is copied below based on 14 CFR 61.93 - *Solo cross-country flight requirements*.

Total Time: 40 hours minimum which consists of at least:

Dual: 20 hours minimum of flight training with an instructor on the Private Pilot areas of operation including:

1. 3 hours of cross country flight training in a single engine airplane;
2. 3 hours of night flight training in a single engine airplane, that includes at least:
 - a) 1 cross country flight of over 100 nm total distance; and
 - b) 10 T/O's and 10 landings to a full stop with each involving a flight in the traffic pattern at an airport.
3. 3 hours of flight training by reference to instruments in a single engine airplane; and
4. 3 hours of flight training in a single engine airplane within the 60 days prior to the practical test.

Solo: 10 hours minimum of solo flying in a single engine airplane on the Private Pilot areas of operation including:

1. 5 hours of solo cross country flying;
2. 1 solo cross country flight of at least 150nm total distance with full stop landings at 3 points and one segment of at least 50nm between T/O and landings; and
3. 3 T/O's and landings to a full stop at an airport with an operating control tower.

For the 150 nautical mile trip I decided to go see my roommate in Beaumont. They had a control tower, it satisfied the distance requirement, and I thought it would be cool to go see him by flying. I decided to leave on a Saturday morning and I remember driving to Easterwood Airport in College Station. I had flown in and out of Easterwood a lot by this point, so I was certainly comfortable taking off and landing there; however, I was a bit nervous as I thought about leaving the "comforts" of the home airport. I checked the weather and everything seemed fine, although there was some cloud cover over Beaumont. I decided it would be OK.

I took off and everything was going well. I was watching my map (this was long before GPS) and everything was tracking relative to landmarks. I went over Lake Livingston and headed south toward Beaumont. Probably about 10 miles outside Beaumont I started to get into some clouds. For experienced pilots with an instrument rating this is no big deal, but for a young pilot it is scary and not permitted when flying "visual".¹ I decided I was too far to turn back and decided to call the control tower.

As I wait for them to respond things were not getting better. One of the downsides of my personality is when I am not in control I start to panic (nothing major, I just start to feel stressed out). As I have gotten older I have learned to manage it, but the one place you don't want to panic is at 5,000 feet in an airplane by yourself! After waiting for what seemed like forever from the tower, they came over the intercom and said, "Cessna 49785, Squawk 1200." This meant I was to dial-in 1 2 0 0 on the transponder so their radar could pick me up. I did as instructed and once again, waited.

¹ Visual Flight Rule (VFR) weather minimums: *three (3) miles visibility, 2,000 feet horizontal distance from clouds, 1,000 feet above them, and 500 feet below them.*

To my surprise the control tower told me to reduce my throttle and break below the clouds. I did as instructed and to my amazement, I was perfectly lined up with the runway and preceded to land. To say I was relieved was a huge understatement. I was a Christian long before I got to college and I took great comfort in knowing that I was praying for myself while flying, as were many friends of our family at First Baptist Church Bryan. I eventually got my pilot license and enjoyed flying, until I started working and having a family.

The reason I tell you that story is for several reasons. First, there are many times in our lives when we “panic” because we have a limited perspective; just like my being in the clouds. God ALWAYS knows where we are and He does not need radar to locate us. It does not mean that He will not let us get into situations where we need help, but He is always there to help. The second reason I tell you the story is we need to be very careful about becoming self-reliant. There is nothing more dangerous to the Christian that being self-reliant and not having, or expressing, a need to God’s involvement in our lives.

As Paul write in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 (NASB):

⁹ And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast [a]bout my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; **for when I am weak, then I am strong.**

As Christian men we need to develop a strong reliance on God and our prayer life needs to reflect that reliance. As my good friend and former pastor of Cypress Bible Church, Dave Gibson, used to say, “A weak prayer life is a declaration of independence from God.” The Declaration of Independence might have worked for the colonists, but it is a recipe for disaster for you and me!

Questions for the Week

1. List at least five (5) areas where you struggle turning things over to God.
2. Why is it important for us to avoid self-reliance? Consider our *Running Rapid* series Bible verse, Proverbs 3:5-6, in developing your answer?
3. Identify a time in your life when you tried to take control of a situation that turned out to be a disaster. Had you gotten God involved earlier, how would the outcome have been different?
4. **Food for Further Thought** – explore Philippians 4:10-13. What do these verses say to you and contentedness and Christ’s role in helping us “do all things”?