

Combat Christian: Day Four

Mission Training: Unit One

Navigation 104

Deviation Check

Many years ago, when I possessed the bravery of my youth, I was an aircraft navigator on the Douglas A-3D Skywarrior. It was a monster of an aircraft that weighed in at around 78,000 pounds. Pretty big to be crashing (making arrested landings) aboard aircraft carriers. Perhaps that is why it eventually was referred to by its nickname, "Whale." The Whale was large because one of the original design considerations was that it would be capable of carrying a nuclear weapon. In those days the weapons were still quite rotund.

Navigation on long over-water flights, was also a bit more cumbersome than it is today. Today even automobiles are equipped with global positioning systems (GPS). But back then we navigated by the stars. At the beginning of a flight it was necessary to perform a "deviation check" in order to determine the accuracy of all the onboard compass systems. If this was not performed properly it would be possible to end up off course without even knowing it. Well, low and behold, along came a flight crew that was on a celestial navigation training flight with a student navigator. The Instructor Pilot, being a steely-eyed naval aviator of some renown, decided to slew the compass system (induce an error into the system) in an attempt to fool the would-be Navigator. You guessed it! The crafty pilot forgot how much he slewed the system and they eventually became lost and had to bailout over open ocean.

Key Verse:

"...and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the **Way**, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem." (Acts 9:2 NIV)

"But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the **Way**. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus." (Acts 19:9 NIV)

"About that time there arose a great disturbance about the **Way**." (Acts 19:23 NIV)

"I persecuted the followers of this **Way** to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison..." (Acts 22:4 NIV)

"However, I admit that I worship the God of our fathers as a follower of the **Way**, which they call a sect. I believe everything that agrees with the Law and that is written in the Prophets..." (Acts 24:14 NIV)

"Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the **Way**, adjourned the proceedings. "When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I will decide your case." (Acts 24:22 NIV)

At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and

those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Mat 11:25-30 NIV)

We learned on "Day One" that Jesus is the Door and on "Day Two" that Jesus is the **Way**. The reality of the situation is that a great many of us have entered in by the "Door" and have managed to miss the "Highway of Holiness" altogether. We lay in the ditch wondering how we got there. What happened? We forgot to do a deviation check. We thought we were on course but were actually lost. This happens because we make other things in life the way (deviation). Prayer, Bible study, worship, the Church and fellowship are all part of the actions of the believer but they are not the **Way**! None of these things will cleanse my sinners heart or give me peace!!! In fact the mere doing of these things, apart from the **Way**, becomes an arduous burden and life crushing weight.

So What!

Many years ago a new believer asked me why the excitement and fervor had gone out of his Christian experience? He said it was as if he had been sitting in a tub of hot water that had slowly become cool to the senses. DEV CHECK!!!! The actions of the Christian experience are NOT the way to Christ!!! Jesus Christ is the **Way** to the actions of the Christian experience. The Spirit of Christ empowers the Christian life. When Christ is near the Scriptures sing an unforgettable chorus. When Christ is near worship lifts the heart to flight. When Christ is near we are drawn to prayer. When Christ is near the Church abounds in perfect unity. When I am in the ditch I look for my compass!! Jesus is the Way (Highway of Holiness) and the on-ramp is at the foot of the Calvary Cross.

*"There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins;
and sinners plunge beneath that flood, loose all their guilty stains."*

William Cowper