



Does God Email?

My morning began like any other day, but it wouldn't end that way. I was pursuing my college degree on the campus of Louisiana's Ragin' Cajuns, and there was nowhere else I desired to be living. Our region was known for its zydeco music, Creole cuisine, Southern hospitality, and unique dialect of the French language.

I had subscribed to a daily devotional that would be emailed promptly each morning. This day, however, I had received no email. It struck me as odd, but I logged off the computer and finished getting ready for class. I enjoyed college, but on this morning, my mind was dreaming about the adventure awaiting me after school. I had been training for my pilot's license and I was about halfway done. A nighttime flight farther than 50 miles was one of the remaining requirements. Tonight would be the night.

Flying at night was always a treat because in Louisiana where it's awfully hot and humid most of the time, the night brought cooler temperatures and calmer winds. The disadvantage was the limited visibility of God's majestic terrain. An emergency landing at night could very well mean inadvertently crashing into a mosquito-infested swamp filled with stumps and hungry alligators.

Matthew, my young instructor who preferred aerobatics, met me at the local airport where I rented a two-seat Cessna airplane. The old airplane performed well during

takeoff, climb, and cruise. Flying was always peaceful to me—practically spiritual. My passion blended the mind, body, and spirit. Seeing the world from a bird's eye view had given me a newfound perspective on humanity and nature.

We felt thrilled to accomplish our goal as we landed at a municipal airport in Rapides Parish some 73 miles away. I applied full throttle and climbed us back into the twilight for our return flight home. The radio was silent, and only the full moon and stars illuminated the mysterious bayou beneath us. It felt like we were the only pilots in the sky. With nights like this, I never cared about how much my passion for flying cost.

It had been a delightful journey so far, and nothing during the past hour had indicated anything was amiss. Suddenly our engine lost about half its power. The abrupt loss of thrust pulled me forward in my seat as the propeller's hum lessened. If we lost all power, our injured bird would be “landing” within minutes—whether we wanted to or not.

I had trained for engine failures, but dealing with a partial power loss was something new to me, and the appropriate response to it wasn't as clear. Fortunately, the engine was still running and we had more options to consider—at least for the time being. We went through our emergency checklist to restore power, but nothing worked.

Panic isn't an ideal characteristic for a pilot, and I was grateful that God had given me a calm demeanor that meshed together with piloting. Matthew alerted air traffic control of our situation and I began scanning for a suitable place to land. All I saw was

darkness from the wetlands below, with one exception—the interstate. I-49 looked like one long, beautifully-paved runway inviting us to land. I suggested it, but Matthew wasn't as optimistic.

“Yeah, and hope an 18-wheeler sees us and doesn’t drive over us,” he replied.

I briefly pondered whether he was a cynic or pragmatist. Either way, the thought of a Big Rig blasting us into a fireball of hot sauce and jambalaya wasn’t a pleasant thought.

We weighed our limited options and hoped the engine would stay alive. We navigated back home, ensuring our route kept the interstate below us just in case the worst happened...

The air traffic controller was aware of our emergency and had volunteered to stay past closing time to assist with our arrival. The familiarity of Lafayette’s well-lit



runway welcoming us to land was a relief. I applied full flaps and made the approach. The tires chirped on landing and the palpable apprehension in the cockpit dissipated now that we were back on God’s green earth.

“Glad y’all made it back safely,” the controller broadcasted over the airwaves.

We certainly were, too. I glanced at my watch, realizing he was scheduled to be off-duty by now. It was 10:15 p.m. I parked the airplane at the hangar. The mechanic inspected it the following day and could find no reason for the malfunction. Its cause still remains a mystery to this day.

Once back in my dorm room that night, I checked my email. It was now past 11:00 p.m., but I had received my devotional at 10:15 p.m.—my exact landing time! Fate was talking to me, and I’ve never forgotten it, or the goosebumps it gave me. “God promises a safe landing, not a calm passage.”