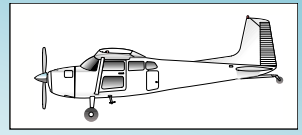


Ken Stoltzfus

# Flying Higher



## “No Fear”

No. 2 in a series

Daring to pursue the highest possible level in all of life

I don't know where today's popular “No Fear!” slogan came from, but I doubt that a seasoned taildragger pilot coined it.

If I've had romances in my life besides my wife Elaine, it was the DC-3 - and the Cessna 180, a spirited taildragger who equally challenges and rewards you. I've flown them off and on over the last 47 years.

I taught my sons Ken Jr., Brian and Mark to fly. When they were ready for a '180 check-out I told them, “If you EVER get to where you don't fear this airplane, park it”.

Now don't get me wrong - - the 180 is a wonderful airplane. I've slugged through serious mud, splashed through puddles that gave it a bath, and felt comfortable flying it in a 30-knot crosswind. I know that you can get it home with a flat tailwheel. Or with one brake out, even with a crosswind, if you keep your good brake on the downwind side.



If that's the case, why did I give my sons that warning? Was I trying to spoil their fun? Or saying they should be anxious and on edge at the thought of flying it? Not at all! Was I telling them to let it sit when the wind was blowing or the runway muddy? Nope, not a chance!

But you see, many 180's show a log entry something like, “Replaced left gearbox; repaired left wing from strut outboard; and installed overhauled prop with new blades.” Many a novice or nonchalant pilot has discovered too late that this airplane can be an enthusiastic groundlooper.

The kind of fear I was thinking of was this. They should never (ever!) disregard the '180's propensity to make unsolicited excursions into the boonies. No matter how good they got with it, they should never become careless - - not even for a moment.

There are certain principles that accompany this long, tall, high performance, spring-steel geared taildragger. While those characteristics help make it such a kick to fly, they also bring challenges that need to be respected. To ignore them is to tempt fate.

I wasn't suggesting that my sons should fear the '180 as much as to say they should fear what it would do to them if they didn't respect it.

The fear I'm speaking of does not disable. It empowers. It equips us to experience something to the max without getting hurt.

That's what it means to fear God! Proverbs 1:7 in the Bible says, "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Only fools despise wisdom and discipline."

When God created the world, He established certain laws for it to function by. To respect them, is the beginning of knowing how to live well.

There is the law of gravity, and while I don't tremble at the thought of it, I do fear/respect it enough that I won't jump off of the hangar roof! I don't like the consequences of violating that law.

There are also laws regarding the life and property of others; human sexuality; relationships; taking one day of rest per week and so forth. They are given in the 10-Commandments (Exodus 20) and are addressed throughout the Bible.

When God created mankind He gave us the freedom to choose between good and bad. The ability to fear/respect the principles of life that He had established and thus to enjoy their benefits. The kind of fear that has allowed our family to enjoy the 180's benefits unscathed for so many years.

But He also allows us to choose to violate the laws of life and to experience the consequences. The terrible things that are happening in our world confirm that. Things far worse than a '180 pilot, 90° to the runway with his left wing on the ground and the prop standing still after making that awful grinding noise.

The whole human race was groundlooped way back close to the beginning. At best, we've got a sprung gear, bent gearbox and wrinkled outer wing. We find it impossible to fly straight. And that's why God sent Jesus into the world!

Jesus came to restore our relationship with God, and to empower us to choose what is good so that we can live well. To help us fly straight. The wise man or woman will listen carefully to His words, "My purpose is to give life in all its fullness." (John 10:10b)

And we'll listen up when John the Baptist says, "All who believe in God's Son have eternal life. Those who don't obey the Son will never experience eternal life, but the wrath of God remains upon them." (John 3:36)

It is our nature to find rules sort of burdensome. We'd like to think we can decide for ourselves. Increasingly our culture tells us that we can determine what is right and wrong. But I guarantee you - - that will work about as well as an overconfident pilot in a Cessna 180 on a windy day! We're gonna bend it!

Let's fly wisely and safely. By the rules! It's a long trip and the choices we make determine both the enjoyment of the flight and its final destination!

1998, Rev. 7/10, Scriptures from the NLT



Ken Stoltzfus was born in 1940, the son of a crop duster. He has worked as a pilot, pastor, business man, missionary to Africa and writer.

A Commercial Pilot with S&MEL&S, DC-3, Glider and Instrument ratings; CFI with A-I-G ratings; Ground Instructor A&I; and A&P, Ken lives in northeast Ohio with Elaine, his wife of over 50 years. His hobbies are aviation photography and collecting aircraft photos, negatives and slides.

This is #2 in his "Flying Higher" series. ©2010, Ken Stoltzfus, [www.John2031.com](http://www.John2031.com), P.O. Box 228, Kidron, OH 44636 USA