

By Raymond B. Johnson

Bail Out!

*Knowing the right thing to do is not enough—
you have to act on what you believe.*

When I was in the Air Force, the operations manual for the F-4 Phantom II fighter jet had a warning in bold print:

“IF THE AIRCRAFT BECOMES UNCONTROLLABLE BELOW 10,000 FEET, BAIL OUT!”

Each pilot was required to memorize this important warning. Indeed, on every flight day, a superior officer could ask for a “bold print” emergency procedure such as this, and any pilot who could not recite it exactly was suspended from flying until it could be repeated perfectly.

Not only was this warning to “bail out” developed by designers, aeronautical engineers, and the Air Force, but its importance had been confirmed by decades of pilots who lost their lives because they did not follow the crucial warning.

The Need to Abandon the Aircraft

It can be hard for a pilot to abandon an aircraft—especially when the “uncontrollable” flight results from one’s own piloting mistake. Pilots often try to correct their error by attempting to fly the airplane out of the problem.

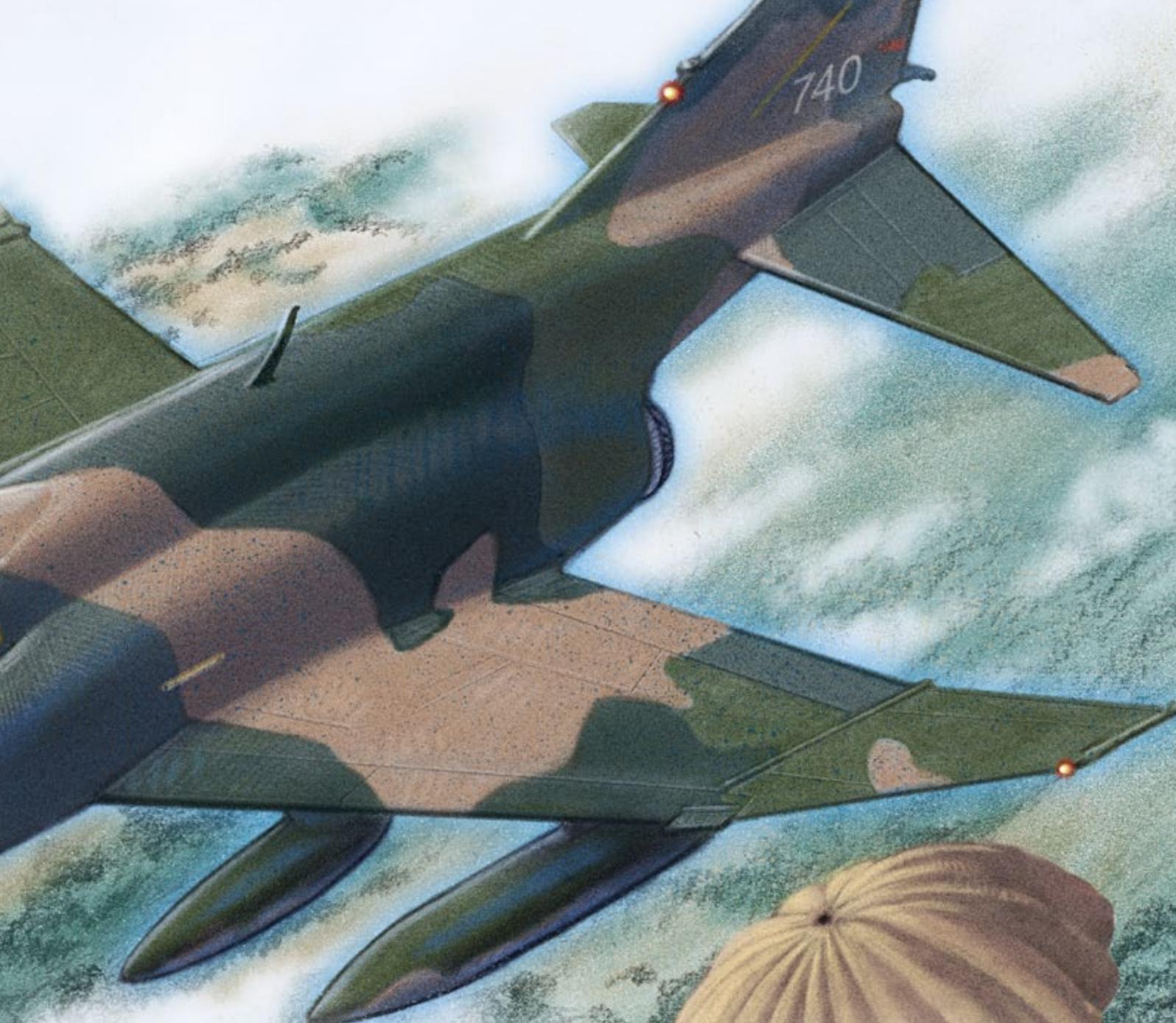
In addition, bailing out is an extremely traumatic

experience that no one looks forward to. The pilot is shot out of the cockpit (sometimes even right through the glass canopy) with such force that it contorts the body with 12–14 Gs of gravitational force and accelerates the pilot to an unknown landing that might include rocks, trees, or water. This situation, however, is much more desirable than riding the uncontrollable piece of metal into the ground at any speed.

This is because gravity is the law—not just a good idea—and is not optional. There is a pilot proverb that states, “In the ongoing battle between objects going



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hundreds of miles per hour and the ground going zero miles per hour, the ground has yet to lose.”

The same could be said when applying gospel principles, or laws, to our spiritual lives. We cannot change eternal principles—we can only obey them to find safety and joy.

My Friend’s Tragedy

I had a good friend who failed to follow the warning in bold print to bail out. There is no doubt he understood the bold print and was well instructed on it. He graduated from the United States Air Force Academy. He graduated near the top of his class in pilot training. He spent years

WAYS TO RECEIVE THE WARNINGS

Like fighter pilots, you will face many difficult situations. Be prepared to remain spiritually safe by listening to the voices of warning given in and for these latter days. You’ll learn about these warnings in many ways, including:

- Personal revelation.
- Scripture study.
- General conference.
- Family home evenings.
- Sunday lessons and discussions.
- Seminary.
- *For the Strength of Youth*.
- Counsel from your parents and leaders.



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studying correct knowledge and training to fly aircraft.

And yet, he simply didn't *believe* what he knew to be true. If he really believed the bold print stating, "If the aircraft becomes uncontrollable below 10,000 feet, bail out!" then he certainly would have pulled the yellow "Eject" handle and bailed out of the uncontrollable and doomed aircraft.

Perfect and Unchanging Laws

Like the bold warnings, which are more than just a good idea, the principles of the gospel are unchallengeable and unchanging. We ignore them at our peril. Gospel principles are not patterned after the pretenses, vain hopes, adages, fables, or best guesses of men. Instead, they are eternal laws.

We must have faith enough to follow the counsel given to us by prophets in both modern and ancient days. The first step is to gain knowledge. The Doctrine and Covenants tells us, "It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance" (D&C 131:6), so each of us must understand the value of acquiring knowledge and then take the necessary action to gain it. We must learn the bold print of gospel principles.

And we must also see that knowledge alone can't protect us. Our knowledge must move us to act on the correct principles. We show the strength of our beliefs when we act correctly in tough or uncertain situations that require

us to apply the knowledge we have gained. Faith that is strong enough to lead us to correct action is the basis of progress and salvation.

Safety in Bailing Out

Unlike my friend who did not heed the direction to bail out, on another occasion one of my other fellow pilots did. He had made a mistake and glanced off the top of a mountain on a low-altitude bombing run. Although his F-4 Phantom II jet was destroyed, this pilot had pulled the yellow handle and bailed out while careening through the air, and he lived. Belief strong enough to apply his knowledge had saved this pilot.

While a man cannot be saved in ignorance, he also cannot be saved without applying properly and timely the knowledge he has gained.

King Benjamin said, "If you *believe* all these things see that you *do* them" (Mosiah 4:10; italics added).

Never trade luck, foolish traditions, adages, or worldly views for obedience to the correct principles that will save you. **NE**



THE EXERCISE OF FAITH

"Faith in the power of obedience to the commandments of God will forge strength of character available to you in times of urgent need. Such character is not developed in moments of great challenge or temptation. That is when it is intended to be used. Your exercise of faith in true principles builds character; fortified character expands your capacity to exercise more faith. As a result, your capacity and confidence to conquer the trials of life is enhanced."

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "The Transforming Power of Faith and Character," *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 43.