

DON'T CRASH

Prevent big problems later by fixing small problems now.

By Adam C. Olson
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SPIRITUAL CHECKUPS



"We need to conduct regular spiritual checkups on ourselves to determine the areas in which we need to improve.

"Usually we perceive these small failings with the aid of the Holy Spirit. . . . We need to listen carefully to what is being pointed out to us by the Spirit, Church leaders, loved ones, coworkers, and friends."

Elder Marcos A. Aidukaitis of the Seventy,
"Honesty in the Small Things," *Ensign*, Sept. 2003, 30.

Andrei has loved airplanes since he was little. But while there are many who dream of flying, Andrei's head isn't in the clouds; his interest is in the nuts and bolts. This 16-year-old from Romania is studying to be an aircraft mechanic.

In Romania teens can choose to attend a high school to prepare for college or a trade school. Because of Andrei's love for airplanes, his decision to attend the aviation trade school was easy.

Aircraft mechanics don't just fix airplanes that are broken. One of the most important things they do is inspect and maintain airplanes so they don't break down. They regularly inspect everything on a plane, from propellers to landing gear and each piece in between.

"It can be hard to find the tiny problem that could cause a plane to crash," Andrei says. "But finding it is easier than trying to put the whole plane back together again."

Keeping a regular maintenance schedule and refusing to skip it are important—both for airplanes and for Church members—in order to identify and correct problems before they become either mechanically or spiritually life threatening.

Spiritual Maintenance

Andrei lives in Bucharest, a city of nearly two million people. However, the Church is relatively young in Romania, and there are only enough members in Bucharest for two branches. Andrei and his family live far from other members of their branch. Andrei feels the pull of the world all around him at school and among his friends. He knows how easy it would be to crash—spiritually speaking—if he doesn't keep up regular spiritual maintenance.

Life can be hectic. Along with the time Andrei spends on his school studies, football, and the computer, he makes time for praying, fasting, studying the scriptures, and fulfilling his responsibilities as a priest. He also makes sure he "goes" to seminary, which he does online because of distance.

Doing those things is part of the regular spiritual maintenance that helps identify and correct weaknesses before they lead to a life-threatening crash of a spiritual nature.

"There are some things you just have to do regularly—creating a habit," he says. "You can't let life take over."

Spiritual Crashes

Andrei has learned that if we do not perform spiritual maintenance regularly, forces such as stress or peer pressure can overcome our resistance to temptation. When that happens, it isn't long before we lose our direction, our control, and ultimately our spiritual power.

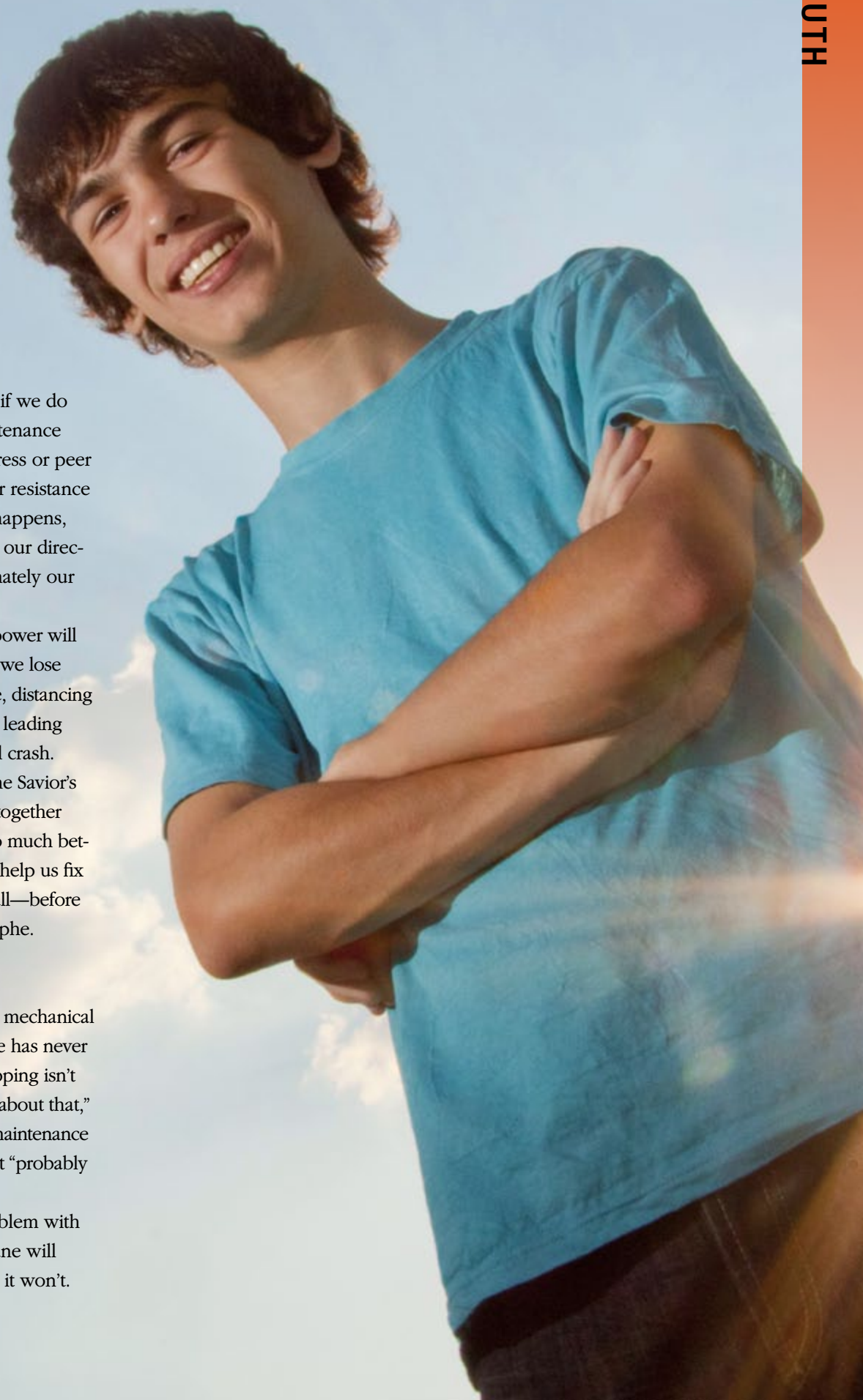
Just as a plane without power will lose altitude, when we sin, we lose spiritual power and altitude, distancing ourselves from heaven and leading sooner or later to a spiritual crash.

While it is possible for the Savior's Atonement to put us back together again after we crash, it is so much better to rely on His power to help us fix the problem when it is small—before it causes a spiritual catastrophe.

The Danger of Skipping

The thought of skipping mechanical maintenance on an airplane has never crossed Andrei's mind. Skipping isn't an option. "There are laws about that," he says. But if he *did* skip maintenance—just once—he admits that "probably nothing would happen."

Perhaps the biggest problem with skipping is not that the plane will immediately crash but that it won't.



“If nothing bad happens when I skip today, I will be more easily tempted to skip tomorrow,” he says.

When maintenance is skipped regularly, the forces and stresses exerted upon the plane—or on us—will cause something to fail sooner or later. “Eventually we will crash,” he says.

That’s why God has given us laws about regular spiritual maintenance too. “Meet together [at church] *oft*” (3 Nephi 18:22; emphasis added). Pray *always* (see 3 Nephi 18:19).

Search the scriptures *diligently* (see 3 Nephi 23:1–5). “Let virtue garnish thy thoughts *unceasingly*” (D&C 121:45; emphasis added). Visit the temple *regularly*.¹

Keeping those laws and performing regular spiritual maintenance will keep us flying right.

“A plane is built to get off the ground, to leave the world,” Andrei says. “That is what Heavenly Father wants for us. With regular maintenance, we’ll safely get where we want to go—back to heaven.” ■

NOTE

1. See Thomas S. Monson, “The Holy Temple—a Beacon to the World,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2011, 92.

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

SPiritual MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

Aircraft mechanics often have a checklist of items they need to inspect regularly. Church leaders have suggested conducting our own regular spiritual checkups.¹ Here are some questions that can help you examine your spiritual health from time to time. If you have concerns about any of your responses, talk to your parents or bishop or branch president.

- Do I pray regularly and sincerely?
- Do I feast upon the word of God in the scriptures and the teachings of living prophets?
 - Do I keep the Sabbath day holy and attend Church meetings regularly?
 - Do I fast and pay my tithes and offerings willingly?
 - Am I willing to forgive others?
 - Do I regularly find ways to serve others?
 - Do I remember the Savior at all times and follow His example?
 - Do I keep my thoughts and language clean?
 - Am I honest in all things?
 - Do I keep the Word of Wisdom?

NOTE

1. See Joseph B. Wirthlin, “True to the Truth,” *Ensign*, May 1997, 17.