

Ken Stoltzfus

Flying Higher



So Many Rules

No. 12 in a series

Daring to pursue the highest possible level in all of life

If you've done any amount of instrument flying, you've had a lot of people telling you what to do.

ATC gives you a circuitous route rather than the "direct" you filed. Your options may be to accept it or stay home.

They tell you to be at a certain altitude by a certain fix; cross a point "at or above" a given altitude; and "keep airspeed up" on the final approach course.

You are not allowed to fly an airway below MEA, and they fuss anytime you're off your assigned altitude by more than 200-feet!

And how about that arbitrary line around a TCA? For crying out loud, why do they get so excited when a pilot goes inside it just a little bit to get an aerial view of his new house! What's the big deal? They treat us like kindergartners who need to raise our hand and ask if we can go to the potty!

Now, most pilots get a little irked at ATC once in a while, but they also know that in most cases there's a good reason for all the rules and instructions.

The rules keep us at an altitude on the airway where we can receive navigational aids. They also keep us clear of towers and mountains, which is a pretty good idea. And "Caravan 208 Papa Alpha, keep airspeed up" is not a bad idea if you have a jet breathing down you neck.

There's something about the human spirit, though, that chafes at the thought of rules. Somebody telling us what to do, or how to do it. It's always been so.

Most of us resisted rules at home and in school. Sometimes we got by with it, other times we paid a price in one form or another. Adults tried to tell us that rules were for our own good, but they weren't very convincing.

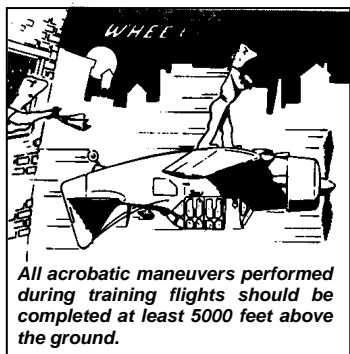
There are several reasons for rules. We need them because of laws of life that we might not understand. Like a parent telling a child to stay away from the fire.

Our USAF trainee is instructed to avoid thunderstorms, for reasons that he will understand better, later in his career.

Some rules are to apply the restraint that is needed to help us get along



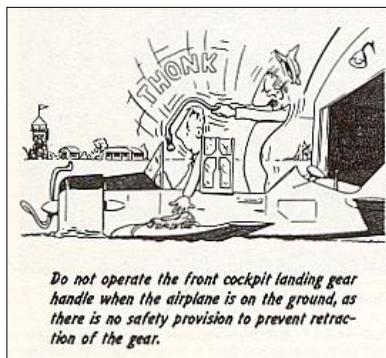
with others. As a child they had to do with sharing, hitting, and so forth.



The USAF was concerned both about a good neighbor policy, and safety, thus this rule.

Still other rules are needed because of the way things are made. Our intrepid aviator below just couldn't resist trying to figure out if this rule was necessary! He paid the consequences!

Contrary to the view of many, the Bible is not a bunch of spoil-sport rules. It outlines the laws of life for us. Even the "Thou shalt nots" of the 10-Commandments are simply rules to keep us out of trouble. Warnings, to stay out of the thunderstorms and lightning of life.



The Bible is God's manual to tell us how to stay on good terms with our neighbor, and how to avoid all kinds of trouble.

It is also a description of how things work. It has both "do" and "don't" stuff, but even more than ATC and the USAF, all are intended for our welfare. Certainly, as all rules, they restrict us in some ways but it is those very restrictions that move us toward the safe path in life. The best path.

The most enjoyable and satisfying way to live is to follow God's rules.

King David in the Bible had it figured out. In Psalm 119:33-35 he said, "Teach me, O Lord, to follow every one of your principles. Give me understanding and I will obey your law; I will put it into practice with all my heart. Make me walk along the path of your commands, for that is where my happiness is found."

David continues in vv 54-56, "Your principles have been the music of my life throughout the years of my pilgrimage. I reflect at night on who you are, O Lord, and I obey your law because of this. This is my happy way of life: obeying your commandments."

It is the happy way of life. And it is soooo good!

1999, rev. 10/09, Bible quotations from 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.

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