

## *Forced to Fly*

Robert Kupferschmid was suddenly confronted with a life-and-death situation, and his spellbinding story is instructive for us all. The 81-year-old man had no flying experience, and yet – due to a tragic emergency – he was forced to fly an airplane.

On June 17, 1998, he and his 52-year-old pilot friend, Wesley Sickle, were flying from Indianapolis to Muncie, Indiana. During the flight, the pilot slumped over and died at the controls. The Cessna 172 single-engine plane began to nosedive, and Kupferschmid grabbed the controls. He got on the radio and pleaded for help.

Nearby were two pilots who heard the call. Mount Comfort was the closest airport, and the two pilots gave Kupferschmid a steady stream of instructions of climbing, steering and – the scariest part – landing. The two experienced pilots circled the runway three times before this somewhat frantic and totally inexperienced pilot was ready to attempt the landing.

Emergency vehicles were called out and ready for what seemed like an approaching disaster. Witnesses said the plane's nose nudged the center line and bounced a few times before the tail hit the ground. The Cessna ended up in a patch of soggy grass next to the runway. Amazingly, Kupferschmid was not injured.

How could this be? This pilot listened and followed those instructions as if his life depended on it – and it did.

Here's the application: Life is a journey fraught with peril. Every day, we may find ourselves in a life-and-death situation – physically, emotionally or spiritually – if we are careless and ignore the hazardous warning signs. God has given us a road map leading to happy and fulfilled lives. It's called The Bible. If we listen and obey the instructions with the same earnestness as did Kupferschmid, we, too, can achieve results beyond our imagination.

--Beecher Hunter