



# On Course

Excerpts of the article by Sandy Snavelly (from *More Stories for the Heart*, compiled by Alice Gray)

*M*y husband Bud and I love to sail. When the water is calm and the wind is stable, sailing is a profoundly rich experience. Yet there are times when the water turns evil and the wind breathes terror through our veins like an invisible enemy.

One day, a sea condition appropriately known as a “widowmaker” interrupted our peaceful voyage. Five- to six-foot waves slammed against us, one right after the other, and we steadied ourselves for a bumpy ride.

Suddenly, Bud heard a sound that appeared to be coming from the bow. Straining to see forward through the water that the wind whipped around us, he discovered that our anchor had become dislodged and was banging against our hull. With each

thud, the danger of beating a hole into the fiberglass increased.

Bud then did the most frightening thing I’ve ever seen him do. With neither a life jacket nor a lifeline, he made his way forward to the point of the bow, leaving me in the cockpit to man the tiller as he retrieved the anchor.

Wave after angry wave crashed over him. Steadying my focus on Bud, I immediately began to plan what I would do to rescue him if indeed he went overboard.

The sound of my husband’s voice shouting to me through the storm broke the hold fear had on me: “Get back on course! Point her toward the marker!”

Prying my focus off of my husband and setting my sights back to the marker was the most difficult order I have ever been

called to obey. It went against all my instincts, but as I heeded Bud’s command, I was able to get us back on course. Bud fastened the anchor into its holder, and we were once again headed in the right direction.

We both learned a valuable lesson that afternoon: Danger lurks around every corner, and we can be distracted from our real goals, tempted to try to change the rules to solve what seem to be life’s more immediate crises.

But there are sound principles designed to bring us safely to our destination, if we are willing to trust them and not be swayed off course by sudden fears. We must be determined to study the charts, follow the rules, and steady the course, or we will end up over our heads in deep water when life’s storms hit.

*A* spacecraft en route to the moon is off course 90 percent of the time. It’s pulled back by the earth’s gravity. It’s continually drawn to one side or the other by other forces. But it has a built-in computer that has a singleness of purpose that homes in on the moon. The computer is making continual corrections to keep the spacecraft on target with its purpose and goal. Lives are like that. If your eye is on your goal, if you have a singleness of purpose, nothing will stop you getting to where you are going.—*Dick Innes* (from *How to Mend a Broken Heart*)

*H*ow do you know what course to take? How can you tell if you’re getting off course, or if your path is veering off one way or another from the best way to go? Well, God’s teaching in the Bible gives the best advice I know of for keeping your life on course. It talks about what will make you happy—and that is God’s plan for you.

You don’t know God’s plan for your life? Then ask Him, and He will show it to you. It all starts with letting Jesus come into your heart, letting Him speak to you and show you His ways of love and life. Then you’ll be aimed in the right direction, and God can keep you on course. He’ll be your Helmsman, and as long as you follow Him, your course will be guided and protected, full of love and fulfillment—and it will take you to Heaven in the end!—

*David Brandt Berg*