

Reference Point

My husband and I were newlyweds, with the best job in the whole wide world. We were caretakers for an estate on Salt Spring Island, British Columbia. For ten months out of the year it was just us, the mountains, the ocean, and the eagles.

But even paradise has its dangers.

We would park our car at the marina and take the 40-foot aluminum work boat back and forth to the main island. Most of the time the seas were small and the biggest threat was hitting a “deadhead” log floating just under the water’s surface. The propeller blade would be damaged and we might have to restart the engine, but we would suffer no real harm.

One time, though, a real threat snuck in on kitten feet. When we returned to the marina and embarked toward home, the entire world was socked in by fluffy gray cotton. The fog was as thick as any simile that comes to mind, and even thicker.

As soon as we shoved off, we were adrift in a land of vertigo, without even a prevailing wind to point the way.

Brent wasn’t worried, though. We had an onboard compass. As long as he glanced down from time to time, the guiding hand of the compass would keep us in the straits. We wouldn’t wander off-course, heading out to sea with no landfall before Japan.

He just had to glance at the compass occasionally. We would be all right.

We set off with confidence, both of us peering ahead for the numerous deadheads in our way. Five minutes into our trip, he looked down. I heard an ominous, “Uh-oh.”

Even though the seas appeared totally calm on the surface, just below the tides were changing. While it seemed like we were heading straight ahead, the compass told the truth: we were slowly spinning around in a circle.

Our strategy immediately changed. While he kept his eye on the compass and kept our course on track, I kept watch for the deadheads. Twenty minutes later with relief we made landfall again.

Sometimes we're so sure of our way that we don't even sense the pull of the world on our standards and values. Sometimes we get so involved in the trip that we completely forget about the final destination. And sometimes we just plain lose sight of true north.

We're reminded in Heb. 12:2 to "look to Jesus Christ, the author and finisher of our salvation." Glancing up from time to time isn't enough. To avoid ending up adrift and shipwrecked at sea, we must keep our eyes constantly fixed on Him.