

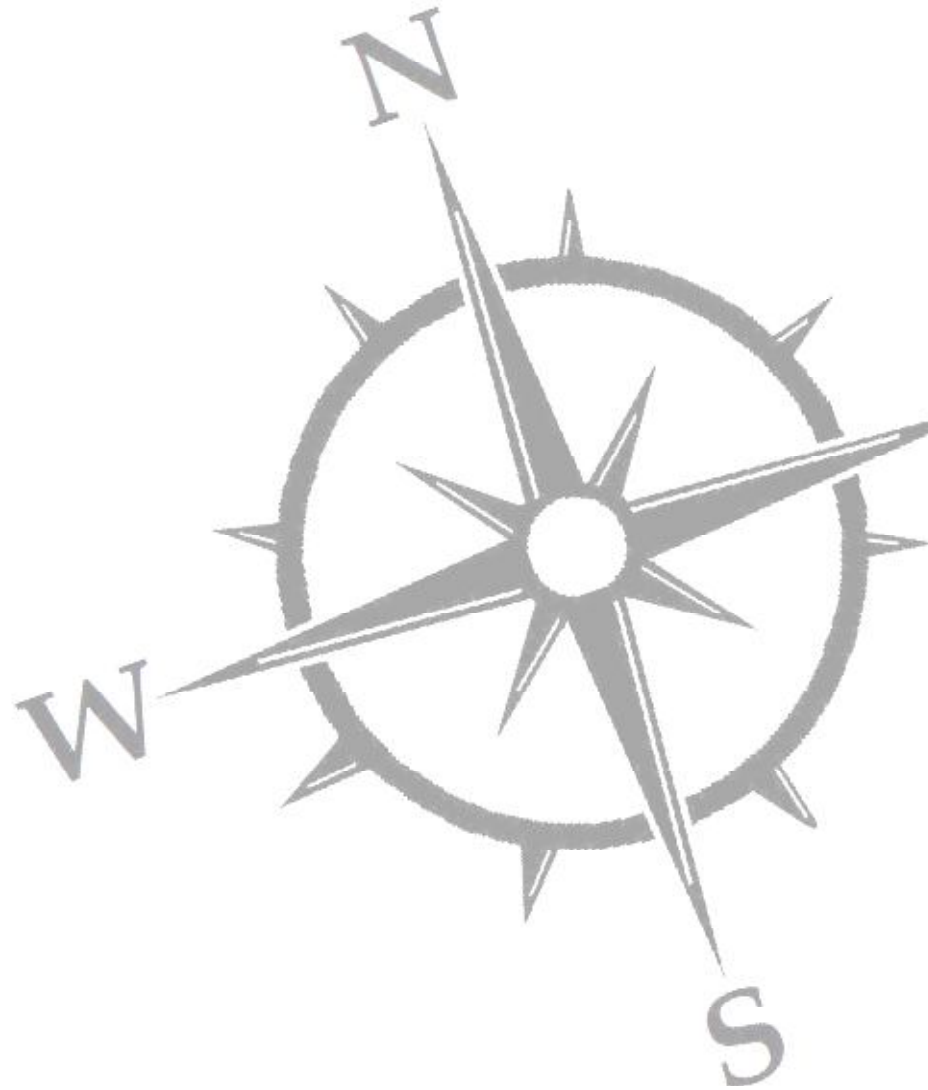
The Life of Jack McGuckin

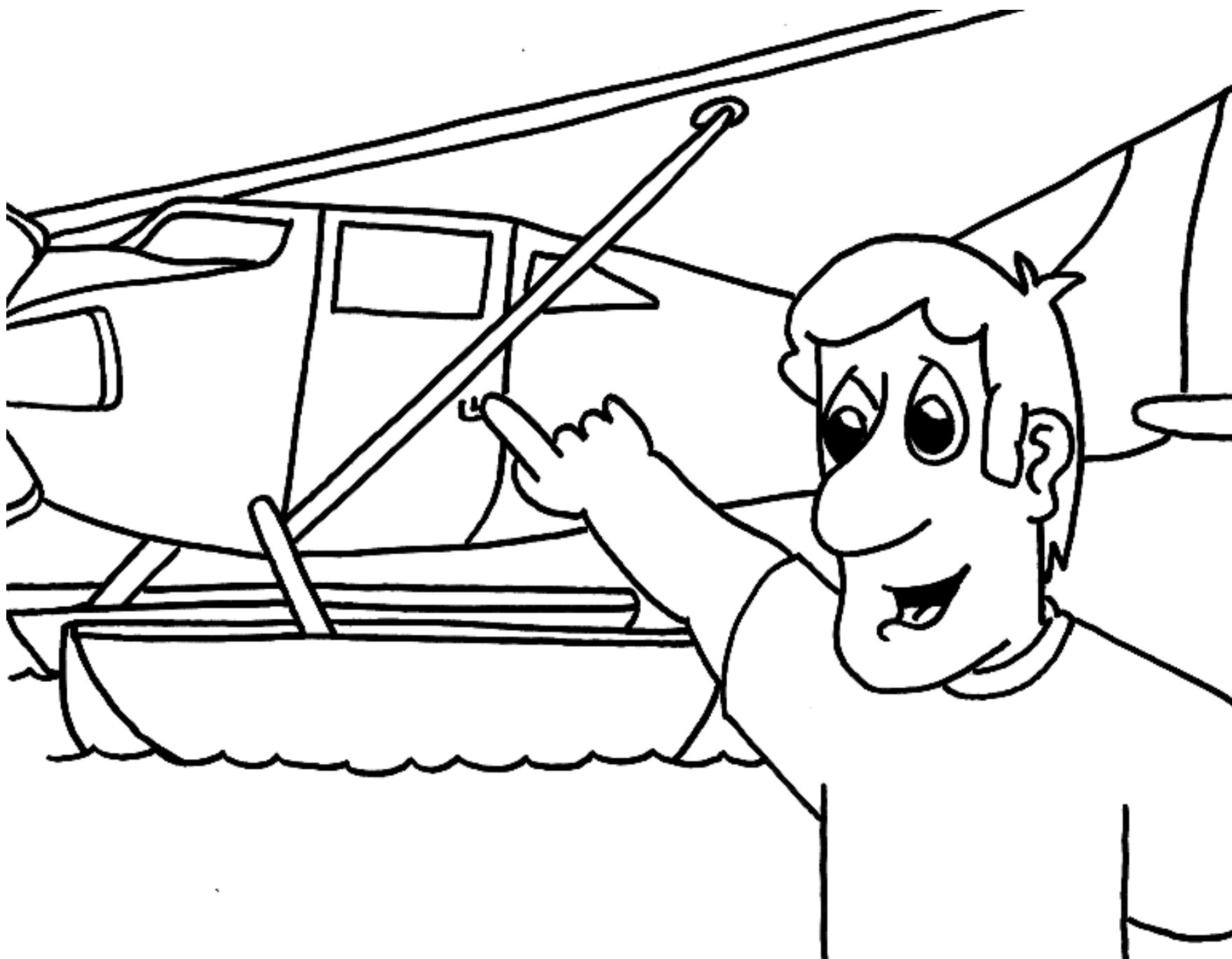
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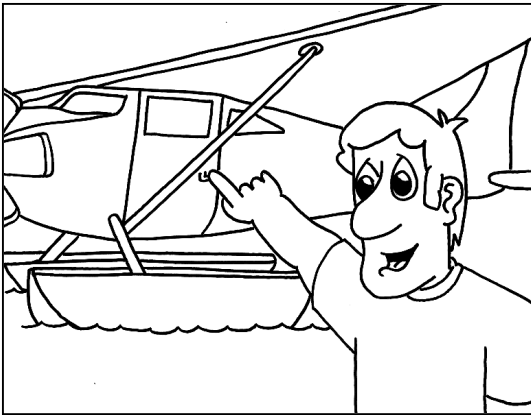
Lesson: 2.26 – Guidance Missionary Snapshot Series

This story reminds us that God leads and guides those who are serving Him. He leads us to where we need to be and away from things that might harm us. It is our job to follow His leading. Many times in life, we get into situations where we are not sure what to do or where God wants us to go. God promises to guide and give wisdom to those who are serving Him by faith. Missionary Jack McGuckin needed God to guide him if he was going to escape a very dangerous situation.

“For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide even unto death.” – Psalm 48:14







Introduction:

Imagine being dropped off in the middle of a huge jungle. It would be confusing and a bit scary to not have a guide along with you. You might get lost or come across something that might hurt you. A guide is a person who knows the area and can help you figure out where to go and what to avoid. Our story today is about a missionary pilot, who used his plane to help missionaries and people in other parts of the world. He was always willing to help, even if it meant bringing along a very strange passenger on his plane. Let's listen carefully to what happened to Jack McGuckin high in the skies over Peru...

Missionary Story:

"There is no way he will escape!" said the sergeant patting a large wicker basket on the ground. "Are you sure?" I said leaning down to take a closer look. The bright Peruvian sun allowed me to see through the reeds and strips of bark of the wicker basket. I could see that this "tiger" that the sergeant had captured and wanted

me to transport to his friend at another area base was a large South American Panther. "Oh yes," said one of the Peruvian soldiers who was standing nearby, "the basket that I made is very strong... the tiger will never escape from it!"

This was one of my first missionary flights in Peru working for the Wycliffe Bible Translator's Jungle Aviation Service. Our mission director had a rule to build good relationships with the authorities. "We are in their country by permission, to preach the Gospel," he had said, "so be kind and helpful whenever you can!" I wasn't excited to have a live panther on my plane, but I wanted to be kind and helpful to the authorities in Peru.

"Yes I will take your tiger and deliver it to you friend," I said. The two men smiled and loaded the basket into the back of my airplane near another box that had four live chickens in it and a box with two turtles in it. "This plane is turning into a modern-day Noah's Ark!" I chuckled to myself. My plane also had supplies which I was taking to a couple of mission stations in the area.

It wasn't long before the plane scooted across the river on its pontoons and rose gently into the air. I looked out my window at the jungle getting farther and farther away below us. Before airplanes came to South America, the missionaries would travel by foot from village to village. A simple trip back into town could often take a couple of weeks of traveling through thick jungles filled with poisonous plants, deadly snakes, fish with razor-sharp teeth, and even head-hunting natives. Now with the help of airplanes, the same trip could be made in an

hour. This made things much easier for the brave missionaries to take the gospel to the natives.

I leaned back in my seat and looked out the window. "Shouldn't be too much longer," I muttered to myself. Suddenly, the plane was filled with a loud crashing and a flood of squawking noises. The chaos reminded me of when I was a boy on my father's farm and we awoke one night to find that a fox had snuck into the henhouse! Spinning around, I noticed that the panther had escaped from its basket. It was slowly climbing over the seat with its yellow eyes locked on the chickens. I grabbed my canteen and splashed it with the water. "Get back you brute!" I shouted. The water surprised the panther and it sunk back to the luggage compartment. Only a few seconds later though, the panther was climbing back over the seat once again. This time, I threw my canteen at it. I missed and the panther pounced down onto the seat, breaking open the box and sending chickens squawking and flapping in all directions. Their wings beat all around me and feathers were flying everywhere in the plane. Suddenly, the panther sat up on its back legs and began to swipe at the chickens with its sharp claws.

I forgot all about flying the plane. For a split second, my mind flashed back to my time as a Marine pilot in World War II and the Korean War, but that was different... in that case, the dangers were outside of my plane not sitting in the seat behind me.

Suddenly, the panther caught one of the chickens on the floor under the seat and began to eat it. "Would one chicken be





enough for it, or would it come looking for more meat to eat?" I wondered looking desperately out the window for somewhere to go. The plane was over three thousand feet in the air and there seemed to be no clearings to land the plane anywhere.

Suddenly, a paw reached out under my seat and grabbed hold of my right leg. The panther was still hungry and now he was hunting me! I kicked with both of my feet as hard as I could. The panther let out a loud shriek that filled the whole plane. "Lord, please help me to find a place to land," I prayed and then I spotted it... several small huts along the river below. I began to quickly circle to bring the plane in for a landing kicking my legs every time the beast tried to reach for them.

A group of native men came out of their huts as I quickly landed, jumped out onto one of the pontoons, and slammed the plane door. "Help!" I shouted to the men "I have a tiger loose inside." About 12 men stepped up onto the pontoons trying to get a closer look at the plane. With so many people standing on it, the plane began to

sink. "Not everyone at once!" I said and they all jumped off into the water. The leader brought some rope and it wasn't long before the men had lassoed and tied up the angry panther.

"Thank you so much," I said wiping sweat off of my forehead, "I'm not sure what would have happened if I had not found your village." "Think nothing of it," said the leader with a smile. "we were just thinking the same thing before you arrived with your plane. You see, one of the men of the village just had a heart attack. Unless he can get to the hospital soon, he will die! Would you take him to a hospital?"

"Absolutely," I said with a smile. Not long after, I helped the sick man get on the plane. As we lifted off of the ground, I glanced back over my shoulder at my new passenger. "So the Lord had a purpose and plan in mind in allowing that panther to break loose," I thought. "God used a hungry panther and a frightened pilot to get my plane to the right place and save a man's life."

Less than two hours later, the sick man was at a hospital in Iquitos, the sergeant's friend had his panther, and I was headed back to the mission station at Yarinacocha. As I looked behind me, I noticed a few chicken feathers still sitting on the seat behind me. "God can even use the worst of situations to bring about something good!" I said with a smile.

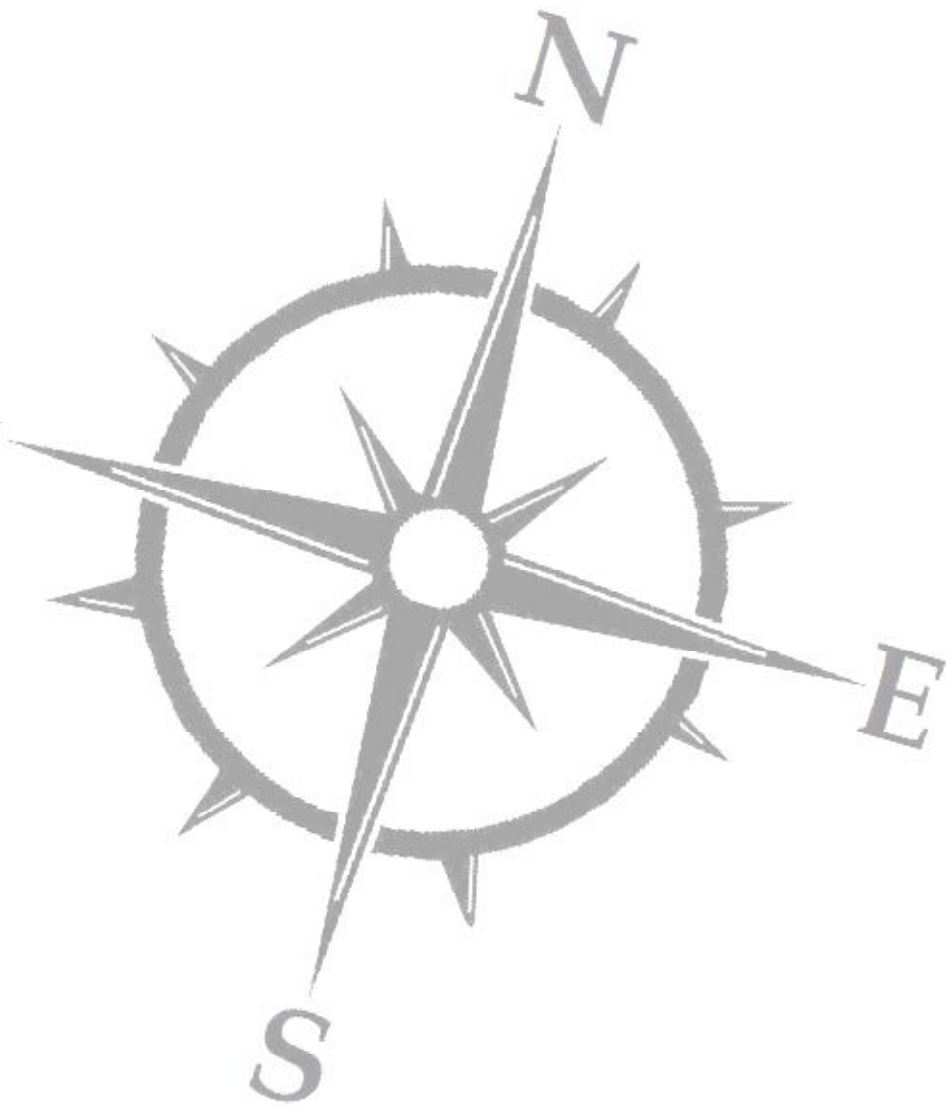
Application:

You know, boys and girls, Psalm 48:14 tells us that God will guide those who are serving Him. God has a wonderful plan

for each of our lives. His plan is always the best plan and the one that will bring us the most joy. Just like a jungle guide, God is watching out for us every step of the way. Jack McGuckin would make many more flights to many places in the jungles of South America. He carried supplies and people in his plane but never had quite as odd of a passenger as that panther.

Jack McGuckin served as a missionary pilot in Peru for about 4 years and then worked for 30 years as an international evangelist telling people about Jesus. Jack had logged thousands of hours in the Marines and flew in several battles and wars. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Bronze Star, and the Presidential Citation as well as other decorations. Five years after the Korean War ended, Jack McGuckin gave his life to Christ. Soon, he was back in the air as he had been so many times before in service to his country... only this time it was in service to his Lord. Jack flew all sorts of missionaries and supplies to many unreachable places in Peru. But he didn't just drop the missionaries off, he stayed and helped. Even in the high mountains of Peru, he worked to evangelize a whole group of natives, and even the village witch doctor was saved! Jack allowed God to have control of his time and his life knowing that just like with the panther, God had a perfect plan.

*(For additional information, discussion questions, and materials on this lesson please refer to lesson 2.26 on **page 86** in your Burma Expedition - Leader's Guide.)*



References

For further reading or to obtain more information on this portion of the life of this missionary, please consult the following sources from which we obtained our information:

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McGuckin, J. (1979). *Split second from hell*. Scottsdale, AZ: Good Life Productions.

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