

IT IS SETTLED!

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13b)

By Howell Lasseter

Religious Integrity (Part 1)

Integrity: how can we determine whether one is a person of integrity? Could it be said a person of integrity is faithful to a truthful position? If one is anything less than faithful to a known correct and true position, that one lacks integrity. In the realm of obedience to God's commands, being unfaithful to a command is called "sin." Even during the time that Jesus, the Messiah, walked the earth, not every "religious" person was a person of integrity. Who were some of those who refused to obey Jesus' instruction? Were they not Jews? Did they not "worship" in the temple and in the synagogues? Yes, they did, and most of these religious Jews rejected the very Son of God. Even today, most Jews are still waiting for the Messiah to come. Yet, that event has already happened!

What is necessary for one to believe something? First, our mind must accept a fact about the topic. In order to be obedient to God's Word, each must know what God requires. Romans 10:17 tells us *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* We see that hearing comes before faith. Going back to last week's equation, we now have H+(F). Hebrews 11:6 says, *"But without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God **must believe** that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."* Adding to the equation, we now have H+B(F), with faith and belief being used interchangeably.

A common error in the denominational world shows up as we go to the next letter, "R," in the equation. Most denominations teach that it is at the point of faith that one is saved. Understanding that one cannot be saved without repentance (Jesus said, *"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"* - Luke 13:3), the denominations put repentance before faith. This error has a sinner repenting before he has heard God's Will and believed. Their equation would look like this: R+H+B=S. However, repentance is impossible before one hears God's commands, understands them, and believes a change is required, for repentance is a change of mind leading to a change in action. Look at Mark 1:15: *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."* Of what were the hearers to repent? Of their failure to believe the gospel, *"the power of God unto salvation"* (Romans 1:16). Reader, if you have not yet believed that the gospel is God's power to salvation, repent of that unbelief, hear what God says about the gospel, and believe it.

In our equation, the next letter is "C," which stands for "confession." In the denominational equation noted above - R+H+B=S - confession is left out. Jesus said, *"Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven"* (Matthew 10:32,33). More is learned about this confession in Romans 10:10: *"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* Acts 8:37: *"...And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of*

God." A study of this example of one becoming a Christian shows clearly that the confession is **not** "I believe God for Christ's sake has pardoned my sins," or some similar statement. Nor is it a confession that one has sinned. The confession God requires is the confession of one's belief that Jesus is God's Son.

We are at this point in our equation: H+B(F)+R+C. Next week, we'll complete the "formula" by which one obeys the gospel, becoming a child of God. Join us!