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CROSS A Message from
R The Adairsville Church of Christ
D 126 Summer Street
S Phone: 770-773-3362

Question: As long as I'm sincere and honest about my relationship with God, does it really matter what I believe or practice religiously?

Answer: While sincerity is an important quality, what you believe and practice religiously has eternal significance. Some people have bizarre beliefs, but their sincerity about those beliefs don't make them right.

For example, in some parts of *India*, they worship rats! They believe they're holy, and if you kill one you have to pay a fine. In other parts of that country, they worship cows. Yet, in spite of widespread poverty there, they won't kill the cows for food for fear they might be killing a relative! In *Japan*, people write prayers on paper, put them in their mouth and make 'paper wads' then throw them at an idol god. If the wad sticks, they believe God will answer that prayer; if it doesn't stick, they believe He won't answer it! In *Africa*, a preacher tried to duplicate the miracle of Jesus by walking on water because he believed God gave him a revelation that he could. He drowned! In *America*, there are those who handle rattle snakes to prove their faith, while others deny their children life-saving blood transfusions because of their beliefs!

We don't question the sincerity of any of these folks. But does their honesty and sincerity make their beliefs right? No. Jesus said, "***And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,***" (*John 8:32*). If being free from sin and death is important to you, then what you believe and practice religiously makes a great difference.

--Steve McCaslin