

Bad Assumptions



In addition to doing some classic car restorations, I have built a couple of kit cars. I thought I had seen almost everything in the way of strange electrical troubleshooting until I started working on kit cars.

First off, I discovered that many kit manufacturers provide very limited wiring diagrams. In the case of one car I built there was no factory wiring diagram available and this probably explained part of the reason the first owner had been unable to complete the car. This lack of documentation made the whole wiring process a bit challenging with emails flying back and forth around the world to other current car owners who helped me identify the wires and their proper connection locations.

One day, I was feeling pretty proud of myself and had gotten things almost to a place to fire the engine for the first time. The lights all worked and starter motor would crank the motor and it would only be a short time before the fluids would be added and that exciting first start would be attempted. Then the weirdest thing happened. The entire back half of the car's electrical harness went dead. The starter would not work and the lights in the back half of the car all went dead. I quickly tried to assess what had changed - what was the last thing I changed - well there was nothing in the electrical connections I had changed. The only thing that I been doing was some work under the car on the fuel tank. I had loosened the fuel tank and lowered it onto some blocks while I was working on the hose connections. Surely, that could have nothing to do with the current electrical problems.

I decided that this was the only thing I had changed so I reinstalled the fuel tank and "bingo" the electrical in the back of the car came back to life. There were two electrical connections on the fuel tank to the fuel level sender unit - one to the sender and one to provide ground. I removed the ground connection and watched the power go out in the car's tail again. Eventually, I discovered that the ground connection on the tank had been providing the ground to the wiring harness and not grounding the tank sender like it was really designed to do. Somewhere in the depths of the wiring harness the ground wire that ran from the battery into the harness had not been wired properly and so I had ground running to the front of the car's harness but not to the back unless the ground on the fuel tank was connected. I quickly was able to work around the problem by grounding all the ground wires in the back of the car to the metal chassis and the car would never pull this magic act again.

The whole disappearing ground episode reminded me that I go through life making assumptions about how things work and those assumptions may be correct or incorrect. I may be dealing with a flawed system or just plain outside of my area of expertise. I may work my way up to where I think I can master anything only to discover that I don't have total knowledge. When I was lying on the ground looking at that lowered gas tank I could have kept thinking to myself, "There is no way that removing this fuel tank could have that effect." But the logical thing to do was simply to take a few minutes to reinstall the tank. That simple test triggered a series of discoveries that resulted in the simple truth - I had a bad wiring harness with a bad ground connection.

Such is the spiritual realm. We may be making inaccurate assumptions about who we think God is and what He is like. Is He like our earthly father who was cruel to us and broke trust so many times? Is He vindictive and just waiting for us to make a mistake so He can judge us harshly? Does He care about us at all? Does God exist? The answers to those questions can be discovered by a simple test found in Psalms 34:8 where it says, "Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him!" Take Him for a test drive - set aside your assumptions and put Him to the test and you will discover that He loves you and wants to bring joy into your life.

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