

## **Activity vs. Accomplishment**

Do you ever find yourself feeling as if you're constantly working, but not getting anything done? It seems that you're "spinning your wheels" or "running in circles", always busy, but never getting results? I know I've felt that way many times. As I look back at those times I realize the problem was that I was confusing "**activity**" with "**accomplishment**".

Let's look at the Webster's Dictionary definitions of these two words:

***Activity:* the quality or state of being active**

***(Active: doing things that require physical movement and energy)***

***Accomplishment:* something done, achieved, or accomplished successfully**

***(Accomplish: to bring about a result by effort; to bring to completion)***

We can see by the definitions that **activity** merely requires movement or motion, but **accomplishment** requires completion of the task involved.

So what does this mean for us? It means we sometimes spend time and effort on nonproductive tasks or distractions while the important or essential work is left unfinished. In some cases this is unavoidable because of emergencies or when we are following the orders of others. It is more often the case, though, that we are not focused, haven't clearly defined our goals, or simply procrastinate. Sometimes we get so caught up in our routines that we lose sight of our goals. We continue to automatically perform our tasks without really thinking about results, similar to animals following their instincts.

A vivid example is the Processionary Caterpillar. These creatures are known for their habit of moving in a procession, each following the one ahead of it. A French naturalist, Jean Henri Fabre, performed an experiment in which he placed several of these caterpillars on the rim of a flower pot so that the lead caterpillar's head touched the tail of the last one in line. He then placed pine needles, the natural food source of the creatures, in the center of the pot. The caterpillars blindly continued their activity, moving in a circle around the rim of the pot for several days, not stopping to eat, until, one by one, they died of starvation, never accomplishing their goal, the pine needles. Just inches away from food, they starved because ***they confused activity with accomplishment.***

Of course people are not simple animals, but rather have the ability to think about our actions, to decide what to do and how to do it. We can choose to set clear goals, and to perform **activities** that will help us **accomplish** these goals.

As Christians, some of us choose active roles in various committees, councils, or groups, while others are content to attend Worship Services on most Sundays. Is one choice better or "more Christian" than the other? I believe the answer is for each person to decide, based on his own unique circumstances, with God's counsel. What's right for one person is not necessarily right for another. For me, Christianity is a personal, individual decision, between God and me. Whether I am involved in too few or too many activities is my choice, with the guidance of prayer and scripture. Following the examples of Jesus and his disciples, we should each strive to focus our **activities** so that they lead us to the **accomplishment** of God's plans and goals, being careful not to be like the Processionary Caterpillar, confusing our **activity** with real **accomplishment.**