“The time has come,” the Walrus said, “To talk of many things: Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—Of cabbages—and kings—And why the sea is boiling hot—And whether pigs have wings.” — Lewis Carroll (pseudonym of Rev Charles L. Dodgson), excerpted from Through the Looking Glass

“There is no hope of success for the person who does not have a central purpose, or definite goal at which to aim.” — Napoleon Hill, American writer and philosopher

The other night I went with my neighbor to “Comedy Night” at her church. Before the main act came on, they had some interactive impromptu skits to get the audience warmed up. My favorite one involved four people. Three of the participants were taken behind the stage, where they couldn’t see or hear what was going on. The remaining person was given several unrelated words: Michael Jackson, mini golf, bowling, the moon, cooking, ballet, and 2am. They were then told to act the words out in front of the next participant that was brought in. One by one, each person involved watched the performer in front of them do some things, and then took their turn in repeating what they thought they saw. It was like a visual form of the game “telephone”. No one knew why they were doing what they were doing, and only the first actor knew what was being demonstrated. As you can imagine, by the time the fourth person was done going through the motions they thought they had seen, everything was completely messed up. Each participant had added or deleted elements… my favorite was the shrug between actions that became a mainstream part of the performance. When the last person was finished, the final performer was asked to tell the audience what they had acted out. Their story was quite elaborate. I don’t remember most of it, as I was laughing so hard, but I do know it contained none of the beginning ideas… and their explanation of “the shrug”? Well, it was the most honest and sensible part of the whole thing: “complete confusion”.

I tell you this story because it got me thinking… How often do we go through the motions of following Christ, just assuming everyone knows what we are doing and why? Do we ever just follow along, trying to imitate what we see others doing, without any idea ourselves? And what about our explanation of what it means to be a Christian… Does our walk match our talk? I would like to suggest that if we do not understand what God is calling us to do… if we never clearly convey that message to others… and if we do not actively and accurately live out that passion in our own lives… then all we are left with is “complete confusion”… and that is anything but glorifying to God.

So, what if we find we are lacking in enthusiasm, knowledge, or consistency in our walk with Christ, what should we do? Well, first, pray
(2 Chronicles 7:14-15, Ephesians 6:18, Colossians 1:9-12, Matthew 7:7-8). Ask God what His will is for your life, and what steps He wants you to take (1 Peter 4:1-11, James 1:5-6, Mark 9:23-24). Ask Him to show you areas you can improve in... because none of us are perfect (Psalm 139:23-24). Add to this, if you are not already, a dedication to reading and meditating on God’s Word (Ephesians 6:10-17, Joshua 1:7-9, Psalm 1:1-3). We find an overview of how to live a life pleasing to God, in Romans 12. But there are many other places in the Bible you could turn, as well, to address the questions we have raised. If you have trouble understanding what God’s Word says, ask (Proverbs 1:7). Ask a trusted brother or sister in Christ (Titus 1:6-9)... ask your pastor... read respected commentary or devotional guides. Consider being mentored by a more established believer (Ephesians 4:11-16, Proverbs 11:14). Seek guidance about, and act upon, other ideas that the Holy Spirit puts on your heart (John 14:26). Get an accountability partner, to help you keep on keeping on (Ecclesiastes 4:7-12, 1 Thessalonians 5:11). Just do not remain stagnant (Revelation 3:2-3, 15-22). We all have areas in our spiritual lives in which there is room for improvement (Romans 3:23). It is a journey. We will never reach perfection, and our growth will not end, until we are in Heaven. So press on, as Paul says in Philippians 3:12-14, toward the Heavenly goal that God has called you for. May He grant you strength and courage, as you persevere humbly and obediently in His love (Romans 8:28-39). We are honored, dear friends, to serve alongside you, as we strive together, in all things, to advance the glory of God.